



**BOARD OF NURSE EXAMINERS
FOR THE STATE OF TEXAS**



Meeting Address:
BOX 140696
ALBUQU. TEXAS 78714

333 GUADALUPE, SUITE 3-400
ALBUQU. TEXAS 78701-512/304-7400

KATHERINE A. THOMAS, MN, RN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

December 12, 1995

Cindy Kuykendall, CRNA
22 Preston Oaks
Odessa, Texas 79781

Dear Ms. Kuykendall:

This is in response to a letter from Ira Gunn requesting information on CRNA practice. You ask whether CRNAs are required to practice under supervision.

The CRNA's authorization to practice is derived from the Nursing Practice Act and their educational preparation as nurse anesthetists. Like physicians, CRNAs are credentialed to practice in facilities by medical staff bylaws or policies. These policies do not constitute physician delegation. In the Nursing Practice Act, the definition of professional nursing states that physician orders are required to administer medications; however, when the nurse carries out the order, it becomes a nursing act for which the RN is responsible and accountable. Thus, CRNAs must have an order to administer anesthesia from a physician, but there is no requirement the order specify the drugs, dosages and routes, because these functions are within the CRNA's scope of practice. As a matter of fact, Senate Bill 673 which passed in the 1985 Legislative session, codified the current practice of CRNAs by amending the Medical Practice Act (Article 4495b, Vernon's Texas Civil Statutes), Section 50, subdivision (d), Section 3.06) to expressly allow CRNAs to select, obtain, and administer anesthesia and anesthesia related drugs and apply the appropriate medical devices necessary to accomplish the anesthetic and maintain the patient within a sound physiological status. The CRNA may carry out these functions pursuant to a physician's order for anesthesia or anesthesia-related service that does not have to be drug-specific, dose-specific, or administration-technique-specific.

Rule 221 of the Board's *Rules and Regulations Relating to Professional Nurse Education, Licensure and Practice*, specifies that nurses in advanced practice, including Nurse Anesthetists, "...act independently or in collaboration with the health team in the observation, assessment, diagnosis, intervention, evaluation, rehabilitation, care and counsel, and health teachings of persons who are ill, injured or infirm or experiencing changes in normal health processes...". CRNAs, like other Registered Nurses, are not required to be supervised by physicians when carrying out nursing functions. For CRNAs, administration of anesthesia is a nursing function.

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To summarize, CRNAs may administer anesthesia and anesthesia related services pursuant to a physician order and consistent with medical staff bylaws or policies and when doing so are not required to be supervised by a physician.

I hope this information is helpful. Please feel free to contact me should you require further information or clarification.

Sincerely,


Katherine A. Thomas, MN, RN
Executive Director

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