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Nurse Anesthetist

Overview

Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs) are Advanced Practice Nurses who safely provide anesthesia care to more than 22 million surgical, obstetrical and trauma patients each year in the United States. They administer every type of anesthetic, work in every type of practice setting, and provide care for every type of operation or procedure - from open heart surgery to pain management programs.

CRNAs provide anesthetics to patients in collaboration with surgeons, anesthesiologists, dentists, podiatrists, and other qualified healthcare professionals. As Advanced Practice nurses, they are given a high degree of autonomy and professional respect.

Nurse Anesthetists have been providing anesthesia in the U.S. for over 125 years, beginning with their care of wounded soldiers during the Civil War. There currently are more than 36,000 nurse anesthetists in the U.S. - approximately 45% of whom are men (as compared with 8% men in the nursing profession as a whole). CRNAs are the sole providers of anesthesia in approximately two thirds of all rural hospitals in the United States, enabling these healthcare facilities to offer obstetrical, surgical, and trauma stabilization services. In some states, CRNAs are the sole providers in nearly 100% of the rural hospitals.

For more information about becoming a CRNA, see the [American Association of Nurse Anesthetists \(http://www.aana.com/becomingcrna.aspx?ucNavMenu_TSMenuTargetID=103&ucNavMenu_TSMenuTargetType=4&ucNavMenu_TSMenuID=6&id=110&terms=national%20certification%20exam&searchtype=2&fragment=False\)](http://www.aana.com/becomingcrna.aspx?ucNavMenu_TSMenuTargetID=103&ucNavMenu_TSMenuTargetType=4&ucNavMenu_TSMenuID=6&id=110&terms=national%20certification%20exam&searchtype=2&fragment=False) website.

Working Conditions

CRNAs practice in every setting in which anesthesia is delivered: traditional hospital surgical suites and obstetrical delivery rooms; critical access hospitals; ambulatory surgical centers; the offices of dentists, podiatrists, ophthalmologists, plastic surgeons, and pain management specialists; and healthcare facilities of the military, Public Health Services, and Veterans' Affairs.

CRNAs carry a heavy load of responsibility and are compensated accordingly. The reported average annual salary in 2003 was approximately \$130,000.

The prospects for finding a good job in this field are excellent for the foreseeable future: According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, there is a significant and growing need for CRNAs across the country.

Academic Requirements

In order to be accepted into an [accredited Nurse Anesthesia program \(http://www.aana.com/Credentialing.aspx?ucNavMenu_TSMenuTargetID=105&ucNavMenu_TSMenuTargetType=4&ucNavMenu_TSMenuID=6&id=118\)](http://www.aana.com/Credentialing.aspx?ucNavMenu_TSMenuTargetID=105&ucNavMenu_TSMenuTargetType=4&ucNavMenu_TSMenuID=6&id=118), you must be a currently-licensed RN with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) or other appropriate baccalaureate degree and at least one year of experience in an acute care setting. CRNA programs, which lead to a Master's degree, take two to three years and include clinical training in university-based or large community hospitals. Following graduation, you must pass the [national certification exam](http://www.aana.com/credentialing.aspx?ucNavMenu_TSMenuTargetID=112&ucNavMenu_TSMenuTargetType=4&ucNavMenu_TSMenuID=6&id=143)

[\(http://www.aana.com/credentialing.aspx?ucNavMenu_TSMenuTargetID=112&ucNavMenu_TSMenuTargetType=4&ucNavMenu_TSMenuID=6&id=143\)](http://www.aana.com/credentialing.aspx?ucNavMenu_TSMenuTargetID=112&ucNavMenu_TSMenuTargetType=4&ucNavMenu_TSMenuID=6&id=143) before you can begin practice. However, certification is not a one-time accomplishment: In order to maintain their certification standing, CRNAs must obtain a minimum of 40 hours of continuing education every two years.

Professional Associations

American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (<http://www.aana.com/>)
www.DiscoverNursing.com

Funding Opportunities

Search for funding opportunities in this field (<http://www.explorehealthcareers.org>)

Enrichment Programs

Search for enrichment programs in this field (<http://www.explorehealthcareers.org>)

Source

www.aana.com

Learn more about this field:

Nursing (<http://www.explorehealthcareers.com/en/Field.6.aspx0>)

Average Salary: \$130,000

Years in school: 6 - 7 *

Job outlook: Excellent

* after high school graduation

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