

PROJECT ABSTRACT

Project Title: Nurse Anesthetist Traineeship (NAT) Grant
Applicant Organizational Name: University of New England (UNE) Master of Science in Nurse Anesthesia (MSNA)
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Grant Program Funds: HRSA NAT 07/01/20 to 06/30/23

Requesting Statutory Funding Preference (72% of graduates) and Special Consideration (28% of graduates)

The purpose of this project is to address the opioid epidemic that is affecting the entire United States. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) stated that over 42,000 people died from opioid related overdoses (GAO-18-685R Public Health Emergency for Opioid Crisis). The number of drug overdose deaths is high in Maine and New Hampshire. From 2015 to 2017, Maine's age adjusted death rate per 100,000 was 29 and the death rate in New Hampshire was 34 per 100,000. (<https://www.drugabuse.gov/opioid-summaries-by-state>) Maine is highly rural, with a high percentage of Medically Underserved Areas (MUAs) and is in a Health Provider Shortage Area (HPSA). Currently there are 200 job openings in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont for CRNAs. (<https://www.gaswork.com/search/CRNA/Job>) CRNAs are the primary providers of anesthesia services in rural America, allowing health care facilities in these medically underserved areas to offer obstetrical, surgical, and trauma stabilization services. As part of the UNE MSNA educational process, our students and graduates are a key provider of critical pain management therapies, multimodal pain management including acute and chronic pain management, perioperative and post-surgical and diagnostic procedure pain management. Using evidence-based therapies, our students and graduates have the capability of recognizing, managing, and treating substance abuse disorder in patients, and other providers. Students are educated to use anesthesia techniques without opioids including multi-modal therapies, and regional blocks, avoiding prescriptive opioids, and decreasing the risk of postoperative opioid addiction. This project also helps close the workforce/provider gap especially in rural areas. Our students have clinical experiences in rural facilities that are in MUA/HPSA areas and 28% of the class of 2018 stayed in those areas post-graduation. Funding from this grant will aid in the preparation of competent Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists by: 1. providing monies used to offset the cost of tuition, fees, and required textbooks, equipment, and supplies; 2. assist in providing CRNAs with opioid abuse training; 3. enlarge the workforce of CRNAs to HPSA/MUAs. The UNE MSNA program continues its outreach to provide students to rural facilities and CAHs. Our students are educated and prepared to address the opioid crisis, identify and eliminate barriers to health care, provide quality care, and provide leadership to the healthcare system.