

Project Abstract

Project Director: Kevin C. Buettner, PhD, CRNA
Project Title: Nurse Anesthetist Traineeship (NAT) Program 2020 – 2021
Applicant Name: University of North Dakota, College of Nursing and Professional Disciplines
Address: 430 Oxford Street
Grand Forks, ND 58202-9025
Phone: 701-777-4509
Fax: 701-777-4096
Email: kevin.buettner@und.edu
Website: <https://cnpd.und.edu/nursing/nurse-anesthesia-dnp.html>

The purpose of this University of North Dakota (UND) grant proposal is to prepare registered nurses as Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs) for advanced nursing practice roles. Specifically, the College of Nursing and Professional Disciplines (CNPd) at the University of North Dakota (UND) seeks to increase the number of nurses prepared as CRNAs through the provision of substantial financial assistance, primarily tuition support, to qualified full-time graduate nursing students who are enrolled in the Nurse Anesthesia Program at the CNPD.

Nationally and regionally, the need for nurses prepared in this advanced practice role continues to exceed the available supply. Enrollment in Nurse Anesthesia programs and the number of Nurse Anesthesia programs has continued to increase over the past few years, suggesting the need for additional opportunities for nurses prepared in this educational program. In North Dakota and throughout the nation, multiple opportunities for nurse anesthetist employment exist as determined by the quantity of CRNA recruiting requests received regularly. Additionally, the U.S. Department of Labor Occupational Outlook Handbook reports that the overall employment of Nurse Anesthetists is projected to grow 31% from 2016 – 2026 particularly in medically underserved areas such as rural areas where the aging population is growing.

Access to qualified healthcare professionals is necessary to improve the full potential of health promotion and prevention programs, strategies identified in Healthy People 2020 and in the North Dakota Governor's call to action, *Healthy North Dakota*. North Dakota is a largely rural state with 36 of its 53 counties designated as frontier. Additionally, 81% of the state (43 out of 53 counties) is designated as a primary health care professional shortage area (HPSA). Thirty-seven of the 53 counties are also designated as medically underserved (Center for Rural Health at University of North Dakota, 2016).

The state of North Dakota is heavily reliant on CRNAs for all anesthesia services. In fact, CRNAs provide anesthesia services to every acute care hospital in the state of North Dakota that offers surgical or obstetrical services and CRNAs are the sole anesthesia provider at all North Dakota hospitals with the exception of nine which are located in the six largest cities. Nationally, CRNAs are the sole anesthesia providers in nearly 100% of rural facilities and safely administer approximately 49 million anesthetics annually.

Following completion of the program of study, graduates are eligible to sit for the National Board of Certification and Recertification for Nurse Anesthetists (NBCRNA) National Certification Examination (NCE). The UND Nurse Anesthesia Program is accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs (COA), the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), and approved by the North Dakota Board of Nursing. Traineeships will be awarded to full-time nurse anesthesia students in their first year of study in the program.