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Serving Rural America: Certified Nurse Anesthetists Provide Anesthesia Care and Cost Savings in Rural Healthcare Facilities

UNITED HOSPITAL DISTRICT'S CERTIFIED REGISTERED NURSE ANESTHETISTS CELEBRATE 20TH ANNUAL NATIONAL CRNA WEEK JANUARY 20-26, 2019

Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs) from United Hospital District (UHD) are joining thousands of their colleagues from across the country to celebrate the 20th annual National CRNA Week January 20-26, 2019. Carmelle McHarg, Laraine Klunder and James Dorn, the three CRNAs who form the anesthesia department at UHD, are excited to educate the public about the role CRNAs play in pain management of surgical procedures.

CRNAs are advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) who safely administer anesthesia and pain management services. Active since the Civil War, they currently serve as primary hands-on providers of anesthesia care in both civilian and military healthcare settings around the United States. CRNAs practice in every type of facility where anesthesia is required for patient care. The list includes but is not limited to hospital operating and delivery rooms; ambulatory surgical centers; the offices of dentists, podiatrists, ophthalmologists, and plastic surgeons; pain management centers and all U.S. Military service branches, Public Health Services, and Department of Veterans Affairs medical facilities.

“It is an honor and a privilege to take our patients through anesthesia and a safe surgical experience,” said Laraine Klunder, CRNA at UHD. “Surgery and anesthesia can be intimidating, but we stay with our patients, administering their anesthetics and watching over their vital signs – advocating for them throughout surgery. We take great pride in being there for every breath and every heartbeat.”

Nearly 53,000 CRNAs and student registered nurse anesthetists provide more than 45 million anesthetics to patients in the United States each year, delivering the same safe, high-quality anesthesia care as other anesthesia professionals but at a lower cost, helping to control the nation's rising healthcare costs. Every day, CRNAs deliver essential healthcare in thousands of communities and help to prevent gaps in access to anesthesia services, especially in rural and other medically underserved areas of the country.

“As CRNAs, we administer anesthesia to patients undergoing orthopedic, general surgery, ophthalmic, ear nose and throat, urologic, gynecologic, and labor and delivery procedures, just to name a few. Nurse anesthetists apply the same high standards of care, regardless of the type of procedure and the setting in which the anesthesia is delivered,” offered Carmelle McHarg, also a CRNA at UHD. “It is a privilege to be part of a profession that is so dedicated to advancing anesthesia patient safety and ensuring that patients have access to surgical, obstetrical, emergency, and pain management care, especially in rural and other medically underserved areas of our nation.”

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Added her colleague Jim Dorn, CRNA, “In today’s healthcare climate, CRNAs are the key to the future of anesthesia care, as there is an increasing demand for highly qualified, non-MD/DO healthcare specialists who can ensure access to patient care that is both extremely safe and cost-effective. Through this campaign, we aim to highlight the valuable role that CRNAs play today and will continue to play tomorrow.”

At UHD this week, the CRNA team will be sharing facts about their profession and their services with both patients and UHD employees. They will also be posting information about CRNA care around the campus and on social media via UHD’s Facebook page www.facebook.com/uhd.org/.

National CRNA Week was established by the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA) to encourage CRNAs to educate the public about anesthesia safety, questions to ask prior to undergoing surgery, and the benefits of receiving anesthesia care from a nurse anesthetist.

Five ways CRNAs make a difference every day include:

1. **Safety First:** CRNAs are highly trained anesthesia professionals who safely administer more than 45 million anesthetics to patients each year in the United States, according to the AANA 2017 Practice Profile Survey.
2. **Rural America:** CRNAs are the primary providers of anesthesia care in rural America, enabling healthcare facilities in these medically underserved areas to offer obstetrical, surgical, pain management and trauma stabilization services. In some states, CRNAs are the sole providers in nearly 100 percent of the rural hospitals.
3. **Military Presence:** Nurse anesthetists have been the main providers of anesthesia care to U.S. military personnel on the front lines since WWI. Nurses first provided anesthesia to wounded soldiers during the Civil War.
4. **Practice Settings:** 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 more.
5. **Cost-Efficiency:** Managed care plans recognize CRNAs for providing high-quality anesthesia care with reduced expense to patients and insurance companies. The cost-efficiency of CRNAs helps control escalating healthcare costs.

To learn more about the AANA visit www.aana.com/ or www.future-of-anesthesia-care-today.com.

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It's National CRNA Week!
UHD proudly recognizes our talented and compassionate Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists - the advanced practice registered nurses who safely deliver anesthetics & monitor your vital signs during surgeries and childbirth! Our team is pictured here left to right: Carmelle McHarg, Laraine Klunder and Jim Dorn.



**NATIONAL
CRNA Week**
January 20-26, 2019
AANA 
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF NURSE ANESTHETISTS

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