

FROM:
Richard L. Raszewski, MD
620 Warrendale Road
Gibsonia, PA 15044

April 5, 2018

TO:
Pennsylvania House Committee on Professional Licensure

SUBJECT:
Opposition to House Bill 789

1. I am a Plastic Surgeon, with four years of medical school, ten years of surgical residency, and over twenty years of private practice patient care. I am a board-certified plastic and reconstructive surgeon working at a large hospital as well as a free-standing ambulatory surgery center, both in Allegheny County. The anesthesia for my surgeries at both facilities is administered by Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs), working with and without medical direction of an anesthesiologist. When working without an anesthesiologist, the CRNAs work in collaboration with me as the operating surgeon in accordance with the existing Pa. State Board of Nursing, CMS, Pa. Department of Health, and The Joint Commission standards, rules, and regulations.

2. I oppose the provision of House Bill 789 requiring PHYSICIAN supervision of CRNAs. This bill is redundant and not necessary, nor in keeping with national healthcare trends. As a board-certified plastic surgeon, I am a recognized expert in my area of specialization. This does not include anesthesia. I, like most physicians, have done short rotations during my education and residency in various medical specialties, but this does not make me an expert in any of these other areas. CRNAs complete similar anesthesia education and training as do anesthesiologists during their residency. The anesthesia provider is responsible for all aspects of patient safety, comfort, administration of appropriate medications, and maintenance of the patient's vital functions while in the operating room. I am not in control of the anesthesia, whether it is a CRNA or an anesthesiologist who is at the head of the operating table. To add another law to require physician supervision of CRNAs is an added unnecessary and obsolete regulatory burden that is not required by the vast majority of states. In fact, all but 10 states have removed this type of language from all state laws, and over 20 states have opted out of the CMS requirement for any type of physician supervision.

3. CRNAs and anesthesiologists alike, often request pre-operative consultations and medical clearances with physicians in other specialties, such as cardiologists, internal medicine physicians, and pulmonologists in order to determine the best course of action for their patients prior to surgery as well as during and after surgery. Additional physician supervision of CRNAs is not necessary to insure the continued high quality and safe care that CRNAs currently are known to provide, which is well-supported by national outcomes data.

4. House Bill 789 will also increase the costs of health care while limiting access to care for patients in rural areas where few, if any, anesthesiologists are available. I oppose further consideration of this bill. Our state should be looking at better use of our advanced practice nurses, working within the scope of their practice and nursing license, to help with the problems we face in healthcare in Pennsylvania today, including Medicaid expansion, rising costs, the opioid crisis, just to name a few critical areas of concern. CRNAs currently provide care to many indigent patients and are also able to provide regional nerve blocks to help to manage pain as an alternative to opioids.

5. The intervention of House Bill 789 continues the intrusion of lawmakers making the situation worse, in their misguided attempts at correcting imagined deficiencies. The hidden attempts to fill budgetary holes on the backs of production are obvious. This bill will further burden the average practitioner with additional liability. Malpractice will continue to rise, and the exodus of valued providers will continue to flock toward early retirement. The future brain drain on entering members will be magnified.

6. Thank you for considering my comments. If you would like to discuss the issues I have raised above further, I am available at the above address, by e-mail at drrick0323@gmail.com or by phone at 724-940-3223.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Raszewski', written over a faint circular stamp or watermark.

Richard Raszewski, MD
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