

WRITTEN TESTIMONY BEFORE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

IN SUPPORT OF THE

HOUSE BILL 2295

FEBRUARY 18, 2019

MELANIE GUTHRIE, MSA CAA

KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

Dear Chairwoman Lanwehr and members Health and Human Services Committee:

I am writing this letter to show my support for HB 2295, licensure of Certified Anesthesiologist Assistants in Kansas. I have practiced as a Certified Anesthesiologist Assistant (CAA) for 22 years with 13 of those years in Missouri and was the founding and current program director of the UMKC Anesthesiologist Assistant program. I am a board member for the Accreditation and Review Committee for AAs and a commissioner for the National Commission on the Certification of Anesthesiologist Assistants. I am focusing my letter on the high quality education and clinical experiences Student Anesthesiologist Assistants receive.

As the current Chair of the Association of Anesthesiologist Assistant Program Directors (AAAPD) I can speak of the quality of AA education in our area and nationwide. Certified Anesthesiologist Assistants have been existence since 1969 with one primary focus; providing high quality and safe anesthesia care within an anesthesia care team. CAAs educational backgrounds are strong in the science fields, stronger than those of other advanced practice providers providing anesthesia and similar to those of persons entering medical school as prerequisite courses mirror those of medical schools. Courses include General Biology and Chemistry (2 semester of each both with labs), Organic Chemistry (2 semesters with lab), Physics (with lab), Biochemistry (with lab), advanced mathematics (calculus or statistics) and human anatomy and physiology. The specific statistics of the UMKC program include a GPA admissions average of 3.56 and MCAT average scores of 25/495 for admission.

The following are details of the UMKC program but based on the standards and guidelines set forth by the Commission on the Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) would be similar for other programs. The students enter into a rigorous 29 month program with the first year focused on didactics that center on anatomy, physiology, pharmacology, physics methods and instrumentation of anesthesia etc. All courses focus on clinical decision making and technical skills in the classroom, simulation lab and clinical setting. The curriculum is developed around standards and guidelines established by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs. Our courses are taught by anesthesiologists, and CAAs. They are also taught by PharmDs and PhDs that teach like courses within our MD program.

During their time as a student, they will receive over 2500 clinical contact hours and over 2000 patients contact hours as a requirement for graduation. They will in addition have to meet all of our case and skills goals requirements which are equal to the standards and guidelines set forth by Commission on

the Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs. The students within the UMKC program are easily meeting these goals and will not depend on Kansas hospitals to help them reach those numbers.

Upon completion of any AA program students will take a certifying exam administered by the National Commission on the Certification of Anesthesiologist Assistants (NCCAA) that is validated by the National Board of Medical Examiners. The exams are written by both anesthesiologists and CAAs trained by the NBME in test writing. CAAS then must obtain 40 hours of AMA category I or AAPA approved continuing medical education every two years. Every six years they must sit for CDQ (Continuing Display of Qualifications) exam that is also administered by the NCCAAA and validated by the NBME.

I am in support of this bill for its ability to allow Kansas residents to practice within their own state. I have been the program director for over 10 years and have seen many Kansas residents either have to relocate or take on a cumbersome commutes in order to work within their profession. These are highly skilled and trained practitioners that should be working in and providing quality in Kansas.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melanie Guthrie". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Melanie Guthrie CAA, MSA

UMKC MSA Program Director