CRNAs are Part of the Solution to Healthcare Reform

Research shows that Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs) are the most cost-effective anesthesia providers. In today's changing healthcare environment, it is critical that all available steps are taken to improve access to the highest quality, most cost-effective healthcare. CRNAs help ensure access to care. As Congress considers improvements to healthcare legislation, it is important to recognize that CRNAs are vital to resolving the challenges facing the nation’s healthcare system.

- **Preserve Provider Nondiscrimination Language** — In 2010, Congress enacted into law a Provider Nondiscrimination provision that prohibits health plans from discriminating against qualified licensed healthcare professionals, such as CRNAs, solely on the basis of their licensure. This law promotes competition and consumer choice as well as patient access to care. Provider Nondiscrimination also respects local control of healthcare systems and local autonomy in the organization of health plans and benefits. It does not impose “any willing provider” requirements on health plans, and does not prevent group health plans or health insurance issuers from establishing varying reimbursement rates based on quality or performance measures.

- **Support Removal of Barriers to the Use of CRNA Services** — Removing administrative and regulatory barriers to the use of CRNA services will help promote competition and choice while reducing costs in the healthcare system. The requirement for physician supervision of CRNA anesthesia services is costly and unnecessary, driving healthcare expenditures higher without improving patient safety. Eliminating the supervision requirement supports delivery of healthcare in a manner that allows states and healthcare facilities to make their own decisions based on state laws and patient needs, thus controlling cost, providing access, and delivering care.

- **Support Innovative Models in Healthcare Delivery** — New healthcare delivery models have emerged in recent years and offer significant cost savings while maintaining, or even improving, quality of care. These models can also increase the supply of healthcare services, which can expand consumer access to care. Cost-effective models in healthcare delivery such as non-medically directed anesthesia services performed by CRNAs should be included as part of healthcare reform. Additionally, strategic consideration of the role of anesthesia in enhanced recovery after surgery programs can make a tremendous difference in improving patient flow, patient safety, and cost savings.

**ACTION FOR CONGRESS:** Support recognition and utilization of CRNAs to the top of their education, training, and licensure, and maintain the Provider Nondiscrimination provision, as Congress looks to improve healthcare delivery in the United States.