



New Mexico Academy of Anesthesiologist Assistants

Comparison of CAA & CRNA: Education and Practice

Certified Anesthesiologist Assistants (CAA) Certified Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs)

Education		
Training Programs	15 accredited and 4 seeking accreditation	128
Training Program Length and Type	24-27 months; Master's Degree	24-30 months; Masters Degree or 36 months; Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)
Admission Requirements	Bachelor degree with GPA >3.0; Same prerequisite courses as Medical School; Completion of Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT) or Graduate Record Exam (GRE), dependent on each program's individual requirements; Previous health care experience preferred, Personal interview	Bachelor of Science in Nursing with general nursing practice focus with GPA 3.0; Licensure as a Registered Nurse (RN); Minimum 1 year Acute Care Nursing experience; Personal Interview
Training Program Requirements	All Anesthesiologist Assistant (AA) programs must be affiliated with an accredited Medical School; have a Medical Director that is a board-certified Physician Anesthesiologist; and be located in academic facilities that meet Anesthesia residency requirements for physicians	Faculty include Physicians, CRNA's and graduate nurses; Program Director must possess a Master's Degree
Training Program Accreditation	Commission for Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) and Accreditation Review Committee for Anesthesiologist Assistants (ARC-AA)	Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Programs
Didactic Education	56 didactic hours (program dependent)	34-80 didactic hours (program dependent)
Clinical Education and Rotations	Minimum of 600 and 2,000 clinical hours (average >2,500 hours) in all sub-specialties of anesthesia; Advanced Skills include Regional Anesthesia and Invasive Line Placement	600 cases and 2,000 clinical hours in all sub-specialties of anesthesia; Advanced Skills include Regional Anesthesia and Invasive Line Placement
Clinical Instructors	CAAs, CRNAs, Physician Anesthesiologists, and Anesthesiology Residents in training	CRNAs, Physician Anesthesiologists, and Anesthesiology Residents in training
Graduation Requirements	Good class standing; all course semester and clinical requirements completed	All course semester and clinical requirements completed
Certifying Body	National Commission for Certification of Anesthesiologist Assistants (NCCAA) in collaboration with the National Board of Medical Examiners	Council on Certification of Nurse Anesthetists
Recertification	50 Continuing Medical Education (CME) credits submitted biennially and sit for Continued Demonstration of Qualifications Exam (CDQ) every 6 years (new 10 year CDQ requirement being phased in)	8 year, two-part recertification process: first 4 years - submission of 40 CMEs, second 4 years - inclusion of recertification exam (first exam to commence in 2024 without pass/fail score, first pass/fail exam to commence in 2032)
Practice Information		
Description/Model of Practice	Supervision by a Physician Anesthesiologist, also known as the Anesthesia Care Team (ACT) Model	Supervision by Physician of unspecified specialty, ACT model, or independent practice without Physician supervision in Opt-Out states
National Distribution of Providers	Over 3,200 CAAs in 21 jurisdictions (including DC and Guam)	43,000 CRNAs in all 50 states
Distribution of Providers in New Mexico	CAAs currently allowed to practice in Albuquerque, Santa Fe and Las Cruces only	CRNAs currently allowed to practice statewide
National Organization	American Academy of Anesthesiologist Assistants (AAAA)	American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA)

Comparison of CAA & CRNA: Delineation of Privileges

Below is the delineation of privileges (DOP) for both CAAs and CRNAs at a local hospital in Santa Fe, NM. Differences are highlighted in yellow. The first refers to the difference in education and training but both types of providers are required to hold their respective license and current board certification. The second difference describes the conditions of how CAAs work according to national guidelines. Actual duties performed and listed below are identical.

Basic education and minimal formal training

- Current certification by the National Commission for the Certification of Anesthesiologist Assistants (NCAA) as an Anesthesiologists Assistant-Certified (AA-C)
- Current licensure to practice as an Anesthesiologist Assistant-Certified issued by the NM State Board of Medicine

CRNA Basic education and minimal formal training

- Current New Mexico RN license
- Current New Mexico CRNA license
- Certification by the National Board of Certification and Recertification for Nurse Anesthetists (NBCRNA)

Required documentation and experience

New Applicants:

Successful completion of education and training listed above within the last 12 months; **AND** have a designated supervising physician;

OR

Provide documentation of patient care within the scope of requested privileges within the past 12 months; **AND** have a designated supervising physician.

Reappointment applicants:

Provide documentation of patient care within the scope of requested privileges within the past 12 months; **AND** have a current designated supervising physician.

Privileges

Anesthesiologists Assistants may perform medical tasks and services only when under the direction of the anesthesiologist. The anesthesiologist must be in the hospital and in the anesthetizing or operative area such that he can be immediately available to participate directly in the care of the patient with whom the anesthesiologist assistant and the anesthesiologist are jointly involved.

Pre-anesthesia evaluation and preparation; administration of general and regional anesthesia and sedation to children and adults under the supervision of an anesthesiologist.

This list is a sampling of procedures included in the core privileges. It is not intended to be all-encompassing but rather reflective of the categories/types of procedures/therapies included in the core.

- Pre-anesthetic assessment, including appropriate laboratory/diagnostic tests
- Perform history and physical examinations
- Prescribing pre-anesthetic medication
- Administration of general and regional anesthetics
- Moderate sedation
- Cardiopulmonary resuscitation management
- Post-anesthetic care