



Joint Commission

on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations

Setting the Standard for Quality in Health Care

RECEIVED

NOV 17 2003

November 12, 2003

Sandra Tunajek, PhD
Director of Practice
American Association of Nurse Anesthetists
222 So. Prospect Ave
Park Ridge IL 60068

Dear Dr. Tunajek:

We have been discussing certain standards interpretations relating to certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs). More particularly, you have been asking how we will construe our standards and fashion our survey process with regard to CMS' requirement in certain circumstances for "supervision" of the administering of anesthesia by any CRNA in a hospital. Our current approach is as follows:

1. Surveyors will ask the organization if CRNAs provide care and services in the organization.
2. If the answer is yes, the organization will be asked if the CRNAs are allowed to provide care and services independently by law and organization policy.
3. If the answer to number 2 above is yes, the surveyor will accept that answer and confirm that the CRNAs are fully credentialed and privileged under the Medical Staff standards. If an accredited hospital does not utilize the full medical staff process for such "licensed independent practitioners" as that term is defined in the standards, there will be a finding.
4. The Joint Commission will respond to complaints it receives or CMS activity relating to the supervision of CRNAs. The Joint Commission will not attempt to define on its triennial surveys what CMS requires in the way of such supervision. Rather, it will rely on the process described in this communication.

Please call or e-mail me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Robert A. Wise, MD
Vice President
Division of Standards and Survey Methods

cc: Harold J. Bressler
Darlene Christiansen
Paul M. Schyve, MD