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The Practice Environment for Nurse Anesthetists in Tennessee

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Potential consequences of anesthesia provider shortages may include a reduction in health care access, poor patient outcomes, and increased costs to government funded agencies. Current leaders in the anesthesia profession need to establish a work environment that is embracing, supportive, and safe so that certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNA) can remain healthy and productive. The purpose of this Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) scholarly project was to provide an overview of the current CRNA practice environment in Tennessee and advocate for policies to promote CRNA retention and enhance patient access to care. The overarching goal included gathering sufficient evidence regarding the positive and negative working environments of CRNA practice and presenting this evidence to the Tennessee Association of Nurse Anesthetist (TANA) executive committee. The evidence-informed health policy model (EIHP) was used to identify the policy problem as well as guide the development, implementation, and evaluation of a solution. After reviewing the literature, project members discovered seven working environment outcomes that impact retention and patient access to care. Project members presented the seven outcomes to the TANA executive committee and distributed a pre and post presentation survey to evaluate how the TANA organization was doing at promoting a positive work environment for CRNAs. Finally, to compare and analyze the survey responses, project members ran paired sample t-tests.

Keywords: access, access to care, advanced practice registered nurse, barriers, certified registered nurse anesthetist, nurse anesthetist, and scope of practice