

**AANA Position on
Doctoral Preparation of Nurse Anesthetists
Adopted: June 2, 2007**

POSITION STATEMENT

The AANA supports doctoral education for entry into nurse anesthesia practice by 2025.

RATIONALE

Since its founding in 1931, the AANA has advanced quality education as the means to ensure that Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs) are the best-prepared, safest anesthesia providers possible. With today's healthcare environment changing at an extraordinary rate, providers are required to keep pace by continually expanding their knowledge base and skill sets like never before. To best position CRNAs to meet this ongoing challenge and remain recognized leaders in anesthesia care, the AANA believes it is essential to support doctoral education that encompasses technological and pharmaceutical advances, informatics, evidence-based practice, systems approaches to quality improvement, healthcare business models, teamwork, public relations, and other subjects that will shape the future for anesthesia providers and their patients.

BACKGROUND

Nurse anesthesia educational requirements have evolved over the past 75 years. In 1933 the profession identified a primary objective to develop standards for nurse anesthesia education. Over the years, the educational standards for nurse anesthesia programs have grown to meet the required knowledge and skills for entry into practice. In the 1980s nurse anesthesia educational programs moved from hospital-based certificate programs to university-based graduate programs, and in 1998 the Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs (COA) finalized the requirement that all programs award a master's or higher-level degree.

From the mid 1980s through the late 1990s, the AANA and the COA assessed the need for and feasibility of practice-oriented doctoral degrees for nurse anesthetists. In October 2004, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN) adopted its *Position Statement on the Practice Doctorate in Nursing*, which envisioned a practice doctorate requirement for all advanced practice nurses for entry into practice by 2015. In June 2005, the AANA Board of Directors, under the leadership of 2004-2005 AANA President Frank Maziarski, CRNA, MS, CLNC, convened an invitational summit meeting to discuss interests and concerns surrounding doctoral preparation for nurse anesthetists. Pursuant to the summit meeting and with approval of the AANA Board of Directors, 2005-2006 AANA President Brian Thorson, CRNA, MA, appointed the Task Force on Doctoral Preparation of Nurse Anesthetists (DTF). The DTF was charged with developing options relative to doctoral preparation of nurse anesthetists that the AANA Board could consider. The DTF held numerous meetings, conducted surveys, and held open hearings at AANA national meetings. The DTF's final report and options were presented to the Board of Directors in April 2007. The Board discussed the final report during its June 2007 meeting and unanimously adopted the position of supporting doctoral education for entry into nurse anesthesia practice by 2025. The AANA Position

on Doctoral Preparation of Nurse Anesthetists was announced by 2006-2007 AANA President Terry Wicks, CRNA, MHS, at the August 2007 Assembly of School Faculty and the 2007 AANA Annual Business Meeting in Denver, Colorado.

July 12, 2007