

**University Hospitals
HealthSystem**



University Hospitals
of Cleveland

Howard S. Nearman, MD, MBA
Professor and Chairman

November 30, 2004

Gerald A. Maccioli, MD, President
North Carolina Society of Anesthesiologists
P.O. Box 1676
Raleigh, NC 27602

Dear Dr. Maccioli:

With regards to the utilization of both Anesthesiologists Assistants (AAs) and Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs) at University Hospitals of Cleveland, I would like to state the following points. Our faculty physicians provide a level of medical direction of both AAs and CRNAs that is in keeping with the supervision requirements of the federal guidelines issued by CMS and the American Society of Anesthesiologists. We clinically work with both AAs and CRNAs equally as part of the anesthesia care team, with the same levels of participation and supervision.

My department conducted a retrospective review, looking at four years of data beginning in 1999. This in-depth data analysis of approximately 100,000 inpatient and outpatient surgical procedures was performed at University Hospitals of Cleveland (UHC), the primary clinical affiliate of Case Western Reserve University. This study was part of a commitment to a continuous quality improvement process throughout UHC, Cleveland's premier academic medical center.

More specifically, we studied complications rates associated with all surgeries in which an AA or CRNA was present. At University Hospitals of Cleveland, AAs and CRNAs are part of the anesthesiology healthcare team, operating under the medical direction of an anesthesiologist as required by Ohio law. We reviewed more than 46,000 cases (adult and pediatric surgeries) that involved AAs and CRNAs; the cases were split about evenly (23,137 cases involved an AA; 23,708 cases involved a CRNA). Although we did not randomize for severity of cases, we believe that our findings are valid due to the large volume of cases distributed in a randomized fashion.

Overall, intraoperative and immediate postoperative complications rates (also referred to as adverse events) were quite low, and were approximately equal for cases involving AAs or CRNAs.

Department of Anesthesiology

11100 Euclid Avenue Cleveland, Ohio 44106-5007 216-844-7330 FAX 216-844-3781
University Hospitals of Cleveland is the Primary Affiliate of Case Western Reserve University

The work we did is not a prospective study, nor have we published our data analysis as it was part of an internal quality assurance process. In fact, there are very few outcome studies involving this many cases that are performed in a randomized, controlled fashion. As a large retrospective review, our conclusions are statistically valid and based on verifiable data.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Howard S. Nearman".

Howard S. Nearman, MD, MBA
Professor and Chairman
Department of Anesthesiology
University Hospitals of Cleveland/Case School of Medicine