

Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists CRNAs

- Represent nearly 150 years of quality anesthesia
- Safely administer approximately 45 million anesthetics in the US every year
- Represented by 53,000 CRNAs nationwide and over 1,300 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 advances patient safety and CRNA practice through advocacy, education, and member engagement.

Vision Statement

Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists in Georgia will be autonomous providers recognized for their full scope of practice and quality patient care and are compensated fairly for their services.

Report from the President

Facing Unique Challenges

by Eddie Thomas, MSNA, CRNA



It is stunning how much the COVID-19 pandemic has affected our daily lives in such a short amount of time. As front line healthcare workers, CRNAs are facing unique challenges to both our professional and personal lives.

I hope you all remain healthy throughout this time of crisis. The Georgia Association of Nurse Anesthetists has been working tirelessly during this time to ensure we are doing everything we can to support our Georgia CRNAs.

This year's legislative cycle started in January, and was very busy with many bills having a healthcare focus. The government relations committee (GRC) has been diligently working to protect our practice rights. We have successfully defended CRNA practice, and are always monitoring for threats. With the state legislature currently shut down with many days left on the legislative calendar, it is shaping up to be one of the longest legislative cycles in recent history.

This year's Mid-Year Assembly in Washington, D.C. was cancelled; however, many of

us were still able to attend the lectures virtually. We then were able to virtually meet with our Georgia-specific legislators and legislative aides. This process was different, but went very well. We covered a variety of topics related to removal of restrictive regulations, billing, and practice rights. A couple of topics I would like to highlight are 1) the CMS temporary removal of the supervision requirement for CRNAs; and 2) the Veterans Affairs (VA) office allowing full practice authority for CRNAs and other advanced practice providers. These are both huge wins for the CRNA community and we need to fight to make these permanent lasting changes. I call on each and every CRNA in the state of Georgia to take up this fight, contact your legislator, and donate to the PAC.

Mid-Year Assembly will not be the only meeting cancelled due to coronavirus. The

continued on page 13 >

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Report from the President-Elect and Federal Political Director

Advocacy is Rule #1

by Wesley Karcher, MSNA, CRNA



Wow! What a crazy couple of months it has been! I hope that everyone is healthy out there and that you have been able to weather this storm without too much loss. Work may be slow (although I'm sure it will be picking up drastically soon) but we still get the opportunity to be a part of one of the greatest professions out there, NURSE ANESTHESIOLOGY!

As the Federal Political Director for GANA, advocacy is rule #1 for me, but I feel advocacy is important for us all. Unfortunately with the many turf wars we battle regularly, without advocacy our profession would wither away. Believe me when I say that if we don't dictate how we practice, there are many others out there who WILL dictate how we practice.



Virtual MYA meeting with Rep. Lucy McBath. (Left to right) Amy Frank, CRNA; Michael Williams, Health LA for Congresswoman McBath; Steve Smith, CRNA, Wesley Karcher, CRNA; and the phone symbol is Rep. McBath. Pictured center is Wesley Karcher, CRNA

The month of April should have brought the opportunity for me to attend my favorite AANA meeting, Mid-Year Assembly (scheduled April 18-22), but due to COVID-19, things went off the rails a little bit. This year I had a Capitol tour, White House tickets, and reservations at the amazing Italian restaurant Filomena all lined up, but Mother Nature had

continued on page 15 >

Emory University Nell Hodgins Woodruff School of Nursing Nurse Anesthesia Program Report



By Kelly Wiltse Nicely, PhD, CRNA

Due to the spread of the COVID-19 virus, the Emory University Nurse Anesthesia program quickly transitioned from an on campus-learning environment to a temporary distance-learning environment. In efforts to continue to provide a high quality curriculum, we implemented different modalities to present instructional content as well as provide students with supplemental materials.

For example, students were supported with instructional delivery of content and simulation practice via live interactive video conferencing, simulation kits and task trainers distributed to their homes for continued independent practice, and real-time faculty feedback via videoconferencing for skill sets. Additionally, to ensure we all stay connected, we introduced video social hours to maintain some sense of normalcy and a means to support each other.

Additional highlights:

- Emory's Assistant Program Director, Erica Moore, DNP, CRNA, has been invited to be a part of the AANA Education Taskforce as the Assistant Director Representative. She has also been asked to speak at the AANA Assembly for Didactic and Clinical Educators conference on Teaching Anesthesia Diversity. Dr. Moore's commitment to exceptional clinical practice, academic excellence and diversity are to be lauded!

"This year, we celebrated CRNA week with a display on the iconic 300 foot tall Corey Tower, located in the heart of downtown Atlanta and visible to over 1 million people each day."

- This past August, we welcomed Dr. James McLeod, DNP, CRNA to our team as teaching faculty. During the temporary distance learning environment, Dr. McLeod not only taught remotely but he also maintained his clinical practice by joining a COVID-19 team in New Jersey. He will begin his PhD studies this summer to continue his career trajectory. Dr. McLeod has done an exceptional job and we are delighted to have him as a part of our team.
- Joining our team in a more permanent role this summer is Katie Cole, MSN, CRNA. Katie has been adjunct faculty with the program for over a year but has decided to step into a larger role within the teaching faculty. She is also finishing her DNP studies while continuing her clinical practice as well!
- Leslie Jeter, DNP, CRNA who serves as a key leader for the scholarly projects undertaken by the Emory nurse anesthesia students, has been asked to co-author a chapter on infection for the textbook Nurse Anesthesia.
- Our Emory Nurse Anesthesia Program Administrator, Emalee Aparo and her husband Sal welcomed their first child, Lorenzo Holland Aparo on April 24th. The family is doing well and we are so excited to have Lorenzo join the Emory family!

continued on page 14 >

Report from the Legislative Chair

Legislative Update

by Maegan Brass, CRNA



Greetings from the GRC Committee!

The 2020 Legislative session started on January 13th, and we hit the ground running this year with multiple healthcare bills. We had a very successful Capitol Day with our SRNAs. We lucked up this year and picked a date while the legislators were in session. The students got to speak to many of our Senators and Representatives and have a photo taken with the Governor.

We worked hard this session to foster some great working relationships and had a hand in helping write some of the verbiage for these bills. Unfortunately our plans are currently on hold as the unprecedented spread of COVID-19 has caused an abrupt end to the legislative session. We will continue to wait for updates about the completion of the 2020 session. ▲

A promotional banner for the GAS 2020 Georgia Anesthesia Symposium. The background is a night view of Savannah, Georgia, with city lights reflecting on the water. The text is overlaid on the image.

— Registration open —
SAVANNAH, GA
October 2 - 4, 2020

GAS 2020
Georgia Anesthesia Symposium

Featured Guest Speaker: Tonia Bales, CRNA - My Life with Dirty John

CRNA Faculty Includes:
Steven Sertich, CRNA, MAE, JD
Tracy Young, MSNA, MBA, CRNA
Brian Berry, MS, MBA, CRNA

EDUCATE + ENGAGE + EMPOWER

Augusta University Class of 2020 Student Report

by Will Howell, SRNA



Hello from the Augusta University Class of 2020! As we strive to find comfort in uncomfortable times, it is heartwarming to see all of the good that CRNAs are doing across the state and the country. It makes us proud to be entering the profession in December 2020. As SRNAs, we are not immune to the fluidity of situations that have impacted healthcare systems across the state. We made a safe exit from the clinical arena in mid-March and have been socially distancing ourselves since then. Our nurse anesthesia leadership at AU has been phenomenal throughout this process. They put our safety as the top priority, while keeping us engaged with frequent video conferences on the ever-evolving situation. They have been working

closely with our clinical partners to create a contingency plan to safely re-enter us into clinical. Also, a big thank you to our clinical partners. Your unwavering support for us is truly appreciated. In the meantime, we have been working diligently to finish our DNP projects. Some of our classmates will be presenting their doctoral defense as early as mid-May. We have started to prepare for our NCE exam, and are also on the job hunt as we begin anticipation for our graduation. Thanks to everyone who is working on the front lines. Your safety and health are in our thoughts and prayers, and we hope the COVID-19 pandemic is all over soon. ▲



Augusta University SRNAs and Augusta Professor
Dr. Kimberly Kimble with Rep. Matt Hatchett

2020 Legislative Session Suspended on March 13

by Monty Veazey



To the CRNAs who have been on the frontline working among nurses, physicians, and other medical professionals to battle this virus, I say thank you!

The 2020 legislative session was suspended on March 13th, leaving 11 days remaining.

Why suspend the session and not adjourn?

Had they adjourned, there would be the need to call a special session. Instead, they theoretically can pick up where they left off because it has been suspended. Considering everything going on, a special session may still be required.

According to the constitution of the state of Georgia, the only thing required of the legislature is to pass a balanced budget. This has not been done yet and has a deadline of July 1, 2020.

As you may recall – going back to late fall, the governor was warning that the legislature would have to cut the budget by 6% because of the slowing economy. Now we hear the budget may need to be cut by as much as 20%.

The only way to get a balanced budget will require a combination of things:

1. Raise taxes – no one wants to do
2. Repeal tax credits – such as film credits
3. Repeal tax exemptions
4. Find new sources of revenue – casino gambling, horse racing, etc.

House Speaker David Ralston has put together a committee to look at when they should go back into session. I am inclined to think June 1st is a reasonable date.

Once they finish the 2020 session, the governor may still need to call a special session to adjust the budget. The state is in better financial condition than most because of its \$2.8 billion in reserves.

I will keep you posted as we move forward. ▲

AANA has a myriad of resources online.

Adverse events: <https://www.aana.com/practice/health-and-wellness-peer-assistance/about-health-wellness/emotional-and-mental-well-being/adverse-medical-events-critical-incidents---how-to-cope>

Stress: <https://www.aana.com/practice/health-and-wellness-peer-assistance/about-health-wellness/emotional-and-mental-well-being/stress-and-nurse-anesthesia-professionals>

Wellness in the Workplace: <https://www.aana.com/practice/health-and-wellness-peer-assistance/about-health-wellness/wellness-in-the-workplace>

*If you or someone you know struggles with drugs or alcohol, help is available 24/7.
AANA Peer Assistance Helpline – 800-654-5167*

Report from the Wellness Chair

A Time for Everything

By Martha Kral, CRNA



These are most certainly trying times, which will always be in ebb and flow. We can only control so much of our lives. Here's what we do have control over: Today, we can social distance and wash our hands. We can choose to take a break from the barrage of distressing news coverage and social media. We, as individuals, can only do the best we can do with what is known and available at a certain moment in time. Sometimes it is okay to just rest awhile. Here is an ancient sentiment to ponder.

Ecclesiastes 3

A Time for Everything

"For everything there is a season,

a time for every activity under heaven.

A time to be born and a time to die.

A time to plant and a time to harvest.

A time to kill and a time to heal.

A time to tear down and a time to build up.

A time to cry and a time to laugh.

A time to grieve and a time to dance.

A time to scatter stones and a time to gather stones.

A time to embrace and a time to turn away.

A time to search and a time to quit searching.

A time to keep and a time to throw away.

A time to tear and a time to mend.

A time to be quiet and a time to speak.

A time to love and a time to hate.

A time for war and a time for peace."

COVID-19 is taking a heavy toll on the mental health of CRNAs and other healthcare professionals at the front lines. Other CRNAs are stressed because they have been furloughed. We may worry about ourselves, but we also worry about our family and friends.

The AANA has a link to offer help in dealing with COVID-19. It addresses many topics; among them, relaxation techniques, grief and healing, fitness and fatigue, and a link to an online peer support group. It is at <https://www.aana.com/aana-covid-19-resources/covid-19-well-being>. ▲

GANA Calendar 2020

August 14-18

AANA Annual Congress – San Diego, CA

August 22

GANA Board Meeting – Augusta University

October 2-4

GANA Annual Meeting – Savannah, GA

For more information on GANA events, please visit the calendar page on the GANA website.



Go to www.gana.org, scroll down and click on the "Social Media" button and then "Like Us" on Facebook!

LOOKING BACK ...

GANA Capitol Day 2020 – Atlanta, Georgia



Eddie Thomas, GANA President (left) and Steve Smith, CRNA (right) with Georgia Senator Tyler Harper



SRNAs at the Georgia Capitol



Georgia CRNAs and SRNAs with Georgia Governor Brian Kemp

Emory University Student Report

by Shawn Biddle, SRNA



Wow! What a time to be an anesthesia student. COVID-19 has presented various obstacles for our individual cohorts, with each being affected in unique ways.

The stress of anesthesia school is already set at maximum, especially when compounded with conducting doctoral level research, long clinical days, and studying for finals, the NBCRNA Self-Evaluation Exam (SEE), and board exams. Now add in a global pandemic in which type A people have no routine, parents have become teachers, and toilet paper is worth more than gold. You can see how the stress level escalates. Robert Schuller said it best when he said, "tough times never last but tough people do". I encourage all SRNAs in the Emory and Augusta cohorts to think of this quote as we move along with our education throughout these uncertain times.

The senior class of 2020 is expected to graduate in early August 2020! On our very first day of class in

"As the freshman class of 2022 prepares to enter the operating room, we know we will be supported by the same leadership that allowed us to accomplish so much."

2017, we observed the Great American Eclipse. Fast forward three years and it appears as though our last day of class will be somewhere along the continuum of a global pandemic. This spring semester we finished our very last DNP course and are looking forward to starting our summer long board preparation. It has been a wild ride, but we can finally see the light!

Reflecting back on all that the class of 2020 has accomplished within the past three years, it's safe to say that none of it would have been possible without the support of our faculty. From office meetings to discuss life, to now weekly virtual meetings, your dedication to each and every one of us has never gone unnoticed. As the freshman class of 2022 prepares to enter the operating room, we know we will be supported by the same leadership that allowed us to accomplish so much.

Thank you to all of the excellent preceptors who took the time to transform us into safe and confident anesthesia providers. We know that our underclassmen are in good hands and are fortunate to be able to learn from some of the best in the business. ▲



Augusta University Student Report

by Matt Oxford, SRNA

Hello, from Augusta University's Class of 2021! We hope that you all are doing well and staying safe during these trying times. It makes all of us proud to see the contributions that CRNAs are making in Georgia and across the nation.

This brave example gives us an added push to finish finals in the coming weeks. Dr. Broxton and all of the AU Nurse Anesthesia Program faculty have been very diligent in ensuring our education and preparation continue without folly, and we could not be more thankful to have them.

As we look to wrap up the didactic portion of our program at the beginning of May, we know that the constraints around clinical right now are very fluid. With this in mind, we are looking forward to meeting and training with our clinical partners in the coming months. In the meantime, we have adjusted to distance learning, and have enjoyed participating in Mid-Year Assembly meetings with congressional leaders via Zoom instead of traveling to Washington, D.C.

Thank you to all of the CRNAs on the front lines battling COVID-19! You and your families are in our thoughts and prayers. ▲



Emory Assistant Program Director Erica Moore, DNP, CRNA with Sen. Renee Unterman



Congratulations to second year Emory University SRNAs Billie Day, Laura Gil, and Emily Tuggle for receiving GANA student scholarships.

www.aana.com/peerassist.aspx

Helpline
Peer Assistance
800.654.5167

Anesthetists in
Recovery (AIR)
215.635.0183

CRNAs Responding to the Pandemic ...



Tampa General Hospital CRNAs and husband and wife duo Ben Cayer and Mindy Brock Cayer on COVID-19 Airway team. This specially trained team performs all intubations and extubations in an effort to curb the spread of the virus.



Donnell Carter, MBA, MS, CRNA, and the team of CRNAs at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center lead the way in a COVID-19-positive patient ICU_ OR transfer simulation. These types of simulations are essential to saving lives.

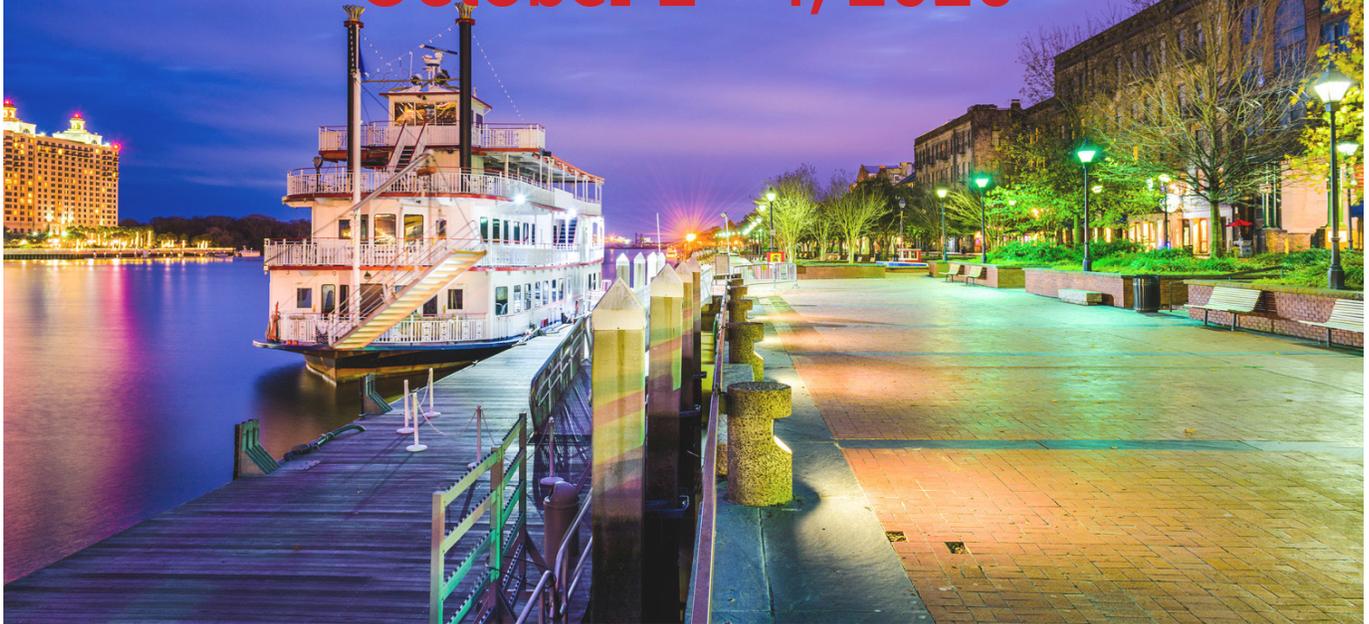


VA CRNAs – Terry Pope, Jose Blanco-Polanco, and Mike Tran – tell what a privilege and honor it is to manage and treat our cherished US Veterans during the pandemic. Practicing social distancing and proper hand hygiene, they plan to flatten the curve.



Two SRNAs from the University of Iowa, Sarah Rohde and Rachel Westernik, are training other healthcare workers on an innovative solution that will help save lives during the COVID-19 pandemic.

— Fall in —
SAVANNAH, GA
October 2 - 4, 2020



G A S 2020
Georgia Anesthesia Symposium

EDUCATE + ENGAGE + EMPOWER

Early registration rates available until September 1, 2020
Discounted Lodging at The DeSoto Starting at \$229

Topics Include:

The Business of Anesthesia, Entrepreneurship with a Health Care Focus,
Preparing for Trial, Leadership, Patient Selection for ASCs,
Pharmacogenetics, Non-Obstetric Surgery in Pregnancy

Bonus: Poster Session Hall

Conference Coordinator:
Laura Moritz
Laura@AssociationMeetingPlanners.com

GANA
Supporting Members • Protecting Patients

Georgia Association
of Nurse Anesthetists

FROM THE COVER

Facing Unique Challenges

GANA already had to cancel some of our in-person meetings. We also have had to cancel the in-person regional breakout meeting to be held this summer, as current guidance suggests that larger gatherings will not be allowed. We are currently exploring virtual options to offer our members. Due to the dynamic nature of the current pandemic, the program committee is exploring how the annual Georgia Anesthesia Symposium in October may be impacted.

I am excited to report that we have successfully transitioned to our new association management company, Frontline. For the last few years, Georgia was one of a few state associations who had participated in the AANA's pilot program for association management. Late last year, the AANA board of directors voted to discontinue that program and the GANA sought RFPs from over a dozen association management companies. Frontline was chosen by the GANA board and officially took over in February. I feel Frontline will be a great asset for our association.

AANA elections are right around the corner. I urge everyone to participate in this process as this is the most basic expression of our democracy. There are some excellent candidates on the slate and AANA has made getting yourself acquainted with them easy. Please check out the AANA website for candidate statements. Our very own region 2 director Angie Mund is running for AANA vice president. I can attest that she is an amazing leader and we would be lucky to have her in that position.

In closing, I am reminded of a quote I had heard recently. "Out of crisis comes clarity" – Randolph O'Toole. I believe the world could refocus and find clarity after we emerge from this pandemic.

Stay safe everyone. ▲

*Peer Assistance is alive and concentrating on saving lives.
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Available at AANA.com*

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HELPLINE (800) 654-5167

If you or someone you know struggles with drugs or alcohol, help is available.

www.AANAPeerAssistance.com



If You See Something,
DO SOMETHING!

Warning signs of substance use disorder include:

- Significant change in behavior
- Patterns of inappropriate drug choices and dosages

Complete list and intervention essentials
www.AANA.com/GettingHelp

SHOW YOU CARE. For help, call (800) 654-5167.

FROM PAGE 3

Emory University Nurse Anesthesia Program Report

- This year, we celebrated CRNA week with a display on the iconic 300 foot tall Corey Tower, located in the heart of downtown Atlanta and visible to over 1 million people each day. Thank you Mr. Corey and your team for the continued support of our profession!
- In August, we look forward to having our first cohort graduate

and are ecstatic to welcome 15 new students to our Emory family.

- Both the 2020 Diversity in Nurse Anesthesia Mentorship Program and DNP Symposium scheduled at Emory have been postponed due to the COVID-19 crisis. Stay tuned for the announcement of the rescheduled dates.

Any inquiries regarding the program can be directed to crnaquestions@emory.edu. To stay up to date on the daily activities of Emory's Nurse Anesthesia DNP Program, follow the program on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram: @emorycrna or [Instagram.com/emorycrna](https://www.instagram.com/emorycrna)
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/EmoryCRNA/>
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/EmoryCRNA> ▲



Maegan Brass, CRNA; Monty Veazey (lobbyist); Eddie Thomas, CRNA; Steve Smith, CRNA; and Keven Keller, CRNA on GANA Capitol Day

FROM PAGE 2

Advocacy is Rule #1

other plans. Nothing matches the vibe I get while attending MYA. I think the energy at MYA is unlike anything I feel at any of the other AANA conferences. Getting the opportunity to hang out with my CRNA and SRNA friends from other states while also getting to do face-to-face advocacy for my profession is simply a joy.

We learned in March that MYA 2020 would have to be canceled due to COVID-19 concerns. That meant that all of the work I had put in to schedule in-person Hill meetings with our 14 Representatives and 2 Senators was essentially a wash. Sometimes though, you must find the silver lining in situations and this was one such opportunity. I immediately went to work trying to shift all of our in-person meetings to virtual meetings. Out of the 16 meetings I had set up, I was able to book virtual meetings for 11 of the offices.

Thank you to all of the CRNAs and SRNAs that took time out of their days to jump on these calls over a 3-day period. I was VERY pleased with ALL of the meetings this year. In the past we could expect about 30 minutes with the legislators or legislative assistants, but this year the average meeting lasted 45 minutes and some as long as 1 hour and 10 minutes! This gave

a lot of extra time to tease out complex issues with people that maybe didn't have a full understanding of who we are and what we do. I really felt like most of the offices "got it" this year.

Although I sorely missed attending MYA 2020, I feel like we were able to take advantage of a not-so-advantageous situation and really do some strong advocacy.

Advocacy can't end with MYA though. It is something that must continue throughout the year and everyone must take part, no matter how small that part might be. Let's continue to push forward because although this pandemic has been terrible, a lot of people in high positions of power now see the excellent care CRNAs and nurses give. This recent exposure has created opportunities to push for getting rid of barriers to practice and allowing us to work to the fullest extent of our education and training. It will take a collaborative effort by everyone to push us past the goal line. So, join me, and let's push forward together! Your profession just may depend on it.

Stay healthy out there and thanks for everything you do for our patients and profession. ▲

Need Malpractice Insurance?

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

To&Fro

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*Thank you for
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to this worthy
cause for your
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Name _____

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Email _____ Fax _____

Do you work in an office based setting? a rural hospital? a surgery center? an urban hospital?

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: **Krystal Toledo, GANA-PAC Treasurer, P.O. Box 887, Tifton, GA 31793**

Forms available at www.gana.org

