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NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 3, 2008

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THE AMERICAN NURSES ASSOCIATION, LOUISIANA STATE NURSES ASSOCIATION AND LOUISIANA ALLIANCE OF NURSING ORGANIZATIONS FILED AN AMICUS BRIEF SUPPORTING THE FULL SCOPE OF PRACTICE FOR CERTIFIED REGISTERED NURSE ANESTHETISTS
Groups' Position Supports Access to Health Care for All and Protects the Full Professional Scope of Nursing

SILVER SPRING, MD – The American Nurses Association (ANA), Louisiana State Nurses Association (LSNA) and the Louisiana Alliance of Nursing Organizations (LANO) filed an amicus brief as a Friend of the Court in a case scheduled for oral argument today in the First Circuit Court of Appeal in the state of Louisiana. ANA's Friend of the Court brief supports the arguments advanced by the Appellant, the Louisiana State Board of Nursing (LSBN) which was prohibited from taking further action on an Advisory Opinion request regarding whether it was within the scope of practice for a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNA) practicing in Louisiana to perform procedures involving the injection of local anesthetics, steroids, and analgesics for interventional pain management purposes. The prohibition was as a result of a petition for injunctive relief and declaratory judgment filed by Spine Diagnostics Center of Baton Rouge, Inc., seeking to enjoin the Nursing Board from taking any further procedural action on the Advisory Opinion request and seeking to prevent the CRNA from practicing interventional pain procedures or practicing anesthesia related management unless under a physician's order and supervision.

The appeal is focused on the January 10, 2008 decision of the 19th Judicial District Court in Louisiana in which the court erred in holding that LSBN had substantively expanded the scope of practice for CRNAs into areas where they have not traditionally practiced and that interventional pain management is not within the scope of practice for CRNAs but is instead the practice of medicine.

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Also, the court incorrectly found that the Louisiana State Board of Nursing's Advisory Opinion was an improper attempt at rulemaking. As a consequence, the court issued a permanent injunction prohibiting the LSBN from enforcing its position statement, prohibiting the CRNA involved in the case from performing interventional pain management (even under the order and supervision of a physician) and directed the LSBN to remove the Advisory Opinion from its Web site.

“ANA will not stand idly by and allow the medically underserved citizens of Louisiana who are in critical need of treatment for their chronic pain to endure needless suffering by not having access to safe, accessible, and cost-effective anesthesia services provided by CRNAs. On behalf of America's nurses, ANA's legal efforts are designed to stop Louisiana from being designated as the only state in the nation to exclude 'interventional pain management' from the CRNA scope of practice,” said ANA President Rebecca M. Patton, MSN, RN, CNOR.

Historically, CRNAs have provided pain management as an inherent part of the administration of anesthetics. Established in the late 1800s, nurse anesthetists became the first clinical nursing specialty in the United States. CRNAs are trained through graduate level education to provide anesthesia and associated care. In fact the Trial Court heard testimony from CRNAs who, for many years, have safely injected local anesthetics, steroids, and analgesics, peripheral nerve blocks, epidural injections and spinal facet joint injections for chronic pain management for their patients. The LSBN testimony and evidentiary submissions prove that the CRNAs in Louisiana have the documented education, training, and experience to safely perform procedures involving the injection of anesthetics, steroids, and analgesics; therefore, making interventional pain management a long-standing element of a Louisiana CRNA's scope of practice.

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The ANA is the only full-service professional organization representing the interests of the nation's 2.9 million registered nurses through its 54 constituent member nurses associations. The ANA advances the nursing profession by fostering high standards of nursing practice, promoting the rights of nurses in the workplace, projecting a positive and realistic view of nursing, and by lobbying the Congress and regulatory agencies on health care issues affecting nurses and the public.

