The Honorable Thomas Scully, Administrator  
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services  
Hubert Humphrey Building, Room 314-G  
200 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Mr. Scully:

Pursuant to the final rule published in the November 13, 2001, Federal Register, Volume 66, Number 219, I am requesting an exemption for the state of Alaska from the regulation requiring hospitals and ambulatory surgical care facilities to have physicians supervise Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs) in order to receive federal Medicare reimbursement for anesthesiology services. After reviewing discussions by the state Boards of Nursing and Medicine on issues of safety and access to anesthesia services in our rural communities, I have determined that exercising this exemption is in the best interest of Alaskans.

This exemption is consistent with Alaska law. It has been the public policy of the State of Alaska to permit advanced registered Nurse Practitioners including CRNAs to practice independently of physician supervision. As such, under Alaska law, CRNAs are authorized to administer anesthesia without physician supervision.

In addition, based on the input I have received from medical staff and administrators of small rural hospitals in Alaska, I believe not exercising this exemption may severely limit the ability of rural hospitals to treat emergencies and provide other services requiring anesthesia care to Medicare patients. Medicare patients will continue to receive the high quality care required under state licensing laws.
The Honorable Thomas Scully  
September 17, 2003  
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After review and consultation with Alaska citizens, practicing health professionals, and hospital administrators, I am confident that the exemption from this federal Medicare regulation will provide significant long-term benefits to all Alaskans.

Sincerely yours,

[Signature]

Frank H. Murkowski  
Governor

cc: Joel Gilbertson, Commissioner, Department of Health and Social Services 
   Rick Uron, Director, Division of Occupational Licensing, Department of Community and Economic Development 
   Alaska Medical Board 
   Alaska Nursing Board 
   Alaska State Hospital and Nursing Home Association 
   Alaska State Medical Association 
   Alaska State Nurses Association