



To & Fro

A Publication of the Georgia Association of Nurse Anesthetists • Volume 75 • Spring 2014

Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists CRNAs

- Represent nearly 150 years of quality anesthesia
- Safely administer approximately 34 million anesthetics in the US every year
- Represented by 47,000 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
- Provide high quality, safe, efficient and cost effective anesthesia care

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.

Vision Statement

Recognized leaders who are committed to patient safety, practice autonomously to the fullest extent of their scope of practice, and are consummate professionals with 100% of its members belonging to the AANA/ GANA, and are fully reimbursed for all anesthesia services.

Report from the President

GANA Priorities for 2014

by Mark Schmitz, CRNA



Shortly after attending Capital Day in Atlanta in January, several GANA Board members and CRNAs attended Georgia Rural Health Day representing Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists at the Georgia Rural Health Association's Capital Day. Again we reemphasized the critical importance that CRNAs contribute to Rural Georgia and its citizens. The people to whom we spoke were advised that a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist is a full service anesthesia provider. Not a helper of the Anesthesiologist as they had been informed by groups of people with incorrect information, be it intentional or not. You are a full service provider. Georgia law does not state that you must work with an anesthesiologist. CRNAs provide the majority of hands on anesthesia in rural Georgia. Without the ability to administer anesthesia as we have been educated, particularly rurally, the citizens of Georgia will have limits to access to quality anesthetic services.

On a good note, when I attended Midyear Assembly of States, the news on the federal issues of healthcare seemed more positive in ways. All of the Congressional offices were confident that with the Affordable Care Act moving at its present manner, CRNAs were going to be in high demand due to the government finding the use of APRNs more affordable and without decreases in safety for

the consumers. The federal rules will defer to state statute. Therefore we need to have strong support on the state level. With the upcoming elections, this would be a good time to make visits to your representative offices or write them finding their positions on CRNA issues and whether you can support them or not. Call their campaign office and ask for their position statements. Thank you to those of you that have spoken to your Congressional members and establish a relationship with them. I did speak with one of the members who talking about the friendships they have with some of the CRNAs in their district. Also many thanks again for the extra time covered at home by those CRNAs so that GANA could attend these functions. ■



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www.gana.org



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From the Executive Director

by Christy A. Dunkelberger, Esq.



The Success of GANA Depends on You

GANA has over 1200 members. If all 1200+ members were actively engaged in the work of GANA, we would be phenomenal, untouchable and unstoppable. Unfortunately, all 1200 members are not actively engaged. You may have noticed that most years the ballot for GANA elections has only one candidate for each open position. Further, you may or may not know that we only attract approximately 150 attendees to our annual state meetings. There are numerous factors that prevent members from being active in GANA. Some of those factors are self-imposed. We live in an age where time is often deemed our most precious commodity. We therefore, protect it, hoard it and share it very sparingly. There is an isolationist attitude about personal time. Time for our families, time for ourselves, time for leisure are more important than getting involved with the demands of running an organizations or dealing with politics.

Whether it is by choice or default the majority are allowing someone else to tend to the business of nurse anesthesia. I caution you – do not get caught in the trap of “everything will be fine.” It is of utmost importance that you at the very least have a working knowledge of each and every outside source that is attempting to shape, change, regulate, govern or affect the profession of nurse anesthesia. If you cannot be actively engaged – then at least be actively knowledgeable. Read professional journals; peruse the AANA and GANA websites for current issues and trends; monitor the Board of Nursing website and watch for proposed rules that affect CRNAs; monitor the Georgia Composite Medical Board’s website and watch for proposed rules that affect CRNA practice; monitor competitors’ websites as well; and hold discussions with colleagues. Be involved at some level. Do not be complacent or indifferent. Be involved at some level. GANA is your state-wide organization and it can accomplish great things, but only with your involvement.

2014 Legislative Wrap-up

The 2014 session of the Georgia General Assembly is history and election season is in full swing. As you know we faced some challenges this past year and now is the time to communicate with the candidates about issues affecting CRNAs. It is important for GANA members to make contact with the candidates running in their districts and learn about their views towards CRNAs and issues important to CRNAs. Lend your support to those who understand and support our issues. The primary election was on May 20th. If there is no run-off, we now know who will be on the ballot in November.

You may recall that last year HB 178 addressing pain management was passed over our objections. This year we worked with Representative Weldon to have the law amended to remove the restriction placed on CRNAs’ scope of practice. After several meetings with Representative Weldon and other interested parties such as the Board of Medicine, GSA, MAG, the Attorney General’s Office and others, the best offer we got was that the restriction placed on CRNAs by HB 178 would be fixed by rules promulgated by the medical board. We were told that since the law directs the medical board to define “medical treatment or services” through rules, that the medical board could exempt CRNA services through its definition of medical treatment or services in its rulemaking. Unfortunately, neither MAG nor GSA liked the proposed rule that did just that. Therefore, the board of medicine has decided to exempt CRNAs under the section which defines the providers who must be present when services are rendered in a pain management clinic. By doing so, the rule is in direct contradiction

(continued on page 5)

The Student's Side

by Joseph C. Penick III, SRNA



Another semester is over at Georgia Regents University and I think I speak for everyone when I say it feels great! The class of 2014 is beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel as we now have two full semesters of clinical rotations under our belts and have two left to go. Many students have begun to buckle down and start preparing for boards already as some have attended the Valley Review course in Dallas, TX recently. Others are planning to attend the course in Orlando this fall.

The class of 2015 has just finished their second semester finals and are getting ready for their last didactic semester this summer. They will be taking courses such as Technologies and Techniques II where they will learn many hands-on skills as well as Pharmacology II and Advanced Principles of Anesthesia II. They are looking forward to putting their book knowledge to good use in the OR this fall and working on their technical skills that they have been practicing in the simulation lab.

The senior students recently returned from the AANA Mid-Year Assembly in Arlington, VA which went very well. Everyone I spoke with, CRNAs and SRNAs alike, had a great experience there. The conference was very beneficial for multiple reasons including the legislative visits that were made. The student body would like to thank Mr. Steve Smith for all of the time and effort he put into scheduling the visits and organizing much of the trip for us. We would also like to thank all of the GANA board members who were there mentoring us and leading the legislative visits. ■



GRU SRNAs Darrell Ragan, Tripp penick and Tyler Harris
"Looking Good" on Capitol Hill at this year's AANA
Mid-Year Assembly



Nominations for the 2014 Rosalie McDonald Award Now Being Accepted

GANA is seeking nominations for a CRNA to receive the 2014 Rosalie McDonald Award. Please nominate a worthy CRNA for this prestigious award. All nominations must be submitted by August 8th to the GANA office. Nominations should be prepared in narrative format and submitted by mail, fax or email to:

GANA, 1832 Highway 54 W.
Fayetteville, GA 30214;
or facsimile: 770.632.1625;
or email: ganaoffice@bellsouth.net.

Rosalie McDonald spearheaded the GANA in 1938. She was the first GANA President and the 6th AANA President. Please take pride in your profession and honor a fellow CRNA by nominating someone for their contribution to our profession. The honoree will be presented with the award at the 2014 GANA Fall Meeting in Atlanta, Georgia on October 4th.



2014 Mid-Year Assembly Report

by Steve Smith, CRNA, MA

As I was preparing to sit down and write this report it occurred to me that this was my eighth year in a row to attend the AANA Mid-Year Assembly (MYA) and fifth in a row as your GANA Federal Political Director (FPD). It has brought me great joy and been an honor to represent the GANA as your FPD for that long. To my knowledge, in those last eight years, we have not missed a single legislative visit. Thanks to all of the GANA members that have attended the MYA over the last eight years. The GANA has been well represented on Capitol Hill advocating for all of the CRNAs back home in Georgia.

This year, a record 900 AANA members attended the MYA, learned about CRNA issues and principles of professional advocacy, then took what they learned to the offices of their members of Congress on Capitol Hill. Four CRNAs and twenty SRNAs from Georgia made 16 legislative visits on April 8th. Our main objective this year was to remove all barriers that prevent CRNAs and APRNs from practicing to the fullest extent of our training and education.

There were four main topics of discussion for which we asked the legislators for their support. The first was to ask Congress to support the work of the VA to improve Veterans access to high quality healthcare. We asked them to contact the Veterans Administration to urge adoption of the VHA Nursing Handbook and recognize the full practice authority of CRNAs/APRNs. We asked for their support of the Provider Nondiscrimination Law, a part of the Affordable Care Act that took effect January 2014. We asked them to consider writing or joining a letter to the Administration in support of this law. We asked them to support continued efforts to permanently repeal the SGR cuts and reform Medicare payment. Lastly, we asked for their support on Nurse Anesthesia Workforce Development. Primarily to support additional funding for nurse anesthetists and other APRNs. As you may guess, many of the legislators were very supportive of our issues, but not all. We will continue the cause, educate and hopefully get them to support us down the road on that same issue or others.

I would personally like to thank the CRNAs that attended MYA, GANA President Mark Schmitz, President-Elect Leslie Jeter and Government Relations Chair Kay Argroves along with the 20 students. It was definitely a team effort. We all had a minimum of 4-6 visits on Capitol Hill. Also during the meeting and before the visits to Capitol Hill Mark and Kay met with Congressman Austin Scott during a fundraiser that was supported by the AANA CRNA-PAC. Leslie Jeter and I

had the honor of once again being a part of the Student Mentoring Program. This program allows students an opportunity to network with other students, CRNAs, and Association leaders at the meeting. The primary goal is to mentor and produce future leaders of the AANA. Leslie and I also attended the AANA CRNA-PAC event, "A Monumental Occasion" at the American Pharmacist Association's historic building overlooking the Lincoln Memorial, Washington Monument, Kennedy Center and Arlington Cemetery. This event helped raise over \$10,000 for the CRNA-PAC. Perhaps one of the highlights of the meeting for me was to get to meet all of the candidates running for an AANA board position and listen to their position statements. If you have not yet voted, please do. You have until May 20th to cast your vote.

In closing, I would like to discuss the CRNA-PAC 2014 development campaign with its goals of reaching the entire membership and strengthening the voice of the nurse anesthesia profession on Capitol Hill during this critical national election year. Governed by CRNAs and consisting 100 percent of AANA member contributions rather than dues dollars, the CRNA-PAC puts the AANA and CRNAs before members of the House and Senate hundreds of times each year, supports CRNA-friendly candidates, and ensures that CRNAs are heard by legislators influential on CRNA issues. If you would like to contribute to the CRNA-PAC go to www.crna-pac.com and make your contribution today. Only eight percent of all AANA members gave to CRNA-PAC in 2013. If every member of the AANA contributed just \$40 to the CRNA-PAC, it would raise \$1.8 million – our total fundraising goal for the 2013-2014 election cycle. ■

Shadow a CRNA

Contact the GANA office
by email at
ganaoffice@bellsouth.net

Need Malpractice Insurance?
Contact AANA Insurance Services at
1-800-343-1368 or obtain insurance
information from the AANA website.

Georgia CRNAs in Action – Georgia Rural Health Association Day



Speaker of the House David Ralston during Georgia Rural Health Association Day – March 5, 2014



GANA Student Representative Tripp Penick, GANA President Mark Schmitz and President-Elect Leslie Jeter



Leslie Jeter, Jo Sineath, Mark Schmitz, Kay Argroves, Christy Dunkelberger, Misti Browder, Tripp Penick and Jannine Deraney



GRU students Tripp Penick and Misti Browder

From the Executive Director

(continued from page 2)

with and expands the law. The problem is not fixed. GANA is committed to correcting the restriction imposed on CRNAs by HB 178. We will continue to pursue a legislative correction. You can help by talking to candidates running for State office.

GANA Meetings

GANA Board Meeting – The next GANA Board Meeting is scheduled for August 23rd at GRU in Augusta. If any member is interested in attending a Board meeting, please call the GANA office at 770.487.3900 to make a reservation. Please check the website at www.gana.org for all meeting dates.

GANA Annual Fall Meeting – The 2014 Annual Fall Meeting will be held in downtown Atlanta this year. Save the date and mark your calendars now to attend from October 3-5,, 2014 at the Westin Peachtree Plaza in Atlanta. The Westin Peachtree Plaza, is an Atlanta skyline icon, crowned by the revolving Sun Dial Restaurant. The 73-story hotel overlooks some of the best attractions and things to do in Atlanta. Located in the heart of downtown Atlanta, the hotel is attached to AmericasMart, and just steps away from CNN Center, Georgia World Congress, World of Coca Cola, Philips Arena, College Football Hall of Fame, and the Georgia Dome. Room rates for GANA are \$119.00/night. Visit www.IPGE.com for complete meeting details. ■

AANA Mid-Year Assembly – April 5-9



Tripp Penick, Kay Argroves, Darrell Ragan, Rebekah Korn, Rachel Green, Mike Janich, Holly Dilworth, Tyler Harris and Congressman Doug Collins's LA Vernon Robinson



AANA ED Wanda Wilson, Steve Smith, AANA President-Elect Sharon Pearce, GANA President Mark Schmitz, Leslie Jeter and Kay Argroves



Congressman Austin Scott, Kay Argroves and Mark Schmitz



Rebecca Kerko, Kay Argroves, Alex Ray and Lauren Meccarielli



SRNA Becki Dannelly, AANA President Dennis Bless and Leslie Jeter



*Steve Smith, Kay Argroves, AANA Federal Government Affairs Director Frank Purcell, Bonnie Cooper and Mark Schmitz.
Taken at the AANA FGA Office in Washington, DC*



Thomas Dorney – Legislative Assistant for Congressman John Lewis, Rebekah Korn, Alex Parker, Leslie Jeter, Tripp Penick and Mike Janich



More from AANA Mid-Year Assembly – April 5-9



Steve Smith, Nathaly Nixon, Stacey Elzey, Tom Price's LA Amanda Street, Anita Garland and Rebecca Kerko



Celebrating with the students another successful year at the AANA Mid-Year Assembly



Steve Smith, Leslie Jeter, Kay Argroves and Mark Schmitz



Kelli Smith, Rachel Greene, Congressman Paul Broun's LA Erica Miller, Bonnie Cooper and Lauren Meccarielle



Steve Smith, Lauren Meccarielle, Nathaly Nixon, Tyler Harris, Sanford Bishop's LA Jonathan Halpern, Boram Chung, Kay Argroves and Kelli Smith



Steve Smith, Darrell Ragan, Holly Dilworth, Stacey Elzey, Congressman John Barrow, Kay Argroves, Rebecca Kerko, Alex Ray and Mike Janich



Misti Browder, Rachel Greene, Tyler Harris, Stacey Elzey, Rebekah Korn, Bonnie Cooper, Congressman Tom Graves' LA Rebecca Anderson and Leslie Jeter



Holly Dilworth, Tyler Harris, Nathaly Nixon, Leslie Jeter, Anita Garland, Saxby Chambliss' LA Bo Butler, Alex Parker and Darrell Ragan

Legislative Update

by Kay Argroves



This was the second year of the 152nd session of the General Assembly in 2014. The Georgia General Assembly consists of 180 Representatives and 56 Senators. Their responsibilities include setting the state budget, proposing bills, hopefully passing some, and making resolutions. They meet in the gold domed capital building for a maximum of 40 days, and this makes up their legislative session each year.

This year they met from January 13, 2014 until March 21, 2014. The last day of the legislative session is referred to as “Sine Die” which means “without day” in Latin. Here is a short synopsis of what transpired during this wild legislative session ride.

HB 268 Defeated. This bill was introduced by Senator Chuck Hufstetler from Rome. He is an Anesthesiology Assistant, educated at Emory, who is a member of the Health and Human Services Committee. If this bill had passed, it would have allowed an authorizing physician to delegate to a physician assistant the authority to prescribe Schedule II controlled substances.

HB 391 Passed. It was initially known as HB 922, and was altered and passed on the last day of session. It allows a physician serving as a community based faculty, non-compensated physician a \$1000.00 tax credit for mentoring a minimum of three to a maximum of ten GA. medical students, GA. physician assistant’s students or GA nurse practitioner students. Instruction must be in family medicine, internal medicine, pediatrics, obstetrics, gynecology, emergency medicine, psychiatry or general surgery. The state wide Area Health Education Centers Program office at GA. Regents will administer the program and certify rotations.

HB 943 Passed. This bill limits co-pays to no more than \$200.00 for any filled oral prescription of chemotherapy drugs. Tacked on to this was some language to prevent state or local governments from using their resources to promote some Affordable Care requirements and any further Medicaid expansion.

HB 990 Passed. This bill prohibits the expansion of Medicaid eligibility through an increase in the income threshold unless first approved by the legislature. This relieves the Governor of the being the sole limiting factor for the further expansion of Medicaid recipients

numbers.

HB 885 Defeated. This bill would have allowed research of a non-hallucinogenic, non inhaled medical derivative of cannabis by academic medical centers for the treatment of cancer, glaucoma and seizure disorders. Special concern was for children with seizure disorders and those with an autism spectrum disorder. SB 397 (below) grew out of attempts to pass HB 885 without success.

SB 397 Defeated. This bill mandated insurance coverage for children with autism. The House refused to pass the autism insurance mandate with the medical cannabis bill attached while the Senate refused to pass the medical cannabis bill unless the autism bill was passed.

SR 981 Passed. This bill established a committee to study the effects of violence toward health care workers, and established another committee to study the effects of medical cannabis derivatives.

SB 273 Passed. This bill established a Maternal Mortality Review Committee to evaluate maternal deaths and to develop measures to address and reduce this dire statistic. Currently, Georgia has the highest maternal death rate in the US.

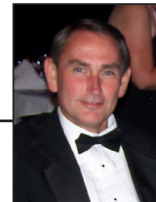
HB 965 Passed. This bill protects certain drug users seeking emergency treatment and allows the lay administration of opioid antagonists such as nalcron for overdoses.

Two other bills that do not really impact the anesthesia community directly, but are of interest are the passage of HB 772 and HB 875. HB 772 requires applicants and or recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Food Stamps (SNAP) to be tested at any time for illegal drug use if there is a suspicion of use due to an arrest or behavior. HB 875 allows for guns to be carried in bars and many government offices. Churches may also allow guns on their premises. School employees may be permitted to carry guns at their School Board’s discretion while honorably discharged military veterans, under the age of 21, may also carry concealed weapons.

Thanks to all who attended Capitol Day at the dome on January 22nd or worked for someone so they could attend. Also thanks to those who spoke with their legislators in their districts or at the capitol as well as to those who have contributed to GANA PAC. ■

Georgia Regents University Nurse Anesthesia Program Report

by James Masiongale, CRNA, MHS
Director and Clinical Coordinator



I am happy to report that all the graduates from the Class of 2013 have passed boards and are now employed as CRNAs. Several students chose to go outside Georgia for employment but most took jobs in Georgia. We look forward to all the great things they will accomplish in their anesthesia careers.

One of the requirements the students have, as part of their professional aspect of anesthesia class is to attend the AANA Mid-Year Assembly as a senior. Year after year the overwhelming feedback from students attending the meeting is that they feel it is crucial to introduce students to the importance of educating elected officials about CRNAs and highly recommend it remain a requirement to attend. This year something unusual occurred for the first time, the dates for Mid-Year occurred during the students' spring break. As you may or may not know, we are required by the university to follow the academic calendar meaning the school could not require the students to attend. So for the first time, the option to attend Mid-Year was voluntary. I am happy to report that all of the Class of 2014 (except one that had already been excused prior to the date being set) chose to attend. I think this speaks volumes about our students' dedication to their future profession and the quality of students the program is fortunate to have. The program would like to thank Steve Smith for agreeing to fill in for the professors that were unable to attend due to a wedding.

The Class of 2015 will be entering their last semester of didactic this summer and are anxiously waiting to getting into the clinical arena. The Class of 2016 has been filled with 30 very qualified individuals and will be arriving on campus in mid August as the Class of 2015 enters clinical.

As always I want to thank all of the clinical instructors. You are the heart and backbone of our program and without you we could not exist. Taking the time to share your knowledge, experience, and skills is one of the greatest gifts you can give back to this wonderful profession. You are true Hero's in the eyes of the students and didactic faculty, and we are forever grateful to you.

If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to send me an email or give me a call.

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Georgia Association of Nurse Anesthetists PAC

*I am contributing \$ _____ to further
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Nurse Practitioner _____ Other (specify) _____ (Mandatory for all donations greater than \$100)

Are you interested in lobbying with the GANA during the legislative session? _____

Are you acquainted with any of Georgia's legislators? _____ If yes, who? _____

Please clip and send to: **Robbie Pope, GANA-PAC Treasurer, P.O. Box 887, Tifton, GA 31793**

Forms available at www.gana.org

*Thank you for
your contribution
to this worthy
cause for your
profession!*



More from AANA Mid-Year Assembly – April 5-9



Amanda Fowler, Boram Chung, Leslie Jeter, Congressman Rob Woodall's LA Janet Rossi, Mike Janich and Anita Garland



Alex Ray, Rebecca Kerko, Johnny Isakson's LA Chance Phiniezy, Lauren Meccarielli, and Kay Argroves



Steve Smith, Boram Chung, Rachel Greene, Kelli Smith, Hank Johnson's LA Scott Goldstein, Mike Janich, Rebekah Korn and Tripp Penick



Steve Smith, Kay Argroves, Mark Schmitz, Lauren Meccarieeli, Nathaly Nixon, Congressman David Scott, Bonnie Cooper, Kelli Smith, Rebecca Kerko and Alex Parker



Steve Smith, Mark Schmitz, Congressman David Scott's LA Lauren Lattany, Bonnie Cooper, Kelli Smith, Alex Ray, Nathaly Nixon, Rebecca Kerko, Lauren Meccarielli and Kay Argroves

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Recovery (AIR)
215.635.0183**

“How YOU Doin’?”

*by Barry Cranfill, CRNA, MHS, MBA, FAAPM
GANA State Reimbursement Specialist*



Joey Tribbiani from the hit TV show “Friends” used this pick-up line time and again, with great success. The line is simple, but what made it work was the courage of the delivery. Joey was a master!

Now, I’m going to ask you: “How YOU doin’?” As anesthesia practitioners, we are always looking for ways to improve our clinical services. We read the journals, attend meetings and participate in various other activities all to ensure that we are providing the very best, state of the art, care to our patients. We gather quality data, analyze our clinical performance and adapt our techniques and training as needed to improve our clinical services. So I KNOW how you are doing clinically ... but how are you doing as a business?

In the business environment of strategic management, human resources, taxes, balance sheets, income statements, accounts receivable, accounts payable, etc. etc., you have some idea of the viability of your enterprise based on whether there is any money left over at the end of the year. But is that ALL you need to know about how you are doing?

The MBA types of the world love to use benchmarking. The objective of benchmarking is to compare one’s business processes and performance metrics to industry bests or best practices from other industries. Being profitable is great, but are you doing as well as others in your industry? Asking that question takes courage. Comparing performance in key areas (revenue, cost, productivity, profitability, customer satisfaction, financial performance, etc.) to industry leaders provides a business with real, quantifiable data that will reveal gaps, and identify areas where improvement can be sought. Where the benchmarking comparison is favorable, the data can provide validation of current practices and processes. The idea is simplistic, but the execution of the comparison is often an arduous task.

Data is the key. One must have the ability to gather, report, analyze and compare specific parameters. Everyone HAS the data...but few understand how to extract, report and analyze the information, much less where to find similar data points for comparison with industry leaders. Please allow me to point you in the right direction!

The AANA has established an association to association relationship with the Medical Group Management Association (MGMA). The MGMA is the largest national professional association for medical practices, complete with state chapters, much like our AANA. In fact, the MGMA

has a specific group within the organization dedicated solely to anesthesia. For the past several years, I have been privileged to represent the AANA at the MGMA Anesthesia Administration Assembly (AAA). As a veteran member of the MGMA/AAA I am excited to see this collaboration continue to expand between our organizations. The AANA initiative to work with the MGMA has had a very positive impact on MGMA members and their practices. Continued education from the AANA related to innovative practice models, CRNA capabilities and the positive impact CRNAs can have on the profitability of an anesthesia practice has paid huge dividends for our profession. Many MGMA “physician only” practices have used the data to transition to adding CRNAs to their practice and others have adjusted their MD/CRNA staffing ratios to maximize profitability. Did these practices change because the AANA was there? No! The practices changed because the AANA used the MGMA benchmarking data to show how CRNA utilization can benefit these practices! This is benchmarking in action!

But how can YOU use the MGMA for benchmarking? Each year the MGMA conducts several surveys that practices can utilize to benchmark their performance. If a member practice participates and provides data, then the survey report is free (or available for the tidy sum of \$730 if you are not a participating member), complete with the ability to use computerized data mining/diving capability to compare your performance to similar practices across the region and nationally. The surveys include Cost surveys as well as Compensation and Productivity and other various surveys. The amount of data included in these benchmarking exercises is enormous and encompasses every aspect of your anesthesia business. The data mining capability is staggering. I would encourage everyone to consider participating in the surveys as a means of obtaining easy, and usable benchmarking data. Additionally, the MGMA is a treasure trove of other resources that can be useful to any anesthesia practice. Certainly, all of the specific compliance and legal issues that I have discussed in the last few issues of the To & Fro are well covered by the MGMA. The information is there to help keep MGMA members informed and up to date on the latest information regarding regulatory and statutory compliance.

Another great source for payer benchmarking is the annual ASA Managed Care Survey. Published each fall in the ASA Newsletter, this data is available for you to utilize to determine how your managed care contracts compare to national and regional standards. Each year, practices across the nation report their managed care rates in a blinded fashion (to avoid running afoul of price fixing laws). You can use this benchmarking data during your contract negotiations with your payers to ensure that you

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“How YOU Doin’?”

(continued from page 11)

are negotiating from a knowledgeable and verifiable position related to the current market. Once again, the benchmarking would be of great benefit to your practice.

After you gather the data and determine how you are doing, then what? If there was ever a “downside” to benchmarking, this where the problem lies. Many folks erroneously believe that you benchmark against the better performers and then simply imitate their activities to replicate their success. But nothing could be farther from the truth. If you simply mimic the successful competition, then you are imitating what they did several years ago to be successful. You will still be behind as the industry leaders are adapting and changing their approaches to improve every year. Doing what they DID won’t get you where they are GOING...it will only get you where they were. So do not fall prey to the assumption that one should simply adopt the practices that worked in the past. Be bold. Be innovative. Innovation separates leaders from followers. See the gaps that were identified in the benchmarking and find your own specific methods to address the shortcomings. Just be sure that your new ideas are proper, legal and compliant with all of the regulatory and statutory bodies that govern our industry.

As your State Reimbursement Specialist and Practice Committee Chair, I am hopeful that you will be able to use these valuable benchmarking resources to improve your practice. Next time, when someone asks “How YOU doin’?”...you will know! ■

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In Memoriam – Jacquelin Harden



HARDEN, Jacquelin
September 16, 1947-March
22, 2014 Jacquelin S.
Harden, 66, of Atlanta
died at her home in
Buckhead on March 22,
2014, after battling uterine
carcinosarcoma since
September of 2012.

Beloved wife, mother, sister
and friend, Jackie was born

September 16, 1947 to the late Jack and Dorothy Eiseman. She grew up in St. Petersburg, Florida where she attended elementary school at St. Paul's Catholic School. She graduated from St. Petersburg High School in 1965, and received her nursing Diploma from the Jackson Memorial Hospital School of Nursing in Miami, Florida in 1968. She completed her nurse anesthesia training program at Albany, NY Medical College School of Nurse Anesthesia in 1972. At the same time she received the CRNA designation (Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist).

She then embarked on a stellar career in medical anesthesia. She worked as a nurse anesthetist at Albany Medical Center Hospital, Crawford W. Long Memorial Hospital of Emory University, Northside Anesthesiology Consultants, Veterans Administration Medical Center West Side Chicago, Northwestern University Medical Faculty Foundation, Medical Center Anesthesia Associates (now at Atlanta Medical Center), again at Northside Anesthesiology Consultants, and finally at Piedmont Anesthesia Associates (at Piedmont Hospital) where she retired due to her illness in February of 2013.

Jackie was always highly regarded by her anesthesia colleagues, and she specialized in anesthesia for thoracic surgery at the end of her career. At every institution she worked the surgeons always wanted Jackie to put their patients to sleep due to her vast experience, overwhelming competence and dedication. Her husband John was a Colonel in the Army Reserves, and during his missions away she always held down the fort at home, and always displayed the attributes of the consummate military wife. This was especially true after 911 when John was gone the better part of a year. In addition, Jackie worked in Chicago while her husband was a resident at Illinois Masonic Medical Center, and helped support the family.

She leaves her husband, Dr. John W. Harden, Jr., her son David Thomas Bertany of Atlanta and his wife Michelle Lee Bertany, and her step son John Wesley Harden, IV, of New York City. She also leaves her older sister Joyce Olivene Doyal of Olympia, WA, and four grandchildren that include Alexandra Marie Bertany, Michael Joseph Bertany, Nicholas Patrick Bertany and Christopher Thomas Bertany all of Atlanta. She also leaves her beloved Shi Tzu's Maggie, Marley and Mollie. Her animals meant the world to her and were a big part of her life.

The family wants to thank Dr. John McBroom of Piedmont Gynecologic Oncology, Dr. Linda Wobeck of Piedmont

Radiology, Dr. Pamela Soliman of the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center and Dr. William Read of the Winship Cancer Center of Emory University Healthcare for providing her care and doing everything humanly possible to save this wonderful woman.

Friends and loved ones will be received between the hours of 7 until 9 o'clock at H. M. Patterson and Son – Spring Hill, on the evening of Friday, March 28, 2014. The funeral will be at 12 noon at The Cathedral of Christ the King on Saturday, March 29, 2014. Interment will follow at Arlington Memorial Park. Following the interment there will be a wake at the Harden home at 2716 Margaret Mitchell Dr., NW, Atlanta, GA 30327. Online condolences may be made at hmpatternsonspringhill.com. See more at: <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/atlanta/obituary.aspx?n=Jacquelin-HARDEN&pid=170381579#sthash.rivYnvuE.dpuf> ■

2014 GANA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

GANA BOARD MEETINGS:

The conference calls will be at 8:00 pm and the in-person meetings will be at 10:00 am. Please call (770) 487-3900 or email ganaoffice@bellsouth.net if you would like to attend a meeting. They are open to all GANA members.

August 23

Saturday meeting in Augusta

OTHER MEETINGS AND EVENTS:

September 13-16

AANA Nurse Anesthesia Annual Congress in Orlando, FL at the Orlando World Center Marriott

October 3-5

GANA Annual Fall Meeting in Atlanta, GA

October 23-25

Georgia Association of Nursing Students (GANS) Convention in Peachtree City at the Wyndham Peachtree Conference Center

November 7-9

AANA Fall Leadership Academy

Proposed Calendar for the *To and Fro*:
January, May and September