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Certified Anesthesiologist Assistants

Comparison: AA, CRNA Training/Practice

	Anesthesiologist Assistants	Nurse Anesthetists
Description of Practice	Medically directed by a physician Anesthesiologist	Supervision by physician of unspecified specialty (excluding Opt-Out states)
Model of Practice	Anesthesia Care Team	Anesthesia Care Team, supervision by any physician, or independent practice without supervision (Opt Out states)
Distribution of Providers	1500+ Certified AAs in 16 states (plus District of Columbia and Guam) and Veteran's Administration	36,000 CRNAs in all 50 states and Veteran's Administration
Programs	10 (in 7 states, plus District of Columbia)	114 (in 37 states, plus DC and PR)
Program Length	24-28 months	24-36 months
Type of Program	Master's degree (specific degree title unique to each program)	Masters degree (specific degree title unique to each program)
Certifying Body	National Commission for Certification of Anesthesiologist Assistants; National Board of Medical Examiners	Council on Certification of Nurse Anesthetists
National Organization	American Academy of Anesthesiologist Assistants (AAAA) www.anesthetist.org	American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA)
Admission Requirements	BS Degree Premedical curriculum GPA > 3.0 Completion of Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT) or Graduate Record Exam (GRE), dependent on each program's individual requirements; Previous health care experience preferable; Personal interview	BN Degree Science curriculum for general practice nursing GPA 3.0 Licensure as a registered nurse Minimum one year of nursing experience in acute care setting Personal interview
Program Requirements	Academic faculty with medical school appointment; Medical Director is a board-certified physician Anesthesiologist; Programs located in academic facilities that meet anesthesia residency requirements for physicians	Faculty includes MDs, CRNAs, and graduate nurses; Program Director must possess a master's degree
Program Accreditation	Commission for Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) Accreditation Review Committee for Anesthesiologist Assistants (ARC-AA)	Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Programs
Didactic Education	56-132 didactic hours (depends on program)	34-80 didactic hours (depends on program)
Clinical Education	Minimum of 2000 clinical hours (average > 2500 hrs)	Minimum of 550 cases (average ~1000+ hours)
Clinical Rotations	All sub-specialties of anesthesia	All sub-specialties of anesthesia
Advanced Skills	Regional anesthesia and invasive line placement	Regional anesthesia and invasive line placement
Clinical Instructors	CAAs, CRNAs, Anesthesiologists, Anesthesiologist Residents in training	CRNAs and Anesthesiologists
Recertification	40 CMEs submitted biennially + sit for Continued Demonstration of Qualifications Exam (CDQ) every 6 years; Set by the National Board of Medical Examiners	40 CMEs submitted biannually (every 10 year recertification exam will commence in 2015)
Graduation Requirements	3.0 GPA or better; good class standing; All course semester and clinical requirements completed	All course semester and clinical requirements completed