

Keeping Pace With the Ever Changing Healthcare

By Joan Joyce Carl, CRNA, President



There was a time referred to as the lazy days of summer that actually applied to the PANA in which issues would quiet down after the sessions were over. We used to have a nice relaxed rhythm where pretty much anything that blipped on the radar screen would blare at us. This is not so true today with this ever-increasing information-overload, technology-driven, dog-eat-dog, fast moving world. Trust me, even the State Government has reached an efficiency level, even if it is bogged down in slot machines and budgets. There are always issues that simply keep churning, changing, and there is never a time during summer vacation where we can just look forward to slacking off a bit.

We have just come back from the ever-awesome Mid-Year Assembly, Washington, D.C. CRNAs really know their way around the halls on Capitol Hill quite well and they continue to work together tirelessly for our profession. We have been graced with growing numbers of students every year, which is not only gratifying, but allows us to have hope for the future. Their understanding of the issues far surpasses anything I knew at that time in my life. (I would sit back and listen to my mother's dealings with the legislature and think I would have to have the same number of years under my belt to even utter words to the mighty people running our country.) Students today have been gifted with directors who have taught them to speak in public and have developed confidence in their ability to discuss issues in political meetings and carry information back to the workplace. This time I would like to especially **honor not only the students, but also their directors who made it possible for them to come.** We may help with some financial support but one needs the blessing of those whose fate as a student lies to promote our profession. The PANA needs to thank you for the magnificently prepared students who made us look so professional; they truly are the future.

We could never survive without the never ending support of the CRNAs like Tom Thomas, Dan Delaney, Fred Ackler and Mary Wojnakowski who, at a days notice, appeared to meet with the Senate Professional Licensure Committee leadership to explain the way CRNAs actually practice today. The dynamics of our practice are heard in many settings, and it is only by these eloquent gestures of support to speak on your behalf that we can keep driving the message home.

At the same time, interest in the House Professional Licensure Committee has increased under the leadership of Karen Robard. She has asked many questions, and we are working to add our point of view to the information the new leadership in the House Professional Licensure committee receives. We have agreed to be honest and work hard to divulge the way things truly are.

Currently, I am looking for hospital sites that the committee can visit to let them see how we really work. Our work arrangements are varied across the spectrum, with many scenarios from the team approach to the independent business owners. Tom Kelly reminded me once, it is by protecting the extremes that we protect the middle. I never forgot this because it is true. How you or I would choose to practice may not suit the person in Punxsutawney, but each is important. We learn and teach each other. These are the work environments that the committee wants to know about the most.

The PANA platform states that no matter where we practice, in what setting, we remain the safest, most cost-effective providers in the Commonwealth. This message is especially important now, as unlicensed providers would love to gain a foothold in our Commonwealth. One must remain objective and recognize that Anesthesiologist Assistants known, as AAs in fact exist, however, in this state they are unlicensed. Our schools have taken the strategic decision to lessen the shortage of CRNAs making the need for the third provider unnecessary here. It pains me to hear CRNAs complaining about there are too many students. We must not be so short sighted that we miss the future trends and bigger picture. We will be the next obsolete provider if we don't keep improving and educating the best and brightest right here in this state.

We do need to be able to retain students in the state by continuing to hold our ground in the political arena. This also applies to extending our support to the other nursing groups and helping them attain their goals and protect their scope of practice. House Bill 1721 defining the Clinical Nurse Specialist is an issue we continue to support. This would provide the framework for providing uniformity in the qualifications of the Clinical Nurse Specialist. Every time a nurse who is an expert in their field attains legislative rights to receive reimbursement then that state receives the most current and competent nursing care available. I know everyone would want their family member to be taken care of by a nurse who is a specialist in his/her field. This also becomes true when administering an anesthetic to a loved one. We want the best qualified person, that is, a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA) who has a nursing background first and foremost. Never forget your roots; never forget why you do your job so well. It is your nursing background that built the foundation for our profession and we must never forget it.

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PANA PAC

By now you have all received your letter requesting that you help insure the future of your profession by making a contribution to the PANA PAC. Since SB 580 is still trying to take off in Harrisburg, our best chance to have our voice heard is by strong financial support to key legislators. We may not understand or agree with this system, but trust me, it is a reality.

WE NEED SB 580 –WE NEED YOUR PAC CHECK

As in the past, we have enlisted the help of a telemarketing firm to assist us with this project. While it may not be what we wanted to have to do—have someone call you at home to ask for your support – these campaigns have been successful in the past. If you have not sent in a check to the PANA PAC, you will be contacted by phone for a donation. We have received notification that some CRNAs are being called at work—for this we apologize. We have updated our records with the telemarketers and removed work phone numbers. We are slowly working out the kinks in the system.

I want to stress again how critically important it is to have a financially strong PAC. If every CRNA in the state would make a contribution of whatever dollar amount, we would have a much stronger presence in the legislative arena in Harrisburg. If you think this is not important, please call me or any of the board members listed in this publication. We need to talk!!! If you have already contributed to the PAC, and many of you have, we thank you very much.

Very Sincerely Submitted,
Susan C. Taylor, CRNA
tnstay@paonline.com
1-800-495-PANA



Who's Who on the Board

Hello! I am Paula Weiss, CRNA, currently serving my two-year term as your PANA Board Trustee (2003 – 2005). Like you, I am balancing an ever-increasing workload with homemaking and pet care or just trying to make that car appointment. And like all my predecessors (how did they do it without conference calls and email?) I feel lucky if I have an hour left to sit down to read that favorite book before nightfall. Recently, I proposed a recommendation to the PANA Board to host an informal seminar at the annual October Symposium to bring new members up to speed, expedite information, transfer and increase the efficiency of all board members. The PANA Board approved my recommendation unanimously and will be hosting a simply fun and informative seminar for newly elected Board Members. Hopefully, this seminar will put the 'willingness to serve' and encourage more of you to come forth and cohesively work for the 2,400 great CRNAs of Pennsylvania. (Send your comments about attending this and future seminars to ptweiss@nauticom.net).

Paula Weiss CRNA, MS, PANA Trustee

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 Need to talk to someone?

PANA Chemical Dependency Contact Person

Art Zwerling, CRNA, MS

Home: 215-635-0183

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TIDINGS

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PANA Publications Susan Clark, CRNA

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FROM THE CAPITOL

ANGIE MELLOTT, PUBLIC AFFAIRS MANAGEMENT

Newly Introduced Legislation

HB 2514—Representative Edward Wojnaroski—The Nursing Misconduct Reporting and Databank Act states that a health care facility would file a report to the department at such time and in such manner as prescribed by the department when a nurse employed by the health care facility is disciplined or dismissed from that employment for endangering the health, welfare or safety of a patient of the health care facility. A nurse who is the subject of a report filed would have the right to file an answer to the report within 60 days of receiving notice of the report. The answer may deny any of the information contained in the report. The department may charge a fee to health care facilities for access to the databank, which would be established by regulation. Introduced and referred to committee on House Professional Licensure 04-13-04.

Legislative Activity

HB 1911—Representative Pat Vance—Amends Public Welfare Code authorizing certified registered nurse practitioners and physician assistants to verify a person's disability claims that may temporarily or permanently preclude the person from unemployment or work-related activity in the RESET program. Final passage 197/0 in the House; received in the Senate and referred to Senate Public Health and Welfare 4-8-04.

HB 1912—Representative Pat Vance—Amends Title 75 (Vehicles) further providing for the person w/disability plate & placard, for physical exams by certified registered nurse practitioners & physician assistants, reports on mental or physical disabilities for competency. Final Passage 197/1 in the House 5-12-04. Received in the Senate and referred to Senate Transportation 5-26-04.

HB 1721—Representative Mary Ann Dailey—Amends the Professional Nursing Law by defining "Clinical Nurse Specialist" (CNS) as a licensed registered nurse who: (1) holds a graduate degree, master's degree, doctoral degree, or a post-master's certificate from an educational program that is recognized by the Board of Nursing (2) holds national certification as a CNS in a designated specialty or in an area pertinent to the designated specialty (3) meets all other Board requirements to practice as a clinical nurse specialist. The legislation also determines which individuals have the right to use the title of CNS. A public hearing was held on June 3, 2004. Sponsor Mary Ann Dailey spoke in support of the bill. Bureau of Professional and Occupational Affairs Commissioner Basil Merenda testified that the Bureau has continually supported efforts to expand the scope of practice for nurses in Advanced Practice Nursing. He said that the Bureau supports this legislation as well and, in fact, he would like to see CNSs more integrated in the health care delivery system. He did suggest some changes to the legislation, including moving CNS qualifications to the Nursing Board for enforcement purposes, authorizing the Board to charge a fee for services offered to the CNS, and the legislation should include certification provisions as well as title protection. Four Clinical Nurse Specialists also testified in support of the bill.

SB 580

Public Affairs Management continues our push to move SB 580 out of the Senate Consumer Protection and Licensure Committee. On May 6, 2004, PAM and PANA representatives sat down with Fran Cleaver, Executive Director and Counsel for the Committee and Pat Carnathan from Senator Mary Jo White's office to discuss SB 580. The meeting went very well. The PANA representatives answered all of Ms. Cleaver's questions in a thorough, professional manner. Immediately following the meeting we spoke with Pat Carnathan on what our next steps should be. Her recommendation was that we ask CRNAs in each Committee members' district to write a letter to their Senator asking him or her to urge Senator Tomlinson,

the Committee Chair, to put SB 580 on the schedule to be voted on. We sent out a letter to each of these CRNAs asking them to contact their Senator. We attached the contact information for their Senator and a sample letter. If you received one of these letters, please consider writing to your Senator.

Regulatory Update

State Board of Nursing

The Board received a request from the House Professional Licensure Committee's Executive Director Karen Dalton asking the board to support the requirement of federal criminal background checks for initial licensure. This would require a statutory change. The Board supports this initiative and Board Counsel will draft language to bring before the Board. The Board is currently working on regulations concerning CRNP Education Programs, LPN/IV Therapy, Temporary Practice Permits, Programs in Transition, and RN and LPN Program Pass Rates.

State Board of Dentistry

Anesthesia regulations were published in the PA Bulletin as proposed. PANA submitted comments on the proposed regulations, reiterating their concerns over language that PANA believes would create a disincentive for dentists to use CRNAs. The House Professional Licensure Committee commented on the proposed regulation on May 11, 2004. Chairman Gannon stated that the Committee is seeking additional explanation from the Board. He noted his disappointment with the lack of cooperation by the Board—the Board was to have had a final draft of the regulation to the Committee by April 2004. One month past the deadline the Board is only in the proposed stage of the regulatory process. Gannon stated that he and Democratic Chairman William Rieger will be watching the Board very closely as they take action. As suggested by Chairman Gannon, the Committee took no action on the regulation until a final regulation is promulgated and will submit the comments to the Board. Public Affairs Management will continue to monitor this situation.

Alliance Updates

The Alliance of Advanced Practice Nurses holds its next conference call Friday, June 11. The APN Lobby Day will be Tuesday, October 5, 2004.

The Alliance of Healthcare Providers met on Wednesday, June 2. Karen Dalton, Executive Director of the House Professional Licensure Committee and John Zimmerman, Executive Director of the House Majority Policy Committee were guest speakers. Mr. Zimmerman spoke extensively about the Policy Committee's intention to hold several health care topic meetings across the state this summer. They recently held a meeting dealing with the Small Business Health Plan. There are several other topics that they plan to look at. We here at Public Affairs Management have been in touch with the Committee to let them know that PANA is interested in participating in this series of hearings. We expect more specific information from the Committee soon. Mr. Zimmerman also addressed the Tax Clearance issue, which is an initiative by the Department of Revenue that would require all licensees to submit proof of having paid taxes before licensure renewal. The Alliance opposes this measure for several reasons. The most important of which is that the Department of State already has a full workload with routine licensing applications and renewals. This could take time and attention away from the real objectives of the licensing boards—protection of the public. The Alliance was set to testify on this issue in front of the House Majority Policy Committee Thursday, June 10. Peg Callahan Moyer has been meeting with Mr. Zimmerman and will continue to maintain contact with him to make sure that PANA's issues are in front of the Policy Committee.

STUDENT VOICE

By Greig M. Williams, BSN, SRNA

I solemnly pledge myself before God and in the presence of this assembly, to pass my life in purity and to practice my profession faithfully. I will abstain from whatever is deleterious and mischievous, and will not take or knowingly administer any harmful drug. I will do all in my power to maintain and elevate the standard of my profession, and will hold in confidence all personal matters committed to my keeping and all family affairs coming to my knowledge in the practice of my calling.

As students, we are just entering the field of nurse anesthesia. Many issues address the professional role and the practice of nurse anesthesia. As new providers for anesthesia, we have the responsibility to ensure this practice is maintained and allowed to flourish. The path is not always an easy one, and we will need the assistance of our legislature to help support and ease that path. However, this too has a professional process that is based on mutual respect among professions.

A concern that became reality was the final Department of Defense ruling to allow the Anesthesia Assistants (AAs) into the Tricare health system as a new anesthesia provider. These providers are not as qualified as the anesthetist, but the ASA would want you to believe they are better. According to Dr. David C. Mackey in his March 2003 Volume 67 newsletter, AAs are educated by anesthesiologists in a medical school environment, and many of us firmly believe AAs are

actually better trained than nurse anesthetists. (http://www.asahq.org/Newsletters/2003/03_03/mackey.html)

The AAs would be under direct supervision of the anesthesiologist, however, direct supervision was not clearly defined. This ruling was met with strong opposition from the AANA, congress, and the members that would eventually receive care, the military member or veteran.



Greig Williams, BSN, CRNA

The nurse anesthetist was the founder of anesthesia. The anesthetist has demonstrated only safe anesthesia and established the standards of which anesthesia is practiced. As students and future anesthesia providers, I charge all Anesthetists, current and future, to become active in the AANA and your state organization. The quality of anesthesia care remains in our hands. What are you willing to give back to your profession, your colleagues, your patients, and to yourself as the being the Best by Test!

High School Students Learn About Nurse Anesthesia

On Friday, April 2, 2004, junior and senior anatomy and physiology students from South Fayette High School visited the University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing and UPMC-Presbyterian for a field trip to learn about the profession of nurse anesthesia. This visit was the second one for the group from South Fayette, an Allegheny County township located just outside of Bridgeville. The students adhered to a tight schedule from about 8am to 2pm with experiences including OR observation, anesthesia simulation, and rotation through stations that include endotracheal intubation of mannequins and use of the automatic external defibrillator.

The day concluded with a pizza lunch sponsored by the nurse anesthetists of UPMC-Presbyterian and a presentation on how to become a nurse anesthetist. The event required many actors and actresses, many of which are students from the nationally recognized University of Pittsburgh Nurse Anesthesia Program. The nurse anesthesia students volunteered their time to instruct, demonstrate and assist the high school students through their rotations. Other volunteers include the Presby CRNAs who are willing to have the students shadow them in the OR for their observation experience.

The visit was made possible by many members of the School of Nursing, but especially John O'Donnell, Program Director, who offered the facilities and manpower. Helen DeFranco, Director of Nurse Anesthesia at UPMC Presbyterian and Shadyside, facilitated the students' visits to the OR.

The inspiration for this visit, organized by Aaron Ostrowski, a nurse anesthetist at UPMC-Presbyterian, is Kent Nichols, one of the anatomy and physiology teachers in the high school. Mr. Nichols was Aaron's ninth and tenth grade biology teacher and sparked Aaron's interest in human anatomy and physiology. Aaron attended South Fayette until 1989, earned a Diploma in Nursing from the Washington Hospital School of Nursing in 1992, a BSN from California University of Pennsylvania in 1996, and graduated from Pitt's anesthesia program in 2001. His professional background included critical care nursing at Washington Hospital until 2001, and he has been a CRNA at UPMC-Presby since. Motivated by gratitude to Mr. Nichols and an interest in wanting to share the path to a great career, Aaron has always wanted to give something back to his alma mater. It is his desire to make this an annual event.



PENNSYLVANIA CRNAs and SRNAs ON CAPITOL HILL

Christine M. Allen-Sanders, CRNA, FPD (Federal Political Director, PANA)

The Mid-year Assembly was held at the Capital Hilton, Washington, DC on May 1-4, 2004. Approximately 400 CRNAs from across the nation attended this meeting. Pennsylvania was well represented, but it would be great if more of our 2,300 Pennsylvania CRNAs could attend this very important meeting in the future. This is a great training experience for CRNAs who are interested in taking CRNA issues to Capitol Hill and networking with other CRNAs from across the nation.

Many CRNA students from across the nation were sponsored and mentored for this meeting. The PANA sponsored 11 Pennsylvania students. In addition, the PANA would like to take the time to thank each and every one who helps contribute to the success of this very important meeting. The following Pennsylvania Nurse Anesthesia schools and SRNAs need to be recognized: Pennsylvania Hospital School of Nurse Anesthesia- Amy Lamoreau, Richard Flanagan, David Smyth and Anne Gersbach-Watt; University of Pittsburgh Medical Center- Greig Williams, Amy DiProsperis, Amy Betencourt and Shelley Boyce; Narzareth Hospital- Elizabeth McPherson and Sharon Heisner and Hamot/Gannon Hospital- Jennifer

Adamovich. Overall these students did an excellent job in representing our state and we would like to commend them for their stellar efforts. The PANA wants to thank the school directors for permitting their SRNAs to attend this spectacular event. Finally, we would also like to give a special thanks to Sheldon Lamoreaux, PANA Board Trustee for the organization of the students involvement.

Although the weather did not cooperate during our journey to Capitol Hill, we did visit with most of our state's Federal Representatives, Senators and/or their Legal Health Aides, in order to make them more aware of issues affecting our practice. The following is a brief overview of the current legislative issues discussed with the legislators and aides: support Patient Safety and Medical Error Reporting; support Nurse Anesthesia Educational Funding; keep Medicare strong and pass Medical Liability Reform.

I hope that in the year 2005, we will be able to continue to see new Pennsylvania CRNAs attend this meeting.



Greatest Turnout Ever at the Hershey Spring Symposium 2004



The Hershey Spring Symposium had the highest attendance ever in PANA history with 416 attendees, three of whom were on the AANA national ballot. There were also 86 SRNAs who attended the symposium. Six children enjoyed the newly-added child-care option utilizing the talents of 2 Penn State Elementary Education Student Teachers who were wonderfully interactive with the children. Also, new this year was the refreshing approach to ACLS and PALS taught by Judy Haluka RN EMT-P, Mary Carolyn Nash RN EMT-P and John Szakach EMT-P. There were 65 CRNAs who attended the Friday night ACLS Recertification. In addition, 17 CRNAs attended the PALS course and 33 CRNAs attended the PALS Recertification course on Sunday. The golf tournament was successful despite the rain. Many CRNAs and SRNAs enjoyed the plentiful vendor raffles, two Hershey Spa gift certificates and the newest gift certificate namely, next years free registration to Hershey Spring Symposium 2005. This meeting just gets better and better every year. A huge **thank you** to all the speakers and sponsors who continue to make this meeting a real success along with the CRNAs and SRNAs who attended this meeting. We the membership need to be proud of the tireless efforts put forth by the organizers who work behind the scenes long before we check-in at the Spring Symposium in Hershey, Pennsylvania. Finally, a special thanks to Diana Davidson, Program Committee-Chair for working so very hard and making this meeting truly a success.

It the same spirit of working with all groups, we have been fortunate to have contacts made again by Sue Taylor that enables me to begin dialoging with the Podiatry Board this week on how we can further each others goals.

We have also been asked to serve on the Work Groups of the PA Centers for Health Careers. Every contact made has a far-reaching potential. Please volunteer when asked to serve.

Lois Illar, Public Relations- Chair, has finished up a cell phone drive to present to my Senator Jane Orie who has a passion for the plight of domestic abuse. The PANA would like to thank every one who answered the call and donated his or her old phones. Lois has been working tirelessly to collect the cell phones from all over the State. She finishes every project she starts with flourish and we are lucky to have the spirit of great volunteers on this board.

Finally, we are doing a summer concert series with the Chiropractors on July 15. This is our newer approach to spreading the message in a relaxed environment where our legislature can mingle and relax with us at our Professional Affairs Management Team.

We are also blessed with magnificent support from the Public Affairs Management Team, Angie and Crystal. They are the backbone of the professional group. They lobby our efforts and have the talent that I compare to Wall Street, slick, packaged, ever changing, responsive, and their ability to make us look good at every meeting. They need to be honored and recognized for who they are. Also, I want to give you a special **thank you** for all your efforts and I appreciate you every day.

Please read Public Affairs Management section (page 3), Angie Mellott's article focusing on SB 580. The PANA would like you to please consider writing to your Senator on this very important issue.

LOBBY DAY COMING SOON

Susan Clark, CRNA, MS, APN Lobby Day-Chair

Lobby Day for Advanced Practice Nurses (APNs) has been rescheduled for October 5, 2004. This year the PANA would like its membership to please try to attend this special event. It is extremely important for all Pennsylvania CRNAs to become politically involved in current legislative issues that affect our practice. There is no better way to show your support to your profession than by getting actively involved with current legislative issues and visiting with your legislators to discuss these issues. Please join us on October 5, 2004 in Harrisburg, PA. Together we can make a difference especially on issues that concern our profession. For future information about this upcoming event please check out our website pana.org. Looking forward to seeing each and every one of you. Thank you.

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