



GUIDELINES FOR THE ETHICAL STANDARDS OF THE CERTIFIED ANESTHESIOLOGIST ASSISTANT

Preamble

Membership in the American Academy of Anesthesiologist Assistants (AAAA) is a privilege of those certified anesthesiologist assistants (CAAs) who are dedicated to the basic ethical principles of healthcare. The Ethical Standards of the Certified Anesthesiologist Assistant consist of principles of certified anesthesiologist assistant conduct and fundamental values embraced by the CAA profession. The standards contained in this document describe a code of conduct with respect only to a CAA's professional activities.

Statement of Values

Certified anesthesiologist assistants are expected to act both legally and morally. They are responsible for knowing and understanding the laws governing their practice and the ethical responsibilities of being a healthcare professional.

The practice of anesthesiology involves many complex factors relating to the standards of patient care. As such, the Academy recommends its members adhere to the basic set of ethical standards outlined below:

- I. Certified anesthesiologist assistants shall, while caring for the patient, regard responsibility to the patient as paramount, thereby putting the interests of the patient foremost and acting as a patient advocate.
- II. Certified anesthesiologist assistants shall be dedicated to providing competent medical care with compassion and respect for human dignity.
- III. Certified anesthesiologist assistants shall maintain standards of professionalism in all patient interactions and always acting in the best interests of the patient.
- IV. Certified anesthesiologist assistants shall respect the law and also recognize a responsibility to work for positive change to laws that will enhance the health and well-being of the patient and the community
- V. Certified anesthesiologist assistants shall respect the rights of the patients under their care, colleagues and other healthcare professionals with whom they interact and shall

safeguard the confidentiality of patients' medical and personal information within the constraints of the law.

- VI. Certified anesthesiologist assistants shall uphold the right of every patient to the ethical right to self-determination, and therefore not coerce any portion of the decision-making process and shall facilitate the informed consent process. CAAs shall be committed to the concept of shared decision-making, which involves assisting patients in making decisions that account for medical, situational, and personal factors.
- VII. Certified anesthesiologist assistants shall have the inherent responsibility to observe and report any potentially negligent practices or conditions which compromise patient safety or present a hazard to healthcare facility personnel.
- VIII. Certified anesthesiologist assistants render high-quality patient care without prejudice as to race, religion, age, sex, nationality, disability, social, economic, or insurance status.
- IX. Certified anesthesiologist assistants should not misrepresent, directly or indirectly, their skills, training, professional credentials, title, or identity.
- X. Certified anesthesiologist assistants shall strive to maintain a spirit of cooperation with other healthcare professionals, their organizations, and the general public.
- XI. Certified anesthesiologist assistants shall recognize a responsibility to participate in activities contributing to improvement of the healthcare community and betterment of public health.
- XII. Certified anesthesiologist assistants shall recognize and promote the value of diversity.
- XIII. Certified anesthesiologist assistants shall continue to study, apply and expand their scientific knowledge and skills, maintain a commitment to medical education, keeping abreast of advances in medicine.
- XIV. Certified anesthesiologist assistants shall be transparent and honest to the patient and those with patient consent in the disclosure of anticipated and unanticipated events surrounding a patient's care.
- XV. Certified anesthesiologist assistants have the right for a safe and positive workplace environment, ensuring high quality care is delivered to patients. Certified anesthesiologist assistants have a zero tolerance policy and will report all behaviors associated with workplace targeting and workplace harassment.
- XVI. The practice of quality anesthesia care requires that certified anesthesiologist assistants maintain their physical and mental health and special sensory capabilities. If in doubt

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about their health, then certified anesthesiologist assistants should seek medical evaluation and care. During this period of evaluation or treatment, anesthesiologist assistants should modify or cease their practice.

- XVII. Certified anesthesiologist assistants shall not engage in misconduct in research and/or publication.

Medical Direction

Certified anesthesiologist assistants' practice encompasses a unique relationship involving the CAA, the anesthesiologist, and the patient. CAAs practice with anesthesiologist medical direction in the Anesthesia Care Team (ACT). Within the ACT, an anesthesiologist and CAA work together to provide high-quality care in the belief that the interests of patient safety are best served with an anesthesiologist's involvement in the delivery of every anesthetic. The responsibility for medical direction lies with the anesthesiologist, whom may then delegate aspects related to the implementation of an anesthetic plan to the CAA. Delegation of any aspect of patient care to a CAA is at the discretion of the anesthesiologist, in accordance with established state regulation and local credentialing guidelines.

Medical direction should include ongoing communication between the anesthesiologist and the CAA regarding patient care and management.

Anesthesia Care Team Model (ACT)

The ACT model is a team approach to anesthesia management in which an anesthesiologist concurrently supervises non-physician anesthetists and/or anesthesiology residents during the delivery of anesthesia care. While certified anesthesiologist assistants (CAAs) are comprehensively trained and proficient in all areas of anesthesia care, delegation of the scope of patient care duties to a CAA is at the discretion of the supervising anesthesiologist and/or practice group, in accordance with established state regulations and local or facility credentialing and practice guidelines. (AAAAACT Statement)