



For Immediate Release  
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Statement of Colorado Medical Society On Colorado Supreme Court Decision to uphold Governor Ritter's decision to opt Colorado out of the Medicare reimbursement requirement that the provision of anesthesia by CRNA's be supervised by a physician

The Colorado Supreme Court determined that the Governor "opting out" of Medicare physician supervision requirements for anesthesia delivered by CRNAs impacts only Medicare reimbursement and is not a determination of Colorado law. Colorado law continues to classify delivery of anesthesia by a CRNA as a delegated medical function subject to physician supervision. Such supervision is consistent with patient expectations and Colorado's application of the Captain of the Ship doctrine which designates legal responsibility for care of patients under anesthesia.

Colorado Medical Society recognizes CRNAs as valuable members of the surgical care team. There is no dispute that nurse anesthetists are highly trained professionals; however, their training is shorter in duration, narrower in scope, and less comprehensive than the medical training of physicians. The Colorado Supreme Court's decision clarifies that the Governor's decision is not a legal interpretation of either Colorado's Medical or Nursing Practice Acts.

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