

Representative Susan Donovan
Chair, House Health and Human Services Committee
RI State House
82 Smith Street
Providence RI 02903

May 14, 2024

Re: Testimony in **Opposition** to House Bill 8237 entitled, "An act relating to the business and professions- nurse anesthetists".

Dear Chairperson Donovan and members of the HHS Committee,

I am Cheryl Prignano, from Scituate, RI, from Representative District 41. I have worked as a Nurse Practitioner in the recovery room (PACU) for the past 8 years for the Department of Anesthesiology at Rhode Island Hospital.

I Oppose House bill H 8237, titled, "An act, relating to businesses and professions—nurse anesthetists".

I oppose bill 8237 because,

- This bill would severely restrict my ability to treat and manage many post operative problems, thereby diminishing the safety and quality of care for our recovery room patients.
- While dexmedetomidine, Ketamine, and propofol are "components" of a general anesthesia medication regimen, the individual medications, themselves, do not constitute "anesthesia". Each drug on its own has other uses that are not considered "anesthesia".
- Example: dexmedetomidine is beneficial to:
 - keep patients from pulling out their IV lines, blood drains, Foley catheters and NG tubes during that initial 30 minutes when the patient may be confused and deliriously restless.
 - give pain relief to patients having large back surgeries.
 - reduce the fear and anxiety in patients waking up from cancer surgery.
 - treat delirium and confusion in elderly grandparents after a broken hip repair.
 - maintain the safety and dignity of Alzheimer's patients to help them through that first 30 minutes after anesthesia, until they are once again redirectable and consolable.
- Example: Propofol: a small amount of propofol can help severe post op nausea and vomiting.
- Example: Ketamine: helps severe pain in highly opiate tolerant patients.

- My role in the recovery room allows for immediate identification and treatment of these conditions. As a highly trained, educated, and experienced board-certified Acute Care Adult Geriatric Nurse Practitioner with a full prescriptive license, I treat and manage these routine post op problems independently in the recovery room, which keeps the anesthesiologists and CRNAs undisturbed while they administer general anesthesia in the operating room.

- The administration of these medications for light to moderate sedative effect is not the same as administering anesthesia. The patient sleeps and relaxes for a brief time, but remains easily awakened, without a drug induced reduction of consciousness where the patient cannot be easily awakened (that occurs with general anesthesia).
- In fact, I utilize these medications to wake up the patient smoothly, calmly, safely, and comfortably, and provide as pleasant an experience in the recovery room as possible. These medications help accomplish this goal.

I urge you to vote against bill 8237.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to speak against bill 8237. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Prignano, NP

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Representative District 41