

CHUCK HUFSTETLER
District 52
121-C State Capitol
Atlanta, Georgia 30334
Phone: (404) 656-0034
Fax: (404) 656-6579



COMMITTEES:
Finance, Chairman
Health and Human Services
Higher Education
Rules
Appropriations, Ex-Officio

E-mail: chuck.hufstetler@senate.ga.gov

The State Senate

Atlanta, Georgia 30334

Dear Members of the House Committee on Health and Human Services,

I am Senator Chuck Hufstetler in the Georgia State Senate. I have been in the Senate for 13 years and have chaired the Finance Committee for 9 years. But I am here to testify on behalf of the Anesthesia Assistants of which I am one. I trained at the Emory School of Medicine in Atlanta, Georgia.

This profession began in 1969 in Georgia. Anesthesia Assistants practice in about half the states in the country and have a long history of providing quality anesthesia care. At my hospital where I have been a member of the open-heart surgery team for 15 years, we have 13 AA's and 11 CRNAs. We do the same job and receive the same pay. We are all colleagues and appreciate each other. We have many quality anesthesia providers from each group.

Sometimes in an effort to limit competition, I hear comments disparaging of one group or the other. I believe both groups provide quality care. A study by the National Institute of Health looked at the quality of care of 443,098 patients between 2004 and 2011.

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29847429/>. The study looked at the adjusted mortality of anesthesia assistants vs. nurse assistants. While the anesthesia assistants came in slightly better at 1.6% vs 1.7% for nurse anesthetists, I would say that there is no statistically significant difference and that both groups equally provide quality patient care. There was no difference in mortality, length of stay, or inpatient spending. You may see push studies by either group and/or anecdotal individual cases casting dispersions but the independent studies such as NIH show no differences between the groups.

There is a health care shortage. There are health care providers in Missouri and other states that can help with the health care shortage. I hope you will make use of these providers who can contribute to your state. I also know that you will find that the stories of problems between the groups are unfounded. The fear of the unknown is always used but in the states that we practice in it quickly goes away. I attended Kansas State University many years ago but have to confess I liked the town of Lawrence a little better. Thank you for your time and service to the State of Kansas.

Sincerely

Senator Chuck Hufstetler
Finance Chair
Georgia State Senate