



To & Fro

A Publication of the Georgia Association of Nurse Anesthetists • Volume 65 • Winter 2011

Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists CRNAs

- Represent nearly 150 years of quality anesthesia
- Safely administer approximately 32 million anesthetics in the US every year
- Represented by 44,000 CRNAs nationwide and over 1100 here in Georgia
- Are the sole anesthesia providers in nearly 100% of rural hospitals throughout the country.
- Practice in every type of clinical setting.

Mission Statement

The Georgia Association of Nurse Anesthetists is a non-profit organization committed to advancing patient safety by supporting and furthering the practice of nurse anesthesia in Georgia.

www.gana.org

Congratulations to GANA member Kathy Mann who has been appointed as a member to the Georgia Board of Nursing. Kathy lives and practices in Blue Ridge, Georgia. She joins Barry Cranfill as the second CRNA to the Board. Congratulations Kathy.

Report from the President

Start Small ... Think BIG!

by Rose M. Synsmir, CRNA, ANP, MA



As I sit to write this message, I am reflecting on how much pleasure it gives me to be representing this association as its president. I come from humble beginnings. My parents worked diligently to instill good work ethics, the importance of education and having goals throughout life. They taught me to have broad shoulders, to have a good sense of humor and most of all, to be thankful. As a registered nurse and later as an advanced practitioner, I received many opportunities to develop leadership skills in the professional arena. As a result, I learned many valuable skills and lessons. My intention is to use all that I learned to ensure that our association moves in the right direction. Throughout my life, I have always strived to be successful, but being GANA President is one of my greatest honors. I thank the membership immensely for this opportunity.

I presided over the first meeting of the 2010-2011 board of directors (BOD) during the Annual Fall Meeting held in Atlanta, Georgia on October 2, 2010. We welcomed new board members Bill Agudelo, Treasurer, three new directors: Jim Masiongale, Richard Douberly, and Daniel Dell. We also gave thanks to our returning board. On November 6, 2010, GANA returned to Callaway Gardens for the second BOD meeting and retreat. Following the meeting, Kelly Vrla, CSP, CRMC, presented workshops on stress management, motivating other individuals and enhancing communications. We renewed, recharged and reviewed for the upcoming year's challenges.

I also had the honor to attend the Fall Assembly of States in Colorado Springs along with Janice

Izlar, AANA Vice President, Barry Cranfill, Steve Smith, Brent DuBois, Jim Masiongale, and Leslie A. Jeter. In addition to our AANA President Paul Santoro's address, important state, legislative and federal updates were discussed. Opportunities were given to network with other states during the regional leadership breakouts and States Government Relations Forum. State-level leadership development and association management lectures were presented by various speakers. After attending this meeting I am proud to report the AANA is making all efforts to protect our practice and to advance the interests of CRNAs and the patients we serve in these uncertain times.

Although the holidays have passed and money has been spent to give your family members the perfect gifts, please don't forget the association that afforded you many privileges. We are fortunate to be part of such a wonderful profession, but this comes with a BIG ticket price. In order for you to enjoy all the benefits, the GANA has to have your support to better prepare us for unforeseen battles and challenges. The New Year is a time for making resolutions. My hope is that you resolve to take this opportunity to give back to the association either through repeated contributions or by the giving of your time through service. The GANA Political Action Committee (GANAPAC) has recently sent out letters to all your homes asking for donations. The enactment and implementation of health reform legislation, the outcome of the November 2nd elections, and The House and Senate resolutions to regulate

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Officers / Board of Directors 2010-2011

Rose Synsmir, President
11840 Devon Downs Trail
Alpharetta, GA 30005
Work Phone: 917-723-8409
Home Phone: 770-232-4715
Email: rsynsmir@aol.com

Barry Cranfill, Immediate Past President

4246 N. Mountain Road, N.E.
Marietta, GA 30066
Work Phone: 770-251-2060
Work Fax: 770-251-8567
Home Phone: 770-356-2165
Email: bcranfill@sentryanesthesia.com

Brent DuBois, President Elect

1177 Moore Road
Danville, GA 31017
Home Phone: 478-962-0814
Work Phone: 478-230-9708
Work Fax: 478-962-0201
Home Phone: 478-962-0814
Email: topgunanesthesia@aol.com

Steve Smith, Vice President

1132 White Cloud Ridge
Snellville, GA 30078
Work Phone: 404-429-8553
Home Phone: 770-972-6225
Home Fax: 770-972-6225
Email: slldt@comcast.net

Melanie Marshall, Secretary

527 St. Barbara's Lane
Marietta, GA 30064
Phone: 404-271-4884
Email: melgator@yahoo.com

Bill Agudelo, Treasurer

403 Lakeview Place
Macon, GA 31211
Work Phone: 478-787-9153
Home Phone: 478-742-0695
Email: bkagudelo@yahoo.com

2010-11 Directors**Carmen Simmons**

625 Aunt Lucy Lane, Suite 56
Smyrna, GA 30082
Home Phone: 678-570-6328
Email: simmons_carmen@hotmail.com

James Masiongale

369 Sugar Creek Drive
Grovetown, GA 30813
Work Phone: 706-721-8215
Work Fax: 706-721-8206
Home Phone: 706-869-0797
Email: jmasiong@mccg.edu

Daniel Dell

142 Tanglewood Drive
Moultrie, GA 31768
Work Phone: 229-456-0450
Home Phone: 229-890-2238
Email: ddellcrna@gmail.com

Richard Douberty

Richard Douberty, Director
922 S. Lake Drive
Dublin, GA 31027
Home Phone: 912-704-0414
Email: r.douberty@hotmail.com

Representatives for GANA**Steve Smith, Federal Political Director**

1132 White Cloud Ridge
Snellville, GA 30078
Work Phone: 404-429-8553
Home Phone: 770-972-6225
Email: slldt@comcast.net

Christy A. Dunkelberger, Esq., Executive Director/Legal Counsel

1832 Highway 54 West
Fayetteville, Georgia 30214
O: 770-487-3900
F: 770-632-1625
ganaoffice@bellsouth.net

Monty Veazey, Lobbyist

610 North Ridge Avenue
P.O. Box 1572
Tifton, Georgia 31793
P: 229-386-8660
F: 229-386-8662
mveazey@gach.org

Paul Santoro, AANA President

222 South Prospect Avenue
Park Ridge, IL 60068
Phone: 847-655-1106
Email: psantoro@aanabod.com

Janice Izlar, AANA Vice President

6 Huntingwood Retreat
Savannah, GA 31411
Work Phone: 912-547-7201
Home Phone: 912-598-1027
Home Fax: 912-598-9436
Email: jizlar@aol.com

Sharon Pearce, AANA Region 2 Director

1366 Becks Nursery Road
Lexington, NC 27292
Phone: 336-250-6008
Email: spearce@aanabod.com

Whitney Huffman, MCG Student Representative

802 Hickman Road
Augusta, GA 30904
Home Phone: 706-799-0537
Email: whuffman@students.mcg.edu

Jeremy Brown, MCG Student Representative

1665 Wesleyan Drive, Apt. 318
Macon, GA 31210
Home Phone: 912-308-9044
Email: jestebro84@yahoo.com

Communication

www.gana.org

From the Executive Director

by Christy A. Dunkelberger, Esq.

2010 Is Over

It is hard to believe that summer 2010 is behind us. Here we are starting 2011 with a whole new year of opportunities and challenges. The holiday season has hopefully refreshed all of us to take on the New Year with vigor. The Board of Directors remains positive and uplifted after its motivational retreat in November. Kelli Vrla, a professional speaker steeped in motivation and productivity fully charged the GANA officers to lead the organization through 2011 with energy, a positive attitude and humor.

WHAT LIES AHEAD IN 2011**AANA Elections**

Two Georgia CRNAs will be on the AANA ballot in 2011. Janice Izlar, the current AANA Vice President, is running for AANA President-elect. GANA is extremely proud to support Janice in her endeavor to lead the AANA in the coming years. Janice has served Georgia in many capacities as a CRNA, including serving as our President in 2000. Her many years of dedication to CRNA practice and her proven leadership style make her an excellent candidate to serve as AANA President-elect. Please join GANA and show your support for Janice Izlar.

Steve Smith, GANA Vice President, FPD and Communications Chair is running for the AANA Resolutions Committee. Steve has been serving and actively involved in GANA for many years. He joined the GANA Board in 2006 and has been diligently working for CRNAs since then. He became President in 2008 and remains active and committed to being an advocate for CRNAs today. Please join GANA and show your support for Steve Smith.

Legislative Session

The Georgia General Assembly will begin its session on January 10th. Please plan to participate in the GANA Capitol Day scheduled on January 28th which is during CRNA Appreciation Week at the State Capitol. The GANA has become better known with the legislators and recognized as a force at the Capitol. The more individual contact that CRNAs have with their legislators, the better reception we receive at the Capitol. The GANA legislative agenda is in its development stages at present, but will be finalized after a strategy meeting is held with our officers and lobbyists after the first of the year. This agenda will be placed on the members' only section of our web site at www.gana.org once it is completed. As always you need to contact the representative and senator from your legislative district and ensure that they know your name and the fact that you are a CRNA. We also need to keep the GANA PAC fund well funded in order to contribute to those legislators who understand and support CRNA issues. The winner of the GANA PAC drawing for an iPad is Dennis Moberg, CRNA, from Augusta, Georgia. Thank you to everyone who made a contribution and entered to win. This PAC drive was a success. Congratulations, Dennis.

2011 Meetings

GANA, along with IPGE, will be holding a Spring Meeting on March 14-15, 2011, at the Waverly Renaissance at Cobb Galleria. Plans are currently underway for a continuing education program with a specific focus on the business and economic aspects of CRNA practice. The attendees will learn about building and managing an anesthesia practice. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend this meeting that promises to be outstanding.

The GANA Fall meeting is scheduled for September 30 – October 2, 2011 at the Crowne Plaza Ravinia at Perimeter Mall. As usual this meeting will include a continuing

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and



Presents:

The GANA Spring Meeting in Atlanta

The Business, Economic and Legal Aspects of CRNA Practice

May 14-15, 2011

at the

Waverly Renaissance Atlanta

2450 Galleria Parkway
Atlanta, GA 30339
(770) 953-4500

Program Description and Faculty Members

This is one of the most important CE programs on Business and Economics that we have ever offered. An outstanding faculty consisting of CRNA's, business persons, and attorneys including AANA President Paul Santoro, CRNA, MS; Amsol Executive Vice President Larry Hornsby, CRNA, BS; Sleepy Anesthesia President Juan Quintana, DNP, CRNA; GANA President Barry Cranfill, CRNA, MHS, MBA; Mr. Pat Everett, ProStat Anesthesia Advisors; and David Kuzava, JD, Attorney at Law.

These well qualified faculty members will share with you their experiences in building and managing anesthesia practices and their vast knowledge of what you as a practicing CRNA need to know about the value that you bring to the economic table. Core didactic lectures will focus on practice management, legal and liability issues, malpractice concerns, cost-effective practice models, contract law, negotiation skills, billing and collections, and a myriad of other topics designed to enlighten you, the CRNA practitioner, and make you more aware of your worth.

More details on tuition costs and CE credits will be available soon

Hotel Information

Room Rates for GANA Registrants and Guests:

\$109.00* (run of the house single or double)

* Plus Taxes and Fees

For reservations please call 1-888-391-8724

2011 GANA Calendar of Events

GANA Board Meetings

(Begin at 10:00 a.m. unless otherwise noted)

February 12, 2011
MCCG/Mercer in Macon

May 14, 2011
at the GANA Spring Meeting in Atlanta

August 27, 2011
MCG in Augusta

GANA Events

Capitol Day and Proclamation Signing
with the Governor
January 28, 2011 at State Capitol

GANA Spring Meeting
May 14-15, 2011 in Atlanta

Georgia Public Broadcasting – TV Telethon
Spring of 2011 – TBA

GANA Annual Fall Meeting
September 30-October 2, 2011 in Atlanta

AANA Events

AANA National Nurse Anesthetist Week
January 23-29, 2011

Assembly of School Faculty
February 24-26, 2011 in Orlando, FL

Mid-Year Assembly
April 10-13, 2011 in Arlington, VA

AANA Annual Meeting
August 6-10, 2011 in Boston, MA

Report from the Executive Director

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education program with credits arranged by IPGE; and our GANA Annual Business Meeting and the Board elections. More information will be coming out in the near future, but please save the date.

2010 Non-deductibility of Dues

Please note that the IRS does not permit you to deduct the total amount of dues paid to your professional membership association. Federal legislation excludes that portion of professional dues used for grass roots lobbying efforts from being deductible for income tax purposes. Please note that thirty four dollars (\$34.00) or fourteen percent (14%) of your state dues was used for grass roots lobbying efforts for 2010.

Regulatory Compliance

Have you heard much about corporate compliance lately? Probably not since we were all indoctrinated with HIPAA – but you should be aware. The federal government is always looking over your shoulder and coming up with new ways to reduce spending and eliminate waste of federal and state funds. Healthcare is heavily regulated and providers are subject to volumes of complex rules governing the reimbursement for services. Make sure you do not misstep in your practice arrangements or your coding and billing for services. You have a duty to know and comply with the rules. ■

GANA Scholarship Awards

Katie Truitt and **Kyle Jones** of Mercer's Nurse Anesthesia Program were each awarded \$500.00 through the GANA/MCCG scholarship program. **Maegan Brass** of MCG Nurse Anesthesia Program was awarded the \$500.00 award through the GANA/MCG scholarship program. These awards were given based on academic achievement, involvement in organizations and school activities, involvement in community activities outside of school and the intention to practice as a nurse anesthetist within the state of Georgia. Great job guys!

Mr. Robert John Wichalonis, CRNA

Robert 'Bob' Wichalonis, age 73 of Marietta, Georgia, passed away November 13, 2010. Bob was born in Mahanoy City, PA and lived a full life, serving 4 years in the Navy followed by 18 years in the Coast Guard. He was a devoted fan of the Atlanta Hawks, a proud member of The Catholic Church of St. Ann and an avid outdoorsman throughout his life. He is survived by his wife Mary, daughter Lisa Wichalonis (Raleigh, NC), son Gerard (Cumming, GA), daughter-in-law Kimberly, three grandchildren Karoline, Mary-Kate and Nicholas, and his sister Mildred Anthony (Frackville, PA).



Report from Region 2

by Sharon Pearce, CRNA



*“Nothing great was ever achieved
without enthusiasm.”
— Ralph Waldo Emerson*

I am writing this as the holiday season is upon us and another year will be here before you know it.

We have barely returned from Fall Assembly where state leaders from across the country gathered with great enthusiasm. New ideas were discussed and states came together to discuss issues they are all facing. Region Directors collected this information and it is being collated to spot trends that the AANA needs to address.

The SODC conducted focus sessions with states of the same size rather than the traditional format of meeting with regional states. It was enlightening to have this forum as states of similar size were found to have similar issues.

AANA is now on Facebook! Make sure if you are a part of this social media you become a fan! I, for one, am addicted to Facebook. I can keep up with CRNAs across the country and have reconnected with friends I would never have had the opportunity to do so were not for this media. AANA is also on Twitter but I am not as versed on it.

National Nurse Anesthesia Week is January 23-29, 2011 and materials are already available. Use this opportunity to tell people who you are and what you do. I have said it many times before but we need to make sure we are NOT the best kept secret in healthcare!

There is no better time to be a CRNA! The stars are lining up and the public as well as policy makers are learning about the value CRNAs bring to the healthcare system. We are now grounded in science with the bold new evidence with the RTI Study, “No Harm Found When Nurse Anesthetists

Work Without Supervision by Physicians”. In addition an article in Nursing Economics, “Cost Effectiveness Analysis of Anesthesia Providers” shows that CRNAs are the most efficient delivery model and will be a key to containing costs while maintaining quality care. Then to add icing to the cake, the Institute of Medicine “Future of Nursing Report” reinforced the findings of the aforementioned studies. You can see all of the studies on www.aana.com.

I hope each of you have a wonderful holiday season and a Merry Christmas.

Feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns. My email is spearce@aanabod.com. Thank you for allowing me to serve you. ■

AANA Dates to Remember

2011 NBCRNA Board Nominations

DEADLINE: January 17, 2011

Submit your nomination for the
NBCRNA Board of Directors.

Click <http://nbcma.com> for the Nominations
Information Packet and Application form.

CRNA-PAC

DEADLINE: January 31, 2011

Email a letter of interest with your CV to
your Regional 2 Director, Sharon Pearce
spearce@aanabod.com

AANA Committee Application 2011-2012

DEADLINE: APRIL 1, 2011

Send in an Application Form to attention of
President Elect Debbie Malina, CRNA, DNSc:
atcommittees@aana.com

Include your CV and the name(s) of the
committee(s) you wish to serve on.

GANA Annual Fall Meeting Brings Nurse Anesthesia Community Together

by Rose M. Synsmir CRNA, ANP, MA

The Annual Fall Meeting of 2010 was a great success and a lot of fun! Thanks to Bernie Kuzava of IPGE for assisting the program committee and organizing an extraordinary meeting. It was held at Cobb Energy Center on Oct 1-3, 2010. Over 200 CRNAs and 100 students were in attendance. Attendees took the opportunity to learn about and participate in the business of the Association, voted on bylaw amendments, visited exhibitors, and benefited from important educational sessions. The Dan Ebal Memorial student series presented by Katie Truitt, Korie Agudelo and Brady Banares kicked off the lectures series. Other lectures discussed included current thinking with regards to aspiration pneumonitis and labor analgesia pharmacology. The role of the NBCRNA in the certification and recertification of nurse anesthetists, airway anatomy and pathology, interventional methodology and the ASA difficult airway algorithm were also discussed. Janice Izlar, AANA Vice President and Sharon Pearce, Region 2 Director were in attendance and also presented the AANA update. During the final two days, didactic lectures and "Hand's-On" workshops were devoted to the recognition and management of the difficult airway in adults and children. After a successful lecture series, the participants got the opportunity to perform retrograde intubations on pigs' trachea. A hands on experience with the fiber optic scopes was provided; video assisted airway devices among other airway tools were used to assist in the management and establishment of a challenging airway situation.

The Friday night reception was a great hit; Delicious food and great music were enjoyed by the exhibitors and attendees. This social event provided a unique opportunity for CRNAs, students and guests to network and reconnect with friends and colleagues while conversing about current and future issues affecting nurse anesthesia.

In addition to the Peer Assistance Program, chaired by Barbra Waldon, GANA had its first Wellness Program which focused on physical and mental well-being. A Basic Yoga Class was offered to help members achieve the balance they seek in their everyday lives. This class reviewed basic asanas and philosophies and made yoga accessible to students who are new to the practice as well as long-time yogis. Salsa/ Latin Dance lessons and a wonderful performance by a premier Atlanta Dance Company were also offered.

Our 3rd Annual Student Focus Session was hosted by Carla Farrell, Alex Abraham and Brandon Reddock from MCG. During the business luncheon, the prestigious Rosalie McDonald Award was presented to Martha Kral. Katie Truitt was the winner of the 2010 GANA Outstanding Student Nurse Anesthetist of the Year Award. Photographs and more information are available at www.gana.org. Thank you to the program faculty, exhibitors and sponsors, students and attendees who supported this meeting.

A Look inside the GANA Program Committee

From all of us in the Program committee, Happy New Year! We are looking forward to working with all our members and the GANA Board of Directors to organize an outstanding program to assist you with your continuing education needs. We would love to hear from you and your suggestions are appreciated. If there are any topics that interest you or affects nurse anesthesia, don't hesitate to contact us. We are here to serve you!

The 2010-2011 GANA Program Committee are busy preparing for this year's meetings. We have two exciting programs planned locally. The Spring Meeting will be held at the

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CRNAs in Action ...



AANA Vice President Janice Izlar and Program Director from Wake Forest, Michael Rieker



Martha Kral, 2010 recipient of the Rosalie McDonald Award, Katie Truitt, winner of the 2010 GANA Outstanding Student Nurse Anesthetist Award, Rose Synsmir, 2010-2011 GANA President, and Barry Cranfill, GANA Immediate Past President



Sharon Pearce, 2010-2011 Region 2 Director from North Carolina, Rose Synsmir and Janice Izlar



2010 MCG Director's Award Winner Maegan Brass and Jim Masiongale

Government Relations in 2011

by James Masiongale, CRNA, MHS



I would like to thank GANA President Rose Synsmir for allowing me to chair the Government Relations Committee for the next year. I would also like to introduce the individuals that Rose has selected to join me on this committee. Daniel Dell will be serving as co-chair, Melanie Marshall and Steve Smith will be the other CRNA members. Student participation on GANA committees is always welcomed and we will have Lori Littlejohn, Rebecca Bergeron, Julie Jackson, Jennifer Hayes joining us on the GRC.

The GRC, in collaboration with Christy Dunkelberger, has arranged a meeting with our lobbyist Monty Veazey to discuss the GANA legislative agenda for the upcoming year. I will report the results of this meeting in my next message.

Several important dates to mark on your calendar:

National Nurse Anesthetists Week

January 23-29, 2011

Capitol Day

Georgia State Capitol, Atlanta, GA

January 28th, 2011

AANA Mid-Year Assembly

Crystal Gateway Marriott, Arlington, VA

April 10-13, 2011

If you have ever attended one of these events, you know how educating and enjoyable they are. If you have not attended one, then I encourage you to try and attend at least one. Last year, thanks in large part to Mercer and MCG nurse anesthesia students, we had the largest turnout ever for Capitol Day. It would be wonderful if you could join us this year. ■

www.gana.org

I encourage all GANA members to frequent our website specifically designed to provide you with useable up-to-date information. You can access the GANA calendar of events for 2011, peruse state and federal issues, articles, student news, contact information and resources related to nurse anesthesia and much more.

Please take a few minutes to sign up for the "members only" site. We currently have 175 members. This site will allow you access to information we cannot post on the public side and also includes online voting. Also on this site near the bottom of the page you will find the "mailing list". If you are not receiving blast emails from the GANA you can subscribe from our secure mailing list and unsubscribe if you choose.

As always, I encourage any input into our two GANA publications, the *To & Fro* newsletter and the website. Any comments or suggestions are very welcome. If anyone would like to write an article for the *To & Fro* or an editorial about nurse anesthesia practice or issues that are concerning to you – please do so and submit them to me.

Steve Smith CRNA, MA
GANA Communications Chair
404-429-8553
sldt@comcast.net

The Archives Committee at Work

by Mary P. Flister

The Archives committee continues to work on assorted projects that make GANA history relevant to CRNAs of today and tomorrow.

The Archive storage facility is set up to allow work, such as sorting and searching, to be done at almost any time of day or evening.

One of several projects being worked on is the archival-quality preservation of the original signatory list of the 1938 GANA founding charter.

Another project that grows out of the charter is a GANA CRNA of Distinction feature at each GANA Annual meeting. We plan to highlight at least one or two of the founding members' history as recognition of the incalculable contributions they made to our present day success as an organization and the practice of nurse anesthesia.

The 75th Annual Meeting of the GANA occurs in 2013. The Archives committee hopes to feature significant contributions made by Georgia CRNAs at that meeting. To paraphrase Nell Livengood's admonishment to us in the Rosalie McDonald AANA History Society presentation:

"It is never too early to begin."



The GANA exhibited and held a focus session on "Becoming a CRNA" at the 2010 Georgia Association of Nursing Students Convention in Columbus on October 15. In attendance were Bill Agudelo, Kyle Jones, Karl Spens, MaryEllen McMellion, President Rose Synsmir, Steve Smith, Korie Agudelo, Katie Truitt, Maegan Brass and Harmon Weitzman.

Let There Be P's on Earth

by Barb Waldron, CRNA

Welcome to 2011!

The GANA Board of directors started preparing for this year by having a retreat featuring a motivational speaker, Kelli Vrla; I wish all of you could have been there. I walked away with several different tools that I could use to overcome some character defects that would help me in my relationships with family, friends, and co-workers. One I will share with you is 'Let There Be P's on Earth'. Practice the four P's in all you do. Strive to be Positive, Polite, Professional, and Proactive. I think they are fairly self-explanatory; I am going to work on being positive under ALL circumstances and the one about being proactive, I'll focus on the solution not the problem. Believe it or not, the tag shown to the right, with all the little quips on it, was hanging from a jacket I bought on sale in North Carolina. If I just do some of these, my life will improve and if I do ALL of them, who knows where it will lead? I might just get the 'catch the spirit' result.

The important part is that we as health care professionals need to stay healthy in body, mind, and spirit. To do that, we need to be PROACTIVE, focus on solutions to our problems, remain POSITIVE, treat ourselves and others with dignity and respect or be POLITE, and please act as though someone is watching you because they are! Or be PROFESSIONAL. There you go – I used the four P's, see how easy it is. The website for those helpful life hints, for free! www.Kellivrla.wordpress.com.

With more frequency, CRNAs and SRNAs are found to be 'using', some are found dead. If you suspect someone of using, report what it to someone, it could save a life and that is part our business...saving lives. There are 2 #s on the back of your AANA card, one for Peer Assistance and one for Anesthetists in Recovery. This coming year could be one of the most stressful we as anesthesia providers may encounter with all the changes to Medicare and the healthcare industry in general, so do the things that keep you mentally, physically, and spiritually FIT. BE WELL, and if no one has told you today they love you ... I DO. ■



Work hard.
Have fun.
Never give up.
Expect miracles.
Don't whine.
Hug kids.
Be impulsive.
Whistle.
Lead the way.
Don't look back.
Make believe.
Eat chocolate.
Take a stand.
Smell the roses.
Catch the Spirit!

Report from the Program Director

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Renaissance Waverly, in Atlanta Georgia on May 14-15, 2011 and has been described as the most important and comprehensive CE program on Business and Economics of anesthesia that has ever been offered. The GANA has always been at the forefront of continuing education in nurse anesthesia. In keeping with this long standing tradition, a dynamic faculty has been assembled. You will not want to miss our expert group of speakers as they discuss these topics.

In its beginning stages are the preparation for the Annual Fall Meeting which is scheduled to be held at the Crowne Plaza Ravinia, Atlanta Georgia on September 30-October 2, 2011.

Take advantage of this exceptional opportunity to attend these two meetings. Don't miss these exciting programs and the chance to interact with your peers to exchange ideas on issues affecting nurse anesthesia. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend. Updates and additional information are available at www.gana.org. ■

Shadow a CRNA

Contact the GANA office at
770-487-3900 or
[email ganaoffice@bellsouth.net](mailto:ganaoffice@bellsouth.net)

Report from the President

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office based anesthesia are additional reasons to donate to GANA- PAC. Your donation will assure GANA access to the state law makers and allow us to advance the interests of the nurse anesthesia profession in the legislative and regulatory arenas of Georgia.

In closing, I wish you and your loved ones a healthy and prosperous New Year filled with peace, love and good fortune. We understand that asking for donations may be a hardship, and may not seem to change much at all. However, in order to put our plans into action and realize our vision, we need to start small and think big. Start by giving a small monetary donation with the hopes of one day having the honor to serve as GANA President. With your help, the GANA can continue working diligently to enforce its mission of advancing patient safety and furthering the practice of nurse anesthesia in Georgia. Your donation and support are greatly appreciated. ■

GANABoard of Directors Meeting

(Meeting is OPEN to all GANA members)

Saturday, February 12, 2011 10:00 a.m.

Medical Center of Central Georgia

777 Hemlock Street

Macon, GA 31201

GANA Outstanding Student Nurse Anesthetist of the Year Award

Katie Truitt, who just graduated on December 10, 2010 from MCG/Mercer University, was this year's winner of the 14th GANA Outstanding Student Nurse Anesthetist of the Year Award. She was presented the award at the 2010 GANA Annual Fall Meeting in Atlanta. The award is based on excellence in academics, exemplary clinical practice, leadership capability in the GANA, potential for future contribution to the practice of nurse anesthesia and professional body of knowledge and contribution to the GANA/GANAS as a student nurse anesthetist. Katie received \$250.00, a plaque stating the award and her name on the plaque that will remain at the school of the last winner.

During Katie's 2.5 years as a student nurse anesthetist she attended 4 AANA national meetings and 3 GANA state meetings. Katie also attended multiple GANA board meetings, Capitol Day and Proclamation Signing at the Capitol, ran for national student representative, participated in the national AANA mentoring program at Mid-Year Assembly in Washington DC, and participated in the GANA GPB-TV telethon, Georgia Rural Health Association Convention and the National Rural Health Association Convention in Savannah.

Katie will be working for Southern Crescent Nurse Anesthesia. She looks forward to returning home to Newnan, Georgia to be with her husband, Ben, and children, Jameson and Alex and the rest of her family. *Congratulations Katie!*



Martha Kral (left), recipient of the 2010 GANA Rosalie McDonald Award and Katie Truitt (right), recipient of the 2010 GANA Outstanding Student Nurse Anesthetist of the Year Award

Martha Kral Receives the 2010 GANA Rosalie McDonald Award

The 2010 Rosalie McDonald Award was presented to Martha Dukes Kral during the GANA's Annual Business Meeting in Atlanta. Martha is deserving of this award, as evinced by her accomplishments. During her eleven years of involvement with the GANA, she has served as a Director on the Board of Directors,

Vice President, President-Elect, President, and Immediate Past President. Martha also chaired the following committees: Bylaws, Government Relations, Public Relations, and GANA-PAC. In addition, she has served on the Peer Assistance Committee and Fall Program Committee.

On the national level, Martha was elected to the AANA's Resolutions Committee in 2006. She served as the GANA's Federal Political Director (FPD) from 2005-2009.

Martha graduated from nursing school at Clemson and received her nurse anesthesia education from the Medical University of South Carolina. She has worked in a variety of settings as a CRNA in Savannah since 1983. Martha most recently accepted a position as clinical co-coordinator for SRNAs from MUSC, MCG, and the Army at Memorial University Medical Center.

In the true spirit of Rosalie McDonald, founder and first President of the GANA and sixth President of the AANA, Martha's greatest attribute is her sustained contribution to the practice and the profession of nurse anesthesia in Georgia. Martha is easily identified by her enthusiasm, winning smile, and ready laugh. Martha has been a friend, mentor, and colleague to countless CRNAs and SRNAs across our state.



Jim Masiongale, Janice Izlar, Rose Synsmir, Leslie Jeter, Steve Smith and Brent Dubois at the 2010 AANA Fall Assembly of States in Colorado Springs



2010 GANA Fall Retreat



MCG Program Director Jim Masiongale with students Jennifer Perry and Maegan Brass presenting a check on behalf of the GANA to State Representative Ben Harbin from Evans, GA, who is a strong supporter of the MCG Nurse Anesthesia Program



Entrepreneurs Beware! You Better Know What You Don't Know!

by Barry Cranfill, CRNA, MHS, MBA, FAAPM

Confucius is credited with the following quote: “Real knowledge is to know the extent of one’s ignorance.” If you are an enterprising, energetic entrepreneur seeking opportunity and success in the healthcare field, take heed. This business we call anesthesia is awash with legislative and regulatory issues that can derail the most promising of enterprises despite all good intentions to remain compliant. How does one avoid these pitfalls? By seeking continuous education and collaboration with appropriate professionals that can help one navigate the troubled waters of healthcare compliance and emerge on the other shore unscathed and ready for the next voyage.

First, a disclaimer...I am not an attorney and the GANA Practice Committee does not provide legal advice. But with that in mind, I would like to explore an issue that is becoming more and more prevalent within the literature and case law.

As CRNAs are venturing out on their own, optimistically seeking contractual relationships with facilities and surgeons, many are ill-prepared to deal with the various compliance issues that frequently arise during the negotiations and subsequent operations involved. One area that is becoming more troublesome is compliance with Federal Anti-Kickback legislation as it relates to anesthesia services. In their wisdom, our elected leaders have seen fit to enact laws that will punish individuals or entities that knowingly and willfully offer, pay, solicit or receive remuneration intended to induce or reward referral of business reimbursable under any of the Federal Healthcare programs. What are they trying to prevent here? Well in the business world we call it “blood money”... and our leaders see inducements as an opportunity for unscrupulous folks to bilk money out of the Federal healthcare system.

Now let’s examine what that means to anesthesia providers seeking to peddle their services to potential clients that would refer their patients to them for anesthesia services. Let’s ask a few questions. For the purpose of this little quiz, the terms “anesthesia provider” and “facility” are any individuals or entities that are providing billable services to a Federal healthcare program.

- Can the anesthesia provider pay the facility a fee or split the anesthesia fee with the facility in return for the referral of cases to the anesthesia provider?
- Can the anesthesia provider provide, for use at the facility, ANY equipment (anesthesia machines, monitors, IV pumps, ultrasound machines, etc.), drugs, supplies or non anesthesia related personnel to a facility without fair market value compensation from the facility for these items? (Note: the facility fees and/or

professional fees with site of service differential charged to a Federal healthcare program already include reimbursement for these expenses; thus providing these items for free would decrease expenses for the facility and could be construed as remuneration or inducement)

- Can the anesthesia provider provide reimbursement to a facility for bona fide items such as leases for office space, utilization of office equipment, etc. that would not meet “fair market value” testing?

In my non-legal opinion, the answer to ALL of these questions is a resounding “NO!” However, this has not prevented many facilities and anesthesia providers from considering and, in some cases, implementing these types of arrangements. Do these folks intend to break the law? Probably not. They are simply trying to aggressively market their services in a highly competitive environment the best way they know how. But ignorance does not mean innocence. The

Feds will look very poorly upon any perceived scheme that might provide any inducement for referral to any party on either side of the equation. Fines are huge and in some cases, criminal prosecution can result in a wardrobe change that may include an ill-fitting orange jumpsuit and a roommate named “Bubba.”

Additionally, this will affect either entity’s ability to participate in Medicare. Why? When submitting a claim for reimbursement to Medicare, a healthcare provider certifies that they have not violated any Medicare statutes and regulations, to include the anti-kickback statutes. As a result, the provider could be subject to prosecution under the False Claims Act for Medicare fraud. Therefore, a seemingly innocent financial, contractual or operational arrangement could have far-reaching and devastating effects. Imagine being prosecuted, fined and possibly spending time behind bars for anti-kickback violations and Medicare fraud because of your failure to ensure that your financial, contractual and operational relationships are fully compliant.

And please do not make the mistake of assuming that kickbacks or fraud will go undiscovered by Federal agencies. The government encourages and handsomely rewards individuals that report contractor violations of these statutes and regulations. Typically a “whistleblower” can expect to collect 20-25 percent of any recovered damages. With qui tam lawsuit settlements, fines and penalties in the millions of dollars, you can bet that other parties have an interest and incentive to report any and all suspected abuses of the

(continued on back page)



Steve Smith and Rose Synsmir with Frank Purcell, the Senior Director of AANA Federal Government Affairs, at the 2010 AANA Fall Assembly of States



Kathy Mann, CRNA, Rose Synsmir, GANA President, David Ralston, Speaker of the House, Christy Dunkelberger, GANA Executive Director/Legal Counsel and Melanie Marshall, GANA Secretary



AANA 78th Annual Meeting, August 6-10, 2011, Boston

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An Arduous Task

by Sheree Wolfenden, CRNA, JD

My new job as a Program Director has forced me to make and carry out tough decisions to guard the entry and exit of future nurse anesthetists. Now that my career and profession are no longer, and wisely so, the “Best Kept Secret in Nursing”, many registered nurses want to become CRNAs, arguably for the financial gain and/or the career satisfaction. It is my job, as a Program Director, to make sure we accept only the best, most intelligent and clinically gifted nurses into this profession. It begins with training and graduating outstanding nurse anesthetist graduates and only accepting outstanding registered nurses. This task is arduous, seemingly comprised with never-ending fatigue from long weeks and not popular with the SRNA class, at times. It demands a focus and determination so keen that even the slightest error of judgment or clinical skill deficiency is noted, evaluated, and communicated to the student by me.

In closing I want to relate to the GANA readers my thoughts which I spoke at the Mercer Nurse Anesthesia Program Graduation on December 10, 2010 to a graduating class and the audience: “CRNA Colleagues and CRNA students always maintain the highest degree of excellence in your clinical practice and in the communications with the anesthesia team – each and every day. There is no room for mediocrity or average in our profession. You must strive for perfection and demand no less from others in the operating room. You must be the patient advocate and practice patient safety as a daily professional requirement. Also, remember that our profession changes rapidly and we must all continue to read and study our professional journals and review our textbooks to maintain our strong, respected presence in the Anesthesia community. Graduation is one step to entering our proud profession. Now the highest pinnacle is awaiting you – the NBCRNA Exam. Study hard as this exam is extremely difficult. Enjoy your holidays, but not for long, as you should be studying many hours everyday in preparation for this challenging exam.”

I also want to thank Steve Smith, CRNA for the moving and excellent speech he presented to the graduating class as their chosen Graduation Class Commencement speaker. And thank you, Steve, for your graduation commencement speech to my graduates and for almost three decades as my friend and colleague.

Report from the AANA Vice President

National Summit on Advancing Health Through Nursing

by Janice J. Izlar, CRNA, DNAP



In early December, AANA President Santoro asked me to attend the National Summit on Advancing Health Through Nursing in Washington, DC. The summit was sponsored by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), through their initiative on The Future Of Nursing at the Institute of Medicine (IOM). The event served as the official kick-off of the campaign for action and mobilization of the participants to implement recommendations from their recently published report, *The Future of Nursing Leading Change, Advancing Health*. Other AANA representatives in attendance were Executive Director, Dr. Wanda Wilson, Senior Director of Federal Government Affairs, Frank Purcell, and Associate Director of Federal Government Affairs, Ann Walker-Jenkins.

Key messages from the report are:

- Nurses should practice to the full extent of their education and training.
- Nurses should achieve higher levels of education and training through an improved education system that promotes seamless academic progression.
- Nurses should be full partners with physicians and other health care professionals, in redesigning health care in the United States.
- Effective workforce planning and policy making require better data collection and an improved information infrastructure.

The IOM's report recommends the removal of scope-of-practice barriers for Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs). Quotes from their findings explore federal options to maximize the value of APRNs in providing quality, cost-effective healthcare and supports the repeal of the federal physician supervision requirement for CRNAs under Medicare Part A. Additional recommendations from the report vital to CRNA practice are to expand opportunities for nurses to lead and manage collaborative efforts with physicians and other members of the health care team, to double the number of nurses with a doctorate by 2020 and for educational programs to prepare nurses to become leaders in the health care system.

Speakers at the summit included Dr. Donna Shalala, Chair of the Committee for the RWJF Initiative on the Future of Nursing at the IOM, Risa Lavizzo Mourey, RWJF President, Dr. Donald Berwick, Director of Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), and Susan Reinhard representing the AARP. Smaller action planning sessions on implementation strategy of the report's recommendations with particular interest to CRNAs were Expanding Nurse Practice Potential, Increasing Educational Capacity to Meet Consumer Needs, Expanding Leadership Opportunities for Nurses, and Workforce Development. I attended an energizing session exploring opportunities for nurses to assume key leadership roles in the healthcare system, with regulatory agencies, public policy influencers, and third party payors.

RWJF, in collaboration with AARP, will coordinate state-based work groups called Regional Action Coalitions (RAC) to bring together a broad range of leaders from healthcare, business, education, government and philanthropy sectors that work

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Major Changes in Washington, DC Affect CRNAs Nationwide

by Steve Smith CRNA, MA



On November 2, 2010 the national elections brought about major change to the nation's capital. Voters elected a Republican majority in the House of Representatives and reduced, but did not replace, the Democratic majority in the Senate. What do these changes mean for CRNAs throughout the country? In the House, decisions over what legislation comes to the House floor and what gets blocked will now be made by Speaker John Boehner (R-OH-8th) and his GOP team rather than Nancy Pelosi, former Speaker of House and her Democratic team. The healthcare committees in the House will also get new Republican chairs and members.

Several legislators went down to defeat in the elections that had been instrumental and supportive to CRNA causes. However, there was a gain in several CRNA-friendly legislators who were elected into the Senate. There were 130 CRNA-PAC supported candidates who were seated in the new 112th Congress. Also of note, an anesthesiologist from Maryland, Andy Harris (R-MD-1st) elected to the House.

While many Congressional Republicans ran for election promising to repeal and replace the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) and the new Republican-controlled House may indeed pass such a bill, the Democratic controlled Senate will not move on it. President Obama also has veto power and is very unlikely to repeal healthcare reform.

Here in Georgia we have two new Representatives. Rob Woodall (R-7th) was elected to a seat previously held by John Linder (R) and Austin Scott (R) defeated Democrat incumbent John Marshall in the 8th district. The CRNA-PAC (supports federal election campaigns) this year contributed \$1000 each to John Barrow, Johnny Isakson, Jack Kingston, and Austin Scott. Maegan Brass, a recent graduate from MCG, was instrumental in securing a generous donation from the CRNA-PAC for Austin Scott. These contributions by the CRNA-PAC are intended to help advance the mission, vision and goals of the AANA and the nurse anesthesia profession, and not to advance a partisan objective.

Congress took action in December to provide a one year relief from Medicare Part B payment cuts for anesthesia and physician payment. Without the action Congress took, reduction in the current anesthesia payment conversion factor from \$21.79 per unit to \$15.81 on January 1, 2011, would have reduced total Medicare anesthesia reimbursement for 900 cases by \$64,584. The relief is for one year, and it is not permanent. Unless Congress takes further action during 2011 to provide additional relief, another round of Medicare Part B payment cuts of 30 percent or more will hit anesthesia and physician payment on January 1, 2012.

I encourage all of you to attend the 2011 AANA Mid-Year Assembly in Washington DC scheduled for April 10-13. It's a meeting like no other and a great way to give back to your profession. The current legislative and regulatory issues that face CRNAs on a national level will

be discussed followed by lobbying on Capitol Hill with Georgia's 13 Representatives and 2 U.S. Senators from Georgia. Like never before, I believe we have a wonderful opportunity to get our message across in the wake of the two national studies (Health Affairs and Nursing Economics) published in 2010 that concluded the quality, safety, efficiency and cost effectiveness of CRNAs. Now is our time to advocate for our cause. The recent Institute of Medicine report is still even further evidence that CRNAs are highly qualified professionals and should be allowed to practice to the full extent of their capabilities, ensuring all Americans access to safe, affordable healthcare.

Please consider investing in our national political action committee, CRNA-PAC. As mentioned previously it is a nonpartisan separate segregated fund that supports the federal election campaigns of candidates who are influential to CRNAs interests in federal healthcare policy. Contributions to CRNA-PAC are needed to keep our political presence on the national front strong and move forward to the future. Please go to www.gana.org or www.aana.com to contribute.

I will be attending the 2011 AANA Federal Political Directors Conference on February 18-20 in Phoenix, Arizona. This is a special conference held every two years for FPDs which will include discussions on the current CRNA issues in Washington, developing fundamental skills in political organization specific to CRNAs, and building professional relationships and networking. I look forward to representing Georgia at this meeting and will pass pertinent information on to our members. If you do not receive Anesthesia E-ssential please access www.aana.com to read it. It comes out every two weeks and has an abundance of current information valuable to CRNA practice and it covers the current federal political issues in detail to keep you informed and up-to-date. ■

National Summit

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together to transform the role of nurses and ensure Americans have access to the high quality care they need and deserve.

Overall, for me, networking was the highlight of attending this meeting. It was a pleasure to speak with representatives from other professional organizations, CMS, AARP, Boards of Nursing, regulatory agencies, accrediting bodies, academics and additional stakeholders gathered to initiate action, mobilize participants, and implement this landmark report supporting the nurses' role in the healthcare system. ■

A Christmas Tree: In a Different Light

by Brooke Kesler, SRNA

Mercer University/MCCG Nurse Anesthesia Program, Class of 2011

As I stare into a brightly decorated Christmas tree, I wonder, "How in the world am I supposed to summarize a year and a half of CRNA School into a short article?" Countless hours of studying, clinical time, cups of coffee, pens, highlighters, presentations, meetings and all on minimal sleep summarized into a few paragraphs ... no way! Then it hit me, I can use the vibrantly shining, beautifully decorated Christmas tree.

When entering a CRNA program, the student has been chosen from many applicants. It is necessary to have all the requirements plus the potential to be successful as a CRNA. It is like going to a Christmas tree farm. All of the trees are Christmas trees, but that does not make them all right. They have to be the right height to fit in the home, have branches to support the decorations, and well-rounded in order to be viewed from any direction.

Once chosen, the tree is accepted into the home and placed on the tree stand. The tree stand serves as the foundation, just like the first semester of CRNA School. The tree must also be watered; however, the tree must absorb the water on its own. Each student is taught the information, but it is each student's responsibility to learn and comprehend the information. The lights of knowledge begin to shine once the foundation is placed and clinical begins. There are only a few lights in the beginning, and they may not shine very bright. As more time is spent in clinical and more knowledge is gained, more lights are placed on the tree and they begin to shine brightly.

Along with knowledge, skills must also be obtained. Skills are like beautifully decorated ornaments to hang on the tree's branches. The tree does not come with ornaments, but they must be hand-crafted and placed carefully on the branches. Some branches may not be strong enough to support the ornament at first, but after dedication and effort, a branch can be found to support each ornament.

After the foundation, water, lights, and ornaments, the tree needs to be topped. Whether an angel, star, or bow, the tree topper is always exciting and is the completion of the tree. Graduation and passing of boards is the tree topper to CRNA School. It is the final step for every student and brings mixed emotions of excitement and anxiety.

Once the tree is complete, it is time for presents! The gifts placed below the tree are presents for everyone who has been a part of the journey. There are presents for family members, friends, administrators, didactic instructors, clinical instructors, and so on. There is also a gift of compassion and knowledge for each patient the student will come in contact with in the future.

Oddly enough, I have found a way to relate CRNA School to a Christmas tree. With many lights to gain and ornaments to hang, by the time December 2011 arrives, my goal is to be a brightly shining Christmas tree with numerous ornaments and presents galore! ■



Mercer students and faculty at the 2010 GANA Annual Fall Meeting

Class of 2012 Finishes First Semester

by Tina Powers, SRNA
Mercer University/MCCG Nurse Anesthesia Program, Class of 2012

It has been an interesting, exciting, and challenging first semester for the CO 2012. We began anesthesia school with a gathering at our anatomy professor's home that was hosted by our upper classmen. It was very exciting to meet some of our professors and to get to know our upper classmen. We were overwhelmed with joy and anticipation of what our 28-month journey would entail.

As classes began, reality hit. We dove in head first with Anatomy, Principles of Anesthesia, Pharmacology I, and Physical Assessment. There were many challenges in juggling the mass amount of material for which we were responsible. We were told that we would be pushed farther than we thought we could endure. This semester proved that statement to be true, but what we found was that as a class, we can endure more than we thought possible just a few short months ago.

One of the highlights this semester was the opportunity to dissect a cadaver. In the past years, the anesthesia students have used the cadavers that had been dissected by the medical students. Because of circumstances beyond our control, we were required to spend a week preparing a cadaver for our final exam. Even though this required many hours from our entire class and detracted from our study time, it was an incredible experience. We feel very fortunate that we have such a wonderful cadaver lab to enhance our learning.

In October, we joined others across our state at the GANA conference. We were able to hear many great lectures on various aspects of anesthesia. It was also a wonderful experience to be able to meet anesthesia students from another school as well as current

anesthesia providers. One of the things that impressed us the most was the great pride that providers in the anesthesia profession express. We feel very honored to be entering such a profession.

The CO 2012 looks forward to the next semester as we continue with the didactic portion of our education and also as we begin our clinical portion in the OR. Initially, we will be working with our upper classmen in the OR as we are introduced to the routine. It will be an invaluable experience to be able to pull what we have learned this first semester into the real world of anesthesia.

As I reflect on this past semester, I am reminded of not only the many challenges, but also of what an incredible experience anesthesia school has been thus far. We have learned more than we thought possible in these short few months and we have learned to work as a team as we face what lies ahead. With the adjustment to being full time students, we found great support with the staff at our school as well as with the upper classmen. The next two years, though not easy, will be a time of learning and growth both professionally and personally. The CO 2012 is ready for the journey. ■



MCG 2010 graduates with professors Jim and Amy Masiongale, Lisa Stephens and GANA President Rose Synsmir



MCG students and faculty at the 2010 GANA Annual Fall Meeting in Atlanta



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Entrepreneurs Beware!

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system wherever they may be discovered. Additionally, CMS has engaged and empowered commercial Recovery Audit Contractors to relentlessly seek out and pursue any contractors that have engaged in fraudulent activity. These contractors also share in a significant percentage of the recovered damages.

Discriminating and intelligent minds will want to know: "Are there exceptions to these rules?" Thankfully, the rules are not bereft of common sense and therefore have very specific exceptions and "safe harbors" that may be applicable to a specific situation. But testing for these exceptions and safe harbors is not for the faint of heart and typically requires a comprehensive understanding of these complex rules that is beyond the scope of the average anesthesia provider.

Now how does one ensure compliance? Read and understand the current rules of your market. Find and formally engage competent, legal counsel experienced in healthcare compliance and review your financial, contractual and operational issues on a regular basis. It is important to know what you don't know and relentlessly seek to fill in the gaps.

"The doorstep to the temple of wisdom is a knowledge of our own ignorance."
Ben Franklin. ■