Support the Role of CRNAs in Pain Care and Patient Safety

The American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA) represents more than 50,000 Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs) and student registered nurse anesthetists. Nationwide, CRNAs deliver approximately 43 million anesthetics each year. CRNAs are uniquely skilled to deliver pain treatment in a compassionate and holistic manner.

According to the National Academy of Medicine’s *Relieving Pain in America*, approximately 100 million Americans suffer from unrelenting chronic pain and many rely on CRNAs as their primary pain care specialist. By virtue of education and individual clinical experience and competency, a CRNA may practice chronic pain management using a variety of therapeutic, physiological, pharmacological, interventional, and psychological modalities in the management and treatment of pain.

**To promote safe and effective chronic pain management, CRNAs must be part of the solution.**

- **Medicare recognizes and will reimburse CRNAs for chronic pain management services, stating in a 2013 final rule,** “Anesthesia and related care means those services that a certified registered nurse anesthetist is legally authorized to perform in the state in which the services are furnished.” The agency also said in its descriptive preamble, “In addition, we agree with commenters that the primary responsibility for establishing the scope of services CRNAs are sufficiently trained and, thus, should be authorized to furnish, resides with the states.”

- **CRNAs are an untapped resource in combating the opioid epidemic.** Using a patient-centered, multidisciplinary, multimodal treatment approach including interventional pain management can help reduce the reliance on opioids as a primary pain management modality, thus helping curb the prescribed opioid epidemic. CRNAs are well-positioned to provide holistic, patient-centered, multimodal pain treatment and management across the continuum of pain in all clinical settings.

- **Prescriber education is essential to curbing the opioid epidemic,** and CRNAs are well-positioned to provide education related to minimization or elimination of prescribed opioids through pharmacological and nonpharmacological multi-modal pain management strategies.

The AANA encourages Congress to recognize and work with all healthcare professionals, including CRNAs, who provide care for patients with pain and ensure safe and appropriate use of opioids for chronic pain.

**ACTION FOR CONGRESS:** Support recognition and utilization of CRNAs in any legislative initiative addressing chronic pain management and the current opioid epidemic.

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2 42 CFR §410.69(b), as amended by the Nov. 1, 2012, CY 2013 Physician Fee Schedule Final Rule.