

1 **Code of Ethics for the Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist**

2 **Preamble**

3 The American Association of Nurse Anesthesiology (AANA) *Code of Ethics for the Certified*
4 *Registered Nurse Anesthetist* offers guidance to the Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist
5 (CRNA), also referred to as nurse anesthesiologists or nurse anesthetists, in making ethical
6 decisions across all roles and practice settings. The practice of nurse anesthesiology may
7 include clinical, administrative, educational or research activities, or a combination thereof.

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9 The *Code of Ethics for the Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist* sets forth principles of
10 professional conduct and integrity that guide the CRNA's decision-making and behavior. The
11 CRNA's ethical responsibility is primarily to the patient and also extends to the nurse
12 anesthesiology profession, other healthcare providers, self, and society. The CRNA
13 acknowledges, understands, and is sensitive to the vulnerability of the patient undergoing
14 anesthesia, pain management, and related care and is committed to preserving patients' trust,
15 confidence, and dignity.

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17 The CRNA has a personal and professional responsibility to understand, uphold, and apply to
18 these ethical standards of conduct. Circumstances may arise in which ethical principles are in
19 conflict; in such situations, any departure from this *Code of Ethics for the Certified Registered*
20 *Nurse Anesthetist* must be guided by sound ethical reasoning, compelling justifications, and the
21 CRNA's best professional judgment specific to the situation.

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23 The AANA recognizes the American Nurses Association (ANA) *Code of Ethics for Nurses* as the
24 foundational framework for ethical values, duties, and responsibilities in nursing practice.¹

25

26 **1. Responsibility to Patient**

27 The CRNA respects the patient's moral and legal rights, and supports the patient's safety,
28 physical and psychological comfort, and well-being. The CRNA collaborates with the patient
29 and the healthcare team to provide compassionate, holistic, patient-centered anesthesia, pain
30 management, and related care. The CRNA:

31

32 1.1 Respects human rights and the values, customs, culture, and beliefs of patients and
33 their families and caregivers.

1.1.1 Promotes fair and equitable treatment of all patients, regardless of diagnosis, prognosis, socioeconomic status, insurance coverage, or other nonclinical characteristics, and works to reduce barriers that compromise safe anesthesia and pain management care.

1.2 Supports the patient's right to self-determination.

1.2.1 Presents accurate, complete and understandable information to the patient to facilitate informed healthcare decisions.

1.2.2 Encourages patients, including minors, to participate in healthcare decision making that is appropriate for their developmental capacity.

1.2.3 Supports a patient's decision-making without undue influence or coercion that is consistent with their values.

1.3 Acts in the patient's best interest and advocates for the patient's welfare.

1.3.1 Identifies and seeks to prevent or reduce risks of harm related to anesthesia, pain management, and related services and takes action to protect the patient when such risks are recognized.

1.3.2 If the CRNA has a moral, religious or ethical conflict related to the patient's healthcare decisions or plan for care, the CRNA may, without judgment or bias, transfer care to an appropriately credentialed anesthesia provider willing to perform the procedure.

1.4 Prior to providing anesthesia, pain management, and related care:

1.4.1 Introduces self, using name, a term representing the CRNA credential, and role.

1.4.2 Verifies that residents have introduced themselves or been introduced to the patient, and the patient has consented to resident participation in anesthesia, pain management, and related care.

1.4.3 Discusses the plan of care and either obtains informed consent or verifies that the patient has given informed consent in accordance with law, accreditation standards, and institutional policy.²

67 1.4.4 Discusses the plan of care and obtains informed consent from a legal decision
68 maker (e.g., healthcare proxy, surrogate) when the legal decision maker is
69 responsible for the patient's healthcare decisions or verifies that the legal
70 decision maker has given informed consent.

71 1.4.5 Protects patient privacy, including confidentiality and security of patient
72 information, in accordance with applicable federal and state privacy laws,
73 including the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), and
74 relevant facility policies, except when disclosure is necessary to protect the
75 patient or other persons or is otherwise required or expressly permitted by law.

77 1.5 Protects patients by taking appropriate action when the CRNA knows or reasonably
78 suspects that a healthcare provider is incompetent, impaired, or engaging in unsafe,
79 illegal, deceptive, abusive, disrespectful, or unethical practice, consistent with applicable
80 law and facility policy.

82 1.6 Participates in honest and transparent disclosure of an adverse or unanticipated event to
83 the patient and others with the patient's consent.

85 **2. Responsibility as a Professional**

86 As an independently licensed professional, the CRNA is responsible and accountable for
87 judgments made and actions taken in his or her professional practice. Requests or orders by
88 physicians, other healthcare professionals, or institutions do not relieve the CRNA of
89 responsibility for judgments made or actions taken and do not justify participating in unsafe,
90 illegal, or unethical practices. The CRNA:

92 **Competence and Responsibility in Professional Practice**

93 2.1 Engages in a scope of practice within individual competence and maintains role-specific
94 competence.

96 2.2 Maintains national certification as a CRNA and a state license as a registered nurse and
97 meets state advanced practice statutory or regulatory requirements.

99 2.3 Engages in continuing education and lifelong professional development related to areas
100 of nurse anesthesiology practice, including clinical practice, education, research, and
101 administration.³

102
103 2.4 Understands and practices in compliance with applicable federal, state, and local law
104 and regulations, facility accreditation standards, and facility policies, procedures, and
105 bylaws in which they practice, and seeks clarification when such requirements are
106 unclear.

107
108 2.5 Evaluates and integrates personal practice outcome data, scientific research, expert
109 opinion, new technology, patient preferences, and relevant metrics to improve processes
110 and outcomes.

111
112 2.5.1 Uses artificial intelligence and other digital decision-support tools only to augment,
113 and never replace, professional judgment.

114
115 2.6 Is physically and mentally fit for duty.

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117 2.7 Clearly presents his or her education, training, skills, and CRNA credential.

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119 2.8 Is honest in all professional interactions to avoid any form of deception.

120
121 2.9 Treats all others, including patients, families, staff, students, and colleagues, in a
122 culturally sensitive manner and without prejudice, bias, or harassment.

123
124 2.10 Maintains professional boundaries in all communications and actions.

126 **Leadership**

127 2.11 Creates an ethical culture and safe work environment.

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129 2.11.1 Supports policies and behaviors that reflect this Code of Ethics.

130 2.11.2 Communicates expectations for ethical behavior and actions in the workplace.

131 2.11.3 Helps individuals raise and resolve ethical concerns in an effective and timely
132 manner.

133

134 **Clinical Practice and the Interdisciplinary Team**

135 2.12 Promote a culture of safety and collaboration through open, respectful communication
136 with other healthcare providers to support ethical, evidence-based, and safe patient
137 care.

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139 2.12.1 Facilitates review and evaluation of peers and other members of the healthcare
140 team.

141

142 2.13 Manages medications and controlled substances in accordance to applicable law and
143 facility policy to prevent diversion, misuse, and unauthorized access, and promptly
144 reports known or reasonably suspected diversion or tampering as delineated in facility
145 policy.

146

147 **Role Modeling and Education of Others**

148 2.14 Provides positive role modeling by upholding and promoting quality patient care
149 outcomes, professional standards of practice, and this Code of Ethics.

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151 2.15 Fosters a safe, respectful, and trusting environment for effective learning and feedback
152 for students, colleagues, and members of the healthcare team.

153

154 2.16 Educates resident registered nurse anesthetists regarding the ethical responsibilities of
155 the nurse anesthesiology profession.

156

157 **The Profession**

158 2.17 Is responsible and accountable for conduct that upholds the dignity, integrity, and public
159 trust in the nurse anesthesiology profession.

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161 2.18 Participates in activities that contribute to the advancement of the profession and its
162 body of knowledge such as education, mentorship, research, quality improvement, and
163 policy or advocacy efforts.

164

165 2.19 Reports critical incidents, adverse events, medical errors, and near misses in
166 accordance with applicable law, facility accreditation standards, and facility policy.

167 Participates in the promotion of a culture of safety, supports quality improvement, and
168 maintains the integrity and advancement of the nurse anesthesiology profession.

169
170 2.20 Maintains accurate, complete, and timely records and uses electronic systems and other
171 information technologies in a manner that protects the integrity, security, and reliability of
172 healthcare and business data, in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and
173 facility policies.

174
175 **3. Responsibility in Research**

176 The CRNA upholds ethical, professional, and legal standards in the conduct of and participation
177 in research, quality improvement, and scholarly activities, including those undertaken as part
178 of doctoral work within a nurse anesthesia educational program. In all such activities, the
179 CRNA acts in accordance with applicable laws, facility policies, and required oversight
180 requirements (e.g., Institutional Review Board). The CRNA:

181
182 3.1 Protects human participants affected by research, quality improvement, and scholarly
183 activities by respecting their rights, dignity, privacy, and wellbeing.

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185 3.2 Promotes the humane treatment of animals used as research subjects by taking reasonable
186 steps to minimize pain and distress and by participating only in activities that are scientifically
187 justified.

188
189 3.3 Seeks and adheres to appropriate oversight, including IRB or institutional review,
190 exemption, or quality improvement determination, and obtains or verifies human research
191 participant informed consent when required by law, policy, or protocol.

192
193 3.4 Conducts or participates in activities in a manner consistent with the ethical principles of
194 respect for persons, beneficence, and justice relevant to research involving human participants.
195 Respects the autonomy and dignity of all human research participants.

196
197 3.5 Maintains appropriate boundaries between clinical care and research roles, minimizing
198 potential therapeutic misconception and ensuring that clinical decisions prioritize patient welfare
199 independent of research participation.

201 3.6 Supports equitable inclusion of human research participants, consistent with ethical
202 principles and approved study or project design, so that populations have fair access to the
203 potential benefits of the research. Takes reasonable steps to minimize any risks to the research
204 participants.

205

206 3.7 Applies appropriate methodology consistent with the purpose and design of the research,
207 quality improvement, or scholarly project.

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209 3.8 Protects participant privacy and data confidentiality to the greatest extent possible and
210 maintains data integrity in the collection, analysis, storage, reuse, and reporting of research or
211 quality improvement data.

212

213 3.9 Discloses perceived or real conflicts of interest to organizations where the research will be
214 conducted, organizations that fund the research, and any publication where the research is
215 submitted. Manages or resolves perceived or real conflicts of interest.

216

217 3.10 Reports findings accurately, objectively, and transparently, avoiding fabrication,
218 falsification, or misrepresentation of results.

219

220 3.10.1 Supports transparency and reproducibility by following relevant reporting
221 guidelines (e.g., CONSORT, PRISMA, STROBE, SQUIRE) and, when feasible,
222 maintaining accessible protocols, analytic plans, and documentation.

223

224 3.11 Provides appropriate authorship and attribution, consistent with recognized publication
225 standards, ensuring that authorship reflects substantive intellectual contributions, participation in
226 drafting or critical revision, final approval of the work, and accountability for integrity, while
227 appropriately acknowledging contributors.

228

229 3.12 Supports and engages in research, quality improvement, and scholarly activities that
230 advance safe, effective, and equitable anesthesiology practice; contribute to professional
231 knowledge and education; inform health policy; and improve patient, workforce, and health
232 system outcomes, including for diverse populations.

233

234 **4. Responsibility in Business Practices**

235 The CRNA, regardless of practice arrangement or practice setting, maintains ethical and legally
236 compliant business practices in dealings with patients, colleagues, institutions, corporations,
237 and others. The CRNA:

238

239 4.1 Establishes, performs, and terminates contractual obligations in a manner consistent with
240 this Code of Ethics, professional standards of practice, and the applicable federal and state
241 laws and regulations.

242

243 4.2 Conducts business practices truthfully and transparently and does not engage in fraud,
244 misrepresentation, or other deceptive conduct.

245

246 4.3 Avoids financial relationships, ownership interests, and referral or compensation
247 arrangements that create real or perceived conflicts between the CRNA's financial interests
248 and the welfare of patients. When conflicts are unavoidable, the CRNA appropriately
249 discloses and manages such conflicts to protect professional judgment and patient interests.

250

251 4.4 Conducts marketing, advertising, and public communication regarding services, outcomes,
252 and qualifications in a truthful, accurate, and non-misleading manner.

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254 4.5 Maintains accurate, complete, and timely business and financial records and cooperates
255 with lawful audits, investigations, and required reporting.

256

257 **5. Responsibility when Endorsing Products and Services**

258 The CRNA may endorse products and services only when, based on reasonable professional
259 judgment, the CRNA is personally satisfied with the product's or service's safety, effectiveness,
260 and quality. The CRNA may not state that the AANA has endorsed any product or service
261 unless such endorsement has been formally approved by the AANA Board of Directors. The
262 CRNA must not endorse any product or service when presenting content for an AANA-approved
263 continuing education activity, as such endorsements constitute a prohibited conflict of interest.

264 The CRNA:

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266 5.1 Makes endorsements that are truthful, accurate, and not misleading, and that are based
267 on personal experience and reliable, factual evidence regarding the product's or
268 service's efficacy.

269

270 5.2 Discloses and appropriately manages or resolves any real or perceived conflicts of
271 interest related to the endorsed product or service, including but not limited to corporate
272 sponsorships, funding arrangements, consulting relationships or other financial or
273 professional affiliations.

274 5.3 Uses the CRNA credential only when endorsing products or services that are related to
275 CRNA professional practice or expertise.

276

277 **6. Responsibility to Society**

278 The CRNA engages with members of the health professions, public health entities,
279 policymakers, and the community to improve public health through collaboration, advocacy,
280 stewardship of healthcare resources, and leadership in advancing access to safe, equitable,
281 and sustainable healthcare and anesthesia, pain management, and related care. The CRNA:
282

283 6.1 Works in collaboration with the healthcare community to promote highly competent,
284 ethical, safe, high-quality patient care.

285

286 6.2 Acts as a responsible steward of healthcare resources by supporting cost-effective,
287 evidence-based practices that do not compromise patient safety or quality of care.

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289 6.3 Recognizes the impact of healthcare delivery on public health and the environment and
290 integrates environmentally sustainable practices into anesthesia delivery when clinically
291 appropriate and when such practices do not compromise patient safety or quality of
292 care.

293 6.3.1 Supports and promotes efforts to reduce the environmental impact of anesthesia
294 practice, including by minimizing waste associated with disposable items,
295 reducing emissions from waste anesthetic gases, and participating in facility
296 sustainability initiatives related to anesthesia and pain management care.

297 6.3.2 Demonstrates ethical stewardship of medications, energy, and natural resources
298 by taking reasonable steps to minimize medication wastage and unnecessary
299 use of electricity, water, and other resources in healthcare and anesthesia
300 delivery.

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