Nurse Anesthesia... is no longer the best kept secret in healthcare. Established in the late 1800s as the first clinical nursing specialty, nurse anesthesia developed in response to the growing need surgeons had for anesthetists. Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs) and the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA) have played significant roles in developing the practice of anesthesia. Today, more than 44,000 nurse anesthetists provide cost-effective, high-quality patient care that is essential to America’s healthcare system.

Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists
A Tradition of Quality Care
Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs) are anesthesia specialists who safely administer approximately 32 million anesthetics to patients in the United States each year. The nurse anesthesia specialty has a history of nearly 150 years.

CRNAs represent a commitment to high standards in a demanding field. The educational requirements to become a CRNA are extensive. Prior to applying for admission to a graduate program in nurse anesthesia, a candidate must have a four-year bachelor of science degree in nursing or other appropriate baccalaureate degree, a current license as a registered nurse, and a minimum of one year’s acute care nursing experience. The master’s degree nurse anesthesia program itself is 24-36 months, depending on university requirements. CRNAs are board certified, and mandatory continuing education is required for recertification every two years.

Nurse anesthetists provide high-quality anesthesia services combined with personal concern for the health and welfare of patients. They are happy to assist you and offer information about what to expect with your anesthesia.

Meeting the Needs of Tomorrow
CRNAs have a proud history of meeting the challenges of changing healthcare trends. The recent acceleration of managed healthcare services will provide additional opportunities and new challenges for these advanced practice registered nurses. CRNAs will continue to be recognized as anesthesia specialists providing safe patient care.

Cover Photo: Two CRNAs use a video laryngoscope during a rapid sequence induction/difficult airway procedure.

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How do CRNAs Impact Healthcare?
As anesthesia specialists, CRNAs safely administer approximately 32 million anesthetics to patients in the United States each year. These advanced practice nurses can serve in a variety of capacities in their daily practice, such as clinician, educator, administrator, manager, and researcher.

- CRNAs administer anesthesia for all types of surgical cases, using all anesthetic techniques and practicing in every setting in which anesthesia is delivered, from university-based medical centers to freestanding surgical facilities.
- CRNAs are the primary anesthesia professionals in rural America, enabling healthcare facilities in these medically underserved areas to provide patient access to surgical, obstetrical, pain management, and trauma stabilization services. In some states CRNAs are the sole providers in nearly 100 percent of rural hospitals.
- CRNAs are qualified and permitted by state law or regulations to practice in every state of the nation.
- Numerous research studies confirm that CRNAs provide access to safe, cost-effective anesthesia services for millions of patients each year.

What is the AANA?
Founded in 1931, the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists is the professional association representing more than 44,000 nurse anesthetists nationwide.

What are Some of the Association’s Ongoing Activities?
The AANA’s ongoing activities include:

- Developing standards that ensure high-quality anesthesia care to safeguard patients.
- Facilitating the nurse anesthesia education process and research.
- Seeking private and public sector funding sources for educational advancement and research.
- Providing educational opportunities and professional recognition.
- Monitoring, assessing, and working with legislative and regulatory bodies to impact government initiatives.
- Promoting a professional and equitable work environment by addressing legal and ethical issues facing CRNAs.
- Facilitating effective cooperation between nurse anesthetists and other healthcare groups.
- Working with state nurse anesthetist associations on projects of mutual interest.
- Disseminating information about nurse anesthesia by publishing a scientific journal, periodicals, and monographs, and maintaining a website (www.aana.com).
- Conducting membership surveys trending the practice of anesthesia by CRNAs.
- Promoting and encouraging nurse anesthetists to develop healthy lifestyles and positive behavior choices.
- Providing resources and support through the AANA Peer Assistance Advisors for chemical dependency, substance misuse, and other work-related issues such as harassment, violence, and fitness for duty.

What are the Educational Requirements for CRNAs?
Applicants to graduate programs in nurse anesthesia are required to have:

- A bachelor of science degree in nursing or other appropriate baccalaureate degree.
- A current license as a registered nurse.
- A minimum of one year’s acute care nursing experience.

There are more than 100 accredited nurse anesthesia educational programs nationwide.

- Nurse anesthesia educational programs vary from 24-36 months of graduate coursework depending on the university. Programs include both classroom and clinical experiences.
- Graduates of nurse anesthesia educational programs must pass the national certification exam to become CRNAs.
- CRNAs are required to earn 40 continuing education credits every two years as one of the criteria for recertification.

What is the Role of the Individual CRNA?
Nurse anesthetists, pioneers in anesthesia, have been administering anesthesia for nearly 150 years.

- As anesthesia specialists, CRNAs take care of patients before, during, and after surgical, obstetrical, or trauma stabilization procedures.
- The nurse anesthetist stays with you for the entire procedure, constantly monitoring every important function of your body and individually modifying your anesthetic to ensure your maximum safety and comfort.

For more information about nurse anesthesia and the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists, return the postage-paid card or contact the AANA.

I would like more information about (please specify):

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