

February 14, 2019

The Honorable Barbara Landwehr
Chairman, Committee on Health and Human Services
Kansas House of Representatives
300 SW 10th Ave. Rm. 352-S
Topeka KS 66612

Dear Chairman Landwehr and members of the Health and Human Services Committee

I am writing this letter to show my support for HB 2295 for the licensure of Certified Anesthesiologist Assistants (CAA's) in Kansas and ask the Committee to approve credentialing and recommend licensure.

CAAs are highly skilled members of the Anesthesia Care Team. After completing a Baccalaureate degree and excelling in courses commonly required for medical school admission, Anesthesiologist Assistants then earn a Master's degree in a program that consists of an average of 600 didactic hours and 2,600 clinical hours. There are currently 12 accredited Anesthesiologist Assistant programs in the U.S., including in the surrounding states of Missouri and Colorado.

There are over 2,000 CAAs currently practicing in 17 jurisdictions across the United States. Certified Anesthesiologist Assistants (CAA's) have been shown to be qualified and reliable anesthesia providers since 1971, and we have an excellent safety record. CAA's practice exclusively under the Anesthesia Care Team model. A physician anesthesiologist is always involved in the planning and management of an anesthetic and related patient care.

The American Society of Anesthesiologists fully endorses CAA practice in collaboration with Anesthesiologists. Anesthesiologists are the only physician specialty in the state of Kansas with only one choice of physician extender. Licensure of CAA's in Kansas would provide its residents access to an alternative advanced practice provider and lower costs without displacing CRNAs or SRNAs from jobs.

My family and I have lived in Kansas since 1991, and we have been able to proudly call Kansas our home for the past 27 years. I completed my bachelor's degree at Kansas State University in 2004 and attended South University for my Master's degree, finishing in 2009. I practiced as an AA for 5 years in Savannah, Georgia at a level 1 trauma center, where I was involved in many types of surgical cases, including cardiac, obstetrics, neurosurgery, pediatrics and trauma.

After the death of my little brother in 2012, I returned to the Midwest to be closer to my mother, who lives in Salina, Kansas. Unfortunately, the closest I could get to her is Kansas City, Missouri. I've lived here for 4 and a half years now and drive 3 hours every time I need to get back to Salina to see family.

I currently practice as a cardiac anesthetist at Saint Luke's Hospital of Kansas City, where I have the privilege of taking care of critically ill patients with some of the best physicians and nurses in the region. Despite that, I would love the opportunity to return to Kansas, where I have many family and friends.

Please support licensure of Anesthesiologist Assistants in Kansas.

Sincerely,
Gudrun Olafsdottir