

DEPARTMENT OF
**Consumer
Affairs**

BOARD OF REGISTERED NURSING

107 SOUTH BROADWAY, SUITE 8026
LOS ANGELES, CA 90012



September 12, 1988

Carol A. Tarnowsky
Professional Liability Analyst
Truck Insurance Exchange
P.O. Box 2478
Los Angeles, CA 90051

Dear Ms. Tarnowsky:

This responds to your letter requesting information regarding the authority of the certified registered nurse anesthetist to discharge a patient home from outpatient surgery or from an ambulatory care surgery center.

Response: The certified registered nurse anesthetist may discharge a patient home from outpatient surgery without either a standardized procedure or a decision by another licensed independent practitioner.

In understanding this authority of the CRNA it is helpful to recognize that performing surgery and performing anesthesia, although collaborative, are independent functions. The surgeon is responsible for performing the surgery and evaluating the patient's response to the surgical procedure. The CRNA, as a licensed independent practitioner, is responsible for selecting and administering the anesthetic agent and monitoring the patient's response thereto, and is not supervised by the physician in this activity.

The CRNA's decision regarding the time of discharge is based on the patient's recovery from anesthesia as well as on the CRNA's determination that the patient's condition in response to the surgical procedure has remained stable. When both responses are satisfactory the CRNA may discharge the patient.

If you have further questions on this matter, please let me know.

Thank you for consulting the Board of Registered Nursing.

Sincerely,

BOARD OF REGISTERED NURSING

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Carol Henriksen'.

Carol Henriksen, M.S., R.N.
Supervising Consultant
Nursing Practice Program

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