

## Anesthesiologist Assistant

RSPT 2147

## Anesthesiologist Assistant

- What is an Anesthesiologist Assistant?
  - The anesthesiologist assistant (AA) functions as a specialty physician assistant under the direction of a licensed and qualified anesthesiologist, principally in medical centers
  - The AA assists the anesthesiologist in developing and implementing the anesthesia care plan

## Anesthesiologist Assistant

- What is an Anesthesiologist Assistant?
  - This may include:
    - Collecting preoperative data, such as taking an appropriate health history
    - Performing various preoperative tasks, such as the insertion of intravenous and arterial catheters and special catheters for central venous pressure monitoring, if necessary
    - Performing airway management and drug administration for induction and maintenance of anesthesia
    - Assisting in the administering and monitoring of regional and peripheral nerve blockade

## Anesthesiologist Assistant

- What is an Anesthesiologist Assistant?
  - This may include
    - Administering supportive therapy, for example, with intravenous fluids and cardiovascular drugs
    - Adjusting anesthetic levels on a minute-to-minute basis
    - Performing intra-operative monitoring
    - Providing recovery room care
    - Functioning in the intensive care unit
  - The AA may also be used in pain clinics or may participate in administrative and educational activities

## Anesthesiologist Assistant

- Job Description
  - In addition to the duties already described, AAs provide other support according to established protocols, such as
    - pretesting anesthesia delivery systems, patient monitors and support devices for critical cardiac, pulmonary, and neurological systems
    - operating bedside electronic computer-based monitors
    - supervising laboratory functions associated with anesthesia
    - providing cardiopulmonary resuscitation in accordance with approved emergency protocols

## Anesthesiologist Assistant

- Employment Characteristics
  - AAs work as members of the anesthesia care team in any locale where they may be appropriately directed by legally responsible anesthesiologists
  - AAs most often work within organizations that also employ nurse anesthetists, and their responsibilities are identical
  - AAs are most commonly employed in larger facilities that perform procedures such as cardiac surgery, neurosurgery, transplant surgery, and trauma care, given the training in extensive patient monitoring devices and complex patients and procedures emphasized in AA educational programs
  - AAs are used in hospitals of all sizes and assist anesthesiologists in a variety of settings and for a wide range of procedures

### Anesthesiologist Assistant

- Education
  - The post-baccalaureate programs are 24 to 28 months
  - Any baccalaureate major is acceptable, but majors typically are biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics, computer science, or one of the allied health professions, such as respiratory therapy or nursing

### Anesthesiologist Assistant

- Education
  - There are seven programs in the U.S.
    - Emory University – Atlanta, Georgia
    - Case Western Reserve University – Cleveland, Ohio
    - Case Western Reserve University – Houston, Texas
    - South University – Savannah, Georgia
    - University of Missouri – Kansas City, Missouri
    - Nova Southeastern University – Fort-Lauderdale, Florida
    - Nova Southeastern University – Tampa, Florida

### Anesthesiologist Assistant

- Education
  - Though minor differences between programs may exist, generalized admission requirements for students seeking entrance into an AA program include:
    - Bachelor's degree from an accredited institution with a premedical sciences track
    - Two semesters of biology with laboratory
    - Two semesters of vertebrate A & P with laboratory
    - Two semesters of general chemistry; 1 semester of organic chemistry; a second semester of organic chemistry or biochemistry with laboratory
    - Two semesters of general physics with laboratory
    - Two semesters of advanced college math including calculus

### Anesthesiologist Assistant

- Education
  - Pre-admission requirements also include either the MCAT or GRE and a GPA of 3.5 or better
  - Programs award either the MMSc (Masters of Medical Science) degree or the MHSc (Masters of Health Science) degree

### Anesthesiologist Assistant

- Certification
  - The National Commission for Certification of Anesthesiologist Assistants (NCCAA) provides for certification
    - The Commission includes anesthesiologists and anesthesiologist assistants
    - The certification process incorporates a certifying examination, examination for continued demonstration of qualifications, and registration of continuing medical education

### Anesthesiologist Assistant

- Licensure
  - AAs currently work in eighteen (18) states.
  - The states in which AAs work by a license, regulation, and/or certification are: Alabama, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Missouri, New Mexico, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Vermont and North Carolina

### Anesthesiologist Assistant

- Licensure
  - The states in which AAs are granted practice privilege through physician delegation: Colorado, Michigan, New Hampshire, Texas, West Virginia and Wisconsin
  - The federal government recognizes and uses AAs
    - Both the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs authorize the use of anesthesiologist assistants to practice under the TRICARE insurance program

### Anesthesiologist Assistant

- Salary
  - Starting salaries for graduates range from \$95,000 to \$120,000 for the 40-hour work week
  - The high end of the salary range is around \$160,000 to \$180,000 for experienced AAs