



Sept. 30, 2020

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, the state's largest farm organization, we urge your support for Senate Bill 325, a noncontroversial title designation bill that would protect rural health care.

Pennsylvania's certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs) are the hands-on providers of anesthesia care, operating safely in every setting where anesthesia is administered, including: hospital operating and delivery rooms; ambulatory surgical centers; the offices of dentists, podiatrists, ophthalmologists, and plastic surgeons; pain management centers and more.

Despite their vital role in our health-care system, Pennsylvania is one of just two states that fail to recognize CRNAs in some form. Because there is no definition for "certified registered nurse anesthetist" under the state's Professional Nursing Law, CRNAs are recognized only as registered nurses, not as CRNAs. Senate Bill 325, which passed the Senate unanimously, would formally recognize nurse anesthetists as "CRNAs" under Pennsylvania statute and finally acknowledge CRNAs for the work they do.

When COVID-19 struck Pennsylvania, health-care facilities put in place emergency preparedness plans, but the lack of title designation impeded the ability of many institutions to fully utilize CRNAs outside of the operating room. Many providers were confused about CRNA credentials, believing they cannot have these advanced practice nurses serve any role other than a RN --- a major underutilization of the unique skillset CRNA possess. Even today, health-care facilities, especially those in rural areas --- some of which still have staffing challenges and remember the surge of critically ill patients related to this pandemic --- continue to inquire about utilization, seeking greater clarification because they need help now and remain concerned about the predicted resurgence in the fall.

Improving access to healthcare in rural Pennsylvania remains a priority issue for Pennsylvania Farm Bureau. CRNAs remain the primary providers of anesthesia care in rural America, enabling health-care facilities in these medically underserved areas to offer obstetrical, surgical, pain management and trauma stabilization services. The health-care crisis caused by the pandemic has made it abundantly clear that we need to do all we can to ensure our health-care system

remains strong, especially in more underserved communities like the rural parts of our commonwealth. On behalf of the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, we urge your support for Senate Bill 325. Thank you.

SINCERELY,

Darrin Youker
Director, State Government Affairs