



April 28, 2025

The Honorable Lauren Underwood
2228 Rayburn House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jen Kiggans
152 Cannon House Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswomen Underwood and Kiggans,

On behalf of the 49 undersigned organizations representing the Nursing Community Coalition (NCC), we extend our appreciation to you both for introducing the *Ensuring Veterans Timely Access to Anesthesia Care Act* (H.R.2234). The NCC is a cross section of education, practice, research, and regulation within the nursing profession representing Registered Nurses (RNs), Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs),¹ nurse leaders, boards of nursing, students, faculty, and researchers. Together, we support this comprehensive effort to ensure patients, specifically our nation's veterans, have access to the high-quality care provided by APRNs.

We recognize how vital removing barriers to practice and increasing access to the high-quality care from our nation's nurses and APRNs, including our Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs), are for the patient and the entire health care system. H.R.2234 would remove unnecessary barriers to care within the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), increasing access to care, decreasing wait times, lowering costs, and maintaining the highest level of care for veterans. Independent groups, such as the Brookings Institution², as well as multiple peer-reviewed studies published in the *Journal of Medical Care*³, *Health Affairs*⁴, and *Health Services Research*⁵ have supported and shown the safety and quality of CRNA provided care.

This important legislation not only aligns the VHA with current Defense Health Agency policy that allows CRNAs to be autonomous providers of anesthesia in the Army, Navy, and Air Force, it

¹ APRNs include certified nurse-midwives (CNMs), certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs), clinical nurse specialists (CNSs) and nurse practitioners (NPs).

² Adams, E. Kathleen; Markowitz, Sara. (June 2018). Improving Efficiency in the Health-Care System: Removing Anticompetitive Barriers for Advance Practice Registered Nurses and Physician Assistants. The Brookings Institution. Retrieved from: https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/am_web_0620.pdf

³ Negrusa, Brighita PhD; Hogan, Paul F. MS; Warner, John T. PhD; Schroeder, Caryl H. BA; Pang, Bo MS. Scope of Practice Laws and Anesthesia Complications: No Measurable Impact of Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist Expanded Scope of Practice on Anesthesia-related Complications. *Medical Care* 54(10):p 913-920, October 2016. | DOI: 10.1097/MLR.0000000000000554

⁴ Dulisse, Brian; Cromwell, Jerry. No Harm Found When Nurse Anesthetists Work Without Supervision by Physicians. (August 2010). *Health Affairs*. Vol. 29. No. 8. DOI: 10.1377/hlthaff.2008.0966 Retrieved from: <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/full/10.1377/hlthaff.2008.0966>

⁵ Needleman, J., & Minnick, A. F. (2009). Anesthesia provider model, hospital resources, and maternal outcomes. *Health services research*, 44(2 Pt 1), 464–482. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6773.2008.00919.x>

also follows recommendations from a Temple University report on CRNA practice within the VHA. As the brief states, “Removing restrictions and allowing more CRNAs to practice autonomously is documented to have no negative impact on patient outcomes, may potentially provide a cost-effective solution to physician shortages, and may increase access to care.”⁶ The VA’s Office of Inspector General reports citing three times as many facilities facing a shortage of physician anesthesiologists as CRNAs⁷, and given reports out of both the Hampton Roads VA Medical Center (VAMC)⁸ and the Denver VAMC⁹ that physician anesthesiologist shortages have restricted veterans’ access to care.

As we continue to support the health care of our veterans throughout the country and reduce unnecessary barriers to care to ensure the efficient delivery of high-quality care, passing the *Ensuring Veterans Timely Access to Anesthesia Care Act* (H.R.2234) is essential. We appreciate your leadership in this effort as we work to address today’s challenges and prepare for a healthier tomorrow. If the Nursing Community Coalition can be of any assistance to you or your staff, please do not hesitate to contact the coalition’s Executive Director, Rachel Minahan, at rstevenson@thenursingcommunity.org.

Sincerely,

Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses
Academy of Neonatal Nursing
American Academy of Ambulatory Care Nursing
American Academy of Emergency Nurse Practitioners
American Academy of Nursing
American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American Association of Critical-Care Nurses
American Association of Heart Failure Nurses
American Association of Neuroscience Nurses
American Association of Nurse Anesthesiology
American Association of Nurse Practitioners
American Association of Occupational Health Nurses
American Nephrology Nurses Association
American Nurses Association
American Nursing Informatics Association
American Organization for Nursing Leadership
American Psychiatric Nurses Association
American Society for Pain Management Nursing
American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses
Association for Radiologic and Imaging Nursing
Association of Community Health Nursing Educators

⁶ Baumle, DeAnna, JD, MSW. (September 2022). *Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist Scope of Practice Laws*. Temple University, Beasley School of Law. Retrieved from:

https://www.va.gov/STANDARDSOFPRACTICE/docs/CRNA_PolicyBrief_Temple.pdf

⁷ Office of Inspector General, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. (August 7, 2024). Retrieved from:

<https://www.vaoig.gov/sites/default/files/reports/2024-08/vaoig-24-00803-222.pdf>

⁸ Spotswood, Stephen. (November 11, 2024). *Legislators Question Why VISN Leaders Were Unaware of Hampton VAMC Problems*. U.S. Medicine. Retrieved from: <https://www.usmedicine.com/non-clinical-topics/policy/legislators-question-why-visn-leaders-were-unaware-of-hampton-vamc-problems/>

⁹ Low, Rob. (October 11, 2017). *VA Surgeries postponed because there aren’t enough anesthesiologists*. Fox31 Denver. Retrieved from: <https://kdvr.com/news/problem-solvers/serving-those-who-serve/va-surgeries-postponed-because-there-arent-enough-anesthesiologists/#:~:text=DENVER%20E2%80%94%20FOX31%20Problems%20Solvers,and%20certified%20registered%20nurse%20anesthetists>

Association of periOperative Registered Nurses
Association of Public Health Nurses
Association of Rehabilitation Nurses
Association of Veterans Affairs Nurse Anesthetists
Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service
Dermatology Nurses' Association
Gerontological Advanced Practice Nurses Association
Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association
International Association of Forensic Nurses
Infusion Nurses Society
International Society of Psychiatric-Mental Health Nurses
National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists
National Association of Hispanic Nurses
National Association of Neonatal Nurse Practitioners
National Association of Neonatal Nurses
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association of School Nurses
National Council of State Boards of Nursing
National Forum of State Nursing Workforce Centers
National League for Nursing
National Nurse-Led Care Consortium
National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties
Nurses Organization of Veterans Affairs
Oncology Nursing Society
Organization for Associate Degree Nursing
Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses Association
Society of Urologic Nurses and Associates

cc:

House Committee on Veterans Affairs