

Anesthesiologist Assistants-Certified

An Overview

American Academy of Anesthesiologist Assistants

Objectives

- Historical Background of Allied Health
- Historical Background of Anesthesiologist Assistants
- Training Program Structure
- Legal Definitions
- Clinical Duties of Anesthesiologist Assistants
- Reimbursement for AA Services
- Frequently Asked Questions

Historical Overview

- 1960's - Medicine considers physician extenders
 - Manpower issues
 - Vietnam War
 - Increased Specialization
 - National Academy of Sciences Committee on Medicine Project

National Academy of Sciences Definition

■ Type B Physician Assistant

- The Type B assistant, while not equipped with general knowledge and skills relative to the whole range of medical care, possess exceptional skill in one clinical specialty* or, more commonly, in certain procedures within such a specialty. In their area area of specialty, they have a degree of skill beyond that normally possessed by a type A assistant and perhaps beyond that normally possessed by physicians who are not engaged in the specialty. Because their knowledge and skill are limited to a particular specialty, they are less qualified for independent* action.

– 1970 Panel of the Board on Medicine Report to the National Academy of Sciences

- * presenter's emphasis

Historical Overview

- 1969 /1971- Case Western Reserve University(BS)/Emory University(MS)
- 1975- American Academy of Anesthesiologists Assistants (AAAA) formed
- 1975- Petition to the ASA by the Association for Anesthesiologist Assistants Training Programs (AAATP) to sponsor AAs as an emerging health care profession to AMA's Council on Medical Education (CME)
- 1975- ASA accepts sponsorship to AMA for recognition of AAs
- 1978- ASA presents AAs to the AMA's Council on Medical Education (CME)
- 1978- AMA's CME recognizes AAs as an emerging health profession
- 1981- AAATP becomes Association for Anesthesiologist Assistant Education (AAAE)
- 1983- AAAE requests AMA to be recognized as sponsors for AAs
- 1983- AAAA joins AAAE as co-sponsor of AA petition to AMA

Historical Overview

- 1983- AAs recognized by HCFA (now CMS)
- 1984- AMA's CME begins second review of AAs
- 1986- AMA is petitioned to recognize AAs as an allied health profession
- 1986- CWRU AA program graduates Masters degreed AAs
- 1987- Essentials of training programs developed by AMA, AAAE, AAAA
- 1988- Anesthesiologist Assistants recognized by AMA under Council of Allied Health Education and Accreditation (CAHEA)
- 1989- National Commission for the Certification of Anesthesiologist Assistants (NCCAA) formed
- 1992- First examination given by NCCAA
- 1994- Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) succeeds CAHEA for allied health education.

Historical Overview

- 1997- ASA establishes formal liaison with AAAA through the ASA's Anesthesia Care Team Committee
- 1999- AAAA accepts invitation to join ASA Task Force to develop educational affiliate membership
- 2000- ASA's House of Delegates votes to fully endorse AAs and to help promote the profession.
- 2001- ASA's House of Delegates approves the Educational Membership category open to AAs
- 2002- ASA Educational Membership category is changed to allow AA students to become ASA members.
- 2003- ASA appoints the first AA to the Anesthesia Care Team Committee, the first appointment of a non-physician ASA member to any ASA committee.
- 2004- ASA's House of Delegates approves a new ASA committee, the Anesthesiologist Assistant Education and Practice Committee which includes the current AAAA president as a member.

Definition

“The Anesthesiologist Assistant (AA) is a skilled person qualified by advanced academic and clinical education to provide anesthetic care under the direction of a qualified anesthesiologist.”

- Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP)

What is CAAHEP?

- Accredits programs representing 23 health science (allied health) professions
- Sets educational standards and guidelines for over 2100 educational programs
- There are 19 separate review committees
 - **Accreditation Review Committee for the Anesthesiologist Assistant (ARC-AA) reviews AA programs and makes recommendations for changes in standards and guidelines**
- Reviews training programs on a periodic basis
- Recognized by the Council on Higher Education (CHEA). CHEA represents approx. 8,200 universities, colleges, and other educational institutions and 20,400 accredited programs.

CAAHEP Website

www.caahep.org

AA Training Program “Essentials”

- The AA program must be supported by an anesthesiology department of a medical school that is accredited by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education or its equivalent.
- The AA training program medical director must be an ABA or AOBA certified anesthesiologist .
- AA training programs must undergo periodic review by the AMA’s Committee of Allied Health Education and Accreditation’s (CAHEA) successor organization the Commission for the Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP).
- AA training programs have a minimum 24 month duration and award a Master’s degree.

Typical Entrance Requirements for AA Training Programs

- Must have a Bachelor's degree from an accredited institution with a pre-medical sciences track
- Must have 2 semesters of biology with laboratory course
- Must have 2 semesters of vertebrate anatomy and physiology with laboratory course
- Must have 2 semesters of general chemistry, one semester of organic chemistry, second semester organic chemistry or biochemistry with laboratory course
- Must have 2 semesters general physics with laboratory
- Must have 2 semesters of calculus/statistics
- Must have taken either the Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT) or the Graduate Records Admission Test

Occupational Sources

Biologists

Registered Nurse

Certified Nuclear
Medical Technologist

Pharmacists

Chemists

Dentist

College Chemistry
Educator

Electrical Engineer

Ophthalmic
Technologist

Paramedic

Laboratory Technician

College Biology
Instructor

Biochemist

Physician Assistant

Cardiovascular
Technologist

Perfusionist

Physiologist

MR/DD Counselor

Biomedical Engineer

Military Corpman

Dialysis technician

Respiratory Therapist

Physicist

Medical Researcher

Typical Curriculum

- **ANES 460 - Introduction to Anesthesia_____**
- **ANES 461 - Orientation to Clinical Experience**
- **ANES 456 - Applied Physiology for Anesthesiologist Assistants I_____**
- **ANES 440 - Patient Monitoring and Instrumentation I**
- **ANES 403 - Physical Methods for Anesthesiologist Assistants**
- **ANES 475 - Pharmacology for Anesthesiologist Assistants**
- **ANES 463 - Anesthesia Clinical Experience I (Basic Life Support Certification)**
- **ANES 480 - Fundamentals of Anesthetic Sciences I**
- **ANES 462 - Anesthesia Clinical Correlation I**
- **ANES 458 - Applied Physiology for Anesthesiologist Assistants II_____**
- **ANES 441 - Patient Monitoring and Instrumentation II**
- **ANES 477 - ECG for Anesthesiologist Assistants**
- **ANES 465 - Anesthesia Clinical Experience II (Advanced Cardiac Life Support Certification)**
- **ANES 480 - Fundamentals of Anesthetic Sciences I**
- **ANES 464 - Anesthesia Clinical Correlation II**
- **ANES 467 - Anesthesia Clinical Experience III_____**

Typical Curriculum (con't)

- **ANES 469 - Anesthesia Clinical Experience IV__**
- **ANES 580 - Fundamentals of Anesthetic Sciences II**
- **ANES 468 - Anesthesia Clinical Correlation III**
- **ANES 471 - Anesthesia Clinical Experience V__**
- **ANES 580 - Fundamentals of Anesthetic Sciences II**
- **ANES 470 - Anesthesia Clinical Correlation IV**

- **Students are required to deliver four major presentations involving a major review topic and actual cases.**

- **First year - Students spend 2 days a week in clinical rotations**
- **Second year - Students spend 4.5 days a week in clinical rotations**
- **Total average clinical hours = ~ 2,200 hrs.**

Clinical Rotations

- pediatric
- bariatric surgery
- ambulatory surgery
- cardiothoracic
- Obstetrics/GYN
- surgical intensive care
- neuroanesthesia
- general
- trauma
- orthopedics
- ENT
- vascular
- plastics
- GU
- off-site anesthesia

8 Accredited AA Programs Today

- Emory University
Atlanta, GA
- Case Western Reserve University:
Cleveland, OH
Houston, TX
Washington, D.C.
- University of Missouri
Kansas City, MO
- South University
Savannah, GA
- Nova Southeastern University
Ft. Lauderdale, FL
- Nova Southeastern University
Tampa, FL

Certification and Recertification of AAs

- Must graduate from a CAAHEP approved program
- Sit for a national certification examination developed by the National Commission for the Certification of Anesthesiologist Assistants (NCCAA). NCCAA examination co-validated by the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME).
- Must submit 40 CME credits every 2 years.
- Sit for the Continued Demonstration of Qualifications (CDQ) every six years

Legal Authority

- *Delegatory Authority* - Allows licensed physicians to delegate tasks to allied health care providers. This authority usually resides within the Medical Practice Act or other Health Care statutes. No license is usually issued. Scope of practice is not usually defined by State Medical Board (SMB).
- *Statutory Authority* - State authorizes practitioners under statutes as defined by state legislative process. Practitioners are issued a license or registry. Allied health practitioners usually answer to the SMB or allied health board within the SMB.

AA Practice States

- *Under Licensing,*
AAs can work
in 14 states.
- *Under physician
delegatory authority,*
AAs can work
in 4 states

States in which AAs May Practice (2012)

- Alabama - Licensed
- Colorado - Licensed
- District of Columbia - Licensed
- Florida - Licensed
- Georgia - Licensed
- Kentucky - Licensed
- Michigan
- Missouri – Licensed
- New Hampshire
- New Mexico – Licensed
- N. Carolina - Licensed
- Ohio – Licensed
- Oklahoma - Licensed
- S. Carolina - Licensed
- Texas
- Vermont - Licensed
- West Virginia
- Wisconsin – Licensed

Clinical Duties

- Under the medical direction of an anesthesiologist the AA may:
 - *obtain pt. history by chart review and direct contact*
 - *initiate multi-parameter monitoring*
 - *insert venous and arterial catheters*
 - *initiate medically directed therapies*
 - *administer anesthetic, adjuvant, and accessory drugs used in anesthetic practice as specified by protocol or as directed by anesthesiologist*
 - *adjust infusions*
 - *administer blood or blood products*
 - *Initiate basic and advanced airway interventions including intubation of trachea*

Clinical Duties (con't)

- *support patient upon emergence and recovery*
- *initiate ventilatory support*
- *administer supportive fluid therapy*
- *participate in educational, administrative, and research activities*

Recognition of AAs by the Federal Government

- AAs are reimbursed for services by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) through the Code of Federal Regulations
 - 42CFR410.69 – Defines an AA
 - 42CFR414.46 – Additional rules for Payment of Anesthesia Services under Part B
 - 42CFR415.110 – Definition of Medical Direction
 - 42CFR482.52 – Condition of Participation by Anesthesia Services in a Hospital
 - 42CFR485.639 – Conditions of Participation by Surgical Services in Critical Access Hospitals

Important points defined by CMS

- “An Anesthesiologist’s Assistant means a person who-
- Works under the direction of an anesthesiologist;
 - Is in compliance with all applicable requirements of State law, including any licensure requirements the State imposes on nonphysician anesthetists; and
 - Is a graduate of a medical school-based anesthesiologist’s assistant educational program that
 - Is accredited by the Committee on Allied Health Education and Accreditation; and
 - Includes approximately two years of specialized basic science and clinical education in anesthesia at a level that builds on a premedical undergraduate science background.”

From 42CFR410.69

Important CMS Points Con't.

- “Anesthetist includes both an anesthesiologist’s assistant and a certified registered nurse anesthetist.”

From 42CFR410.69

- Medical Direction allows physicians to concurrently direct up to four anesthesia services and receive payment .

From 42CFR415.110

Important CMS Points-Final

- Anesthesiologist Assistants are covered in Conditions for Participation by CMS.

42CFR482.52 and 42CFR485.639

- CMS included AAs in its requirement that all healthcare providers must have a National Provider Identifier (NPI) number by May 23, 2007.

Other Recognition of AAs by the Federal Government

TRICARE Final Rule – Issued by the Department of Defense on May 21, 2004, this final rule recognizes AAs as an authorized anesthesia provider. This Final Rule amended 32CFR199.6.

[Federal Register: May 21, 2004 (Volume 69, Number 99)]

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Other Recognition of AAs by the Federal Government cont.

AAs added to VA Handbook in
2007!

www.anesthesia.med.va.gov/anesthesia

The ASA and AAs

- The ASA recognized AAs as members of the anesthesia care team in their Anesthesia Care Team statement
- Developed a formal relationship with the AAAA through the Anesthesia Care Team Committee and the Committee on AA Education & Practice
- ASA offers educational membership to both AAs, nurse anesthetists, and students of both professions.

Summary of the Anesthesiologist Assistant Profession

- AAs can only work under the medical direction of a licensed anesthesiologist
- Anesthesiologist Assistant profession is recognized by the AMA and the ASA
- AAs are recognized by the Federal Government for reimbursement for Medicare and TRICARE patients
- AA training programs are recognized and accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting body-CAAHEP
- AAs take a national certification examination that is co-validated by the National Board of Medical Examiners
- AA recertification involves CMEs and a CDQ examination
- Anesthesia services provided by AAs are reimbursed by CMS, TRICARE, and private medical health insurance companies

Frequently Asked Questions
about
Anesthesiologist Assistants

What is the difference between an AA and an AA-C?

- An Anesthesiologist Assistant (AA) is anyone who has graduated from a CAAHEP accredited anesthesiologist assistant program
- An Anesthesiologist Assistant – Certified (AA-C), in addition to graduating from an accredited AA program, has passed the NCCAA examination. Certification is maintained by acquiring 40 hours of CMEs (*AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s)*[™] or AAPA credits) and passing the NCCAA Continuing Demonstration of Qualification examination every 6 years.

What is the difference between AAs and Nurse Anesthetists?

- Nurse anesthetists practice under the supervision of a licensed physician or, in “opt-out” states, nurse anesthetists may practice without any physician supervision.
- AAs can only practice under the supervision of a licensed anesthesiologist.
- Nurse anesthetists are nurses while Anesthesiologist Assistants are allied health professionals.

What are the similarities between NAs and AAs?

- Both are non-physician anesthesia providers.
- Both can be physician extenders in the delivery of anesthesia
- In the hospital or surgical center setting, AAs and nurse anesthetists function interchangeably.
- Scope of practice for both nurse anesthetists and AAs may be further defined or restricted by facility bylaws or policies and procedures of the department of anesthesia.

How do AA and NA pay scales compare?

When employed within the same department and when possessing the same job description and experience level within the anesthesia care team, AAs and nurse anesthetists are normally compensated with identical salary and benefit packages.

What is the difference between AAs and PAs?

- PAs work under the direction of any licensed physician.
- PAs are *generalist* allied healthcare providers.
- AAs are *specialists* who can only work under the direction of a licensed anesthesiologist.

Why don't AAs apply for a State PA license?

- State PA laws require a different educational pathway and educational accreditation
- State PA laws require a different certification examination
- State PA laws require a different recertification process

Can AAs work in my state?

Prior to hiring an AA to practice, consultation should take place with the State Medical Board or other governing body to explore the specific legal implications of AA practice in your state.

Also check existing state medical statutes to see if laws specifically governing AAs already exist *or* if AAs may be covered under a state's Medical Practice Act.

What must happen for AAs to work at my facility?

- Hospital or center bylaws must be changed to allow AAs to practice
- Credentialing committee must have a process to credential AAs
- Department of Anesthesiology Policies and Procedures must be changed to allow AAs to practice

American Academy of Anesthesiologist Assistants

www.anesthetist.org

Thank you!

