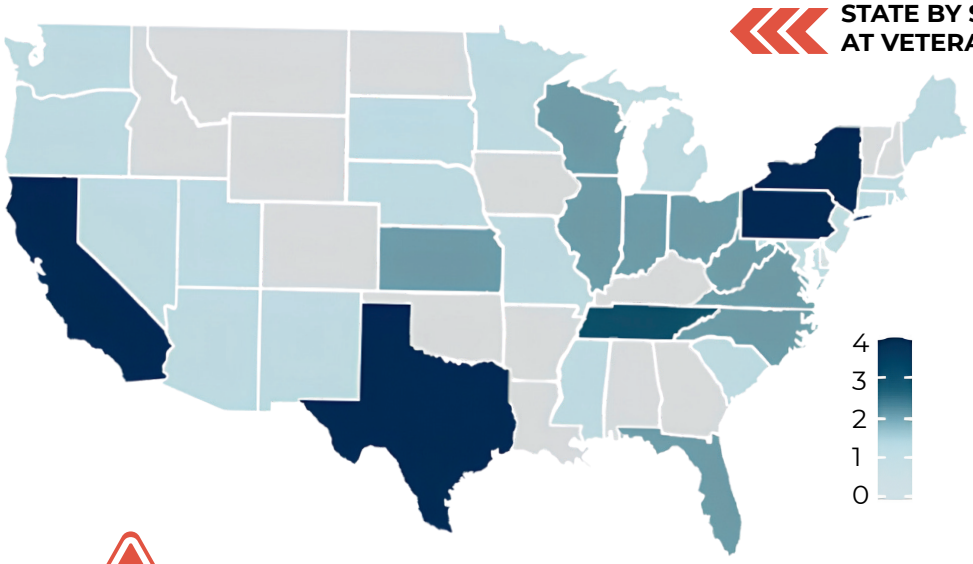
CRNAs Are the Solution to Anesthesiology Workforce Shortages in VA Medical Centers



STATE BY STATE: SEVERE STAFF SHORTAGES AT VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL CENTERS

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More than 40% of Veterans Affairs medical centers reported a severe physician anesthesiologist shortage in 2026.

↑ 31.8% increase since 2025

↑ 81.2% increase since 2024

The VA continues to unnecessarily restrict a key part of its anesthesia workforce: **Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs)**, despite CRNAs serving as frontline anesthesia providers in the military without those same restrictions.

TRUSTED TO PRACTICE AUTONOMOUSLY WHILE SERVING OUR TROOPS.
RESTRICTED WHEN CARING FOR OUR VETERANS.

IN THE U.S. ARMED FORCES

CRNAs practice autonomously.
They provide anesthesia care across all branches of the military, including on forward surgical teams, in combat environments, on naval vessels, and with evacuation teams.



IN VETERANS AFFAIRS FACILITIES

CRNAs subject to federal restrictions.
Even though CRNAs practice autonomously across the U.S. Armed Forces and in a majority of states, VA practice restrictions in some states are more restrictive than the laws of the state in which the VA facility operates.



It's time to allow all CRNAs to practice to the full extent of their education and training so VA facilities can build anesthesia care models around veteran and workforce needs.

SOURCES
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General, Severe Occupational Staffing Shortages reports. A severe shortage reflects an occupation that is difficult to fill based on the criteria in 5 CFR 337.204.

AANA American Association of NURSE ANESTHESIOLOGY