

June 21, 2009

Nancy Whitson, CRNA, MS  
President, Kansas Association of Nurse Anesthetists

Dear Colleagues:

This is a brief update on legislative action in Kansas which has an impact on our practice.

HB 2010, which includes the amendment changing the delegation language in the Board of Healing Arts to allow physicians to delegate acts to individuals, was passed by the House after previous passage by the Senate. This measure will become law on July 1, 2009.

According to written testimony from the President of the Kansas Society of Anesthesiologists, this action would also “remove any doubt that a Registered Nurse or Licensed Professional Nurse could follow the order of a CRNA who is working pursuant to a physician’s order.” As a point of record, CRNA’s have always needed an order from a physician to provide anesthesia services (KS 65-1158: “upon the order of a physician and/or dentist requesting anesthesia or analgesia care, each registered nurse anesthetist shall...”).

In our Spring KANA Newsletter we published our advice to Kansas Anesthetists, and it remains the same:

***“...WE ADVISE, AS PART OF THE ADMISSIONS PROCESS FOR SURGERY, AN ORDER (THAT COULD BE A STANDING ORDER) THAT THE PHYSICIAN SIGNS PRIOR TO A PROCEDURE REQUESTING ANESTHESIA/ANALGESIA BY THE CRNA TO INCLUDE PRE, INTRA, AND POST OPERATIVE ORDERS FOR MEDICATIONS AND TESTS.”***

This should allow us to perform our jobs and to make sure that surgical procedures are done thoroughly and safely. If pre, intra, and post op ordering by a physician are not included in the order for the surgery, then we advise that a CRNA not participate in that procedure.

According to the Kansas Attorney General’s opinion, this includes all CRNA’s in all practice settings including the anesthesia care team setting. It is not acceptable to give verbal orders to a nurse that are simply co-signed by a physician at a later date, but it would be acceptable to receive a verbal order from a physician to give those orders – i.e. “pre, intra, or post-op orders for medications and tests by J. Jones, CRNA/VO Dr. Smith” – after that order for delegation has been placed on the chart. The order for delegation must be on the chart prior to any orders by a CRNA to a nurse.

I hope that this letter will help clarify our position and will give you all some guidance as you deal with these issues in your own practices.

Sincerely, Nancy Whitson, CRNA, MS