

**ANESTHESIOLOGIST ASSISTANT
GS-601**

INTRODUCTION

The Anesthesiologist Assistant (AA) is a professional allied health member of the Anesthesia Care Team who has satisfactorily completed an Anesthesiologist Assistant training program. The Anesthesiologist Assistant administers anesthesia under the medical direction of an Anesthesiologist who must be immediately accessible.

MAJOR DUTIES

Provides anesthesiologist support as a physician extender and part of the patient care team.

Conducts pre-anesthetic patient history and physicals, which include collecting preoperative consults and data.

Describes the anesthetic risks, benefits, and options to the patient based on the anesthetic plan approved by the attending physician.

Pre-tests, calibrates, and monitors anesthesia delivery systems.

Administers, within authorized limits; maintains; and monitors anesthesia.

Provides airway skills including: intubations, laryngeal mask airways, nasal/oral airways, and fiber optic bronchoscopy.

Initiates and utilizes multi-parameter monitoring of patients prior to, during, and after anesthesia, or in an intensive care or acute setting (including: electrocardiogram (EKG), capnography, oxygen saturation, direct arterial pressures, central venous pressure, pulmonary artery pressures, arterial blood gas determinations, necessary chemistry panels, temperature, respiration, noninvasive blood pressure, heart rate, ventilatory parameters and additional monitors as directed by an Anesthesiologist).

Maintains required perioperative documentation.

Administers cardiovascular or pulmonary supportive drug therapies as necessary.

Identifies and makes necessary anesthetic adjustments during the intraoperative period.

Calculates and replaces necessary fluids and blood products.

Provides safe transition into the post-anesthetic care unit and assists in postoperative pain control.

Initiates emergency resuscitation by using current advanced cardiac life support guidelines.

Maintains continuing educational activities and participates in administrative affairs and/or research as directed.

FACTOR LEVELS

Factor 1. Knowledge Required by the Position

Mastery of the specialty area of anesthesiology in order to administer and monitor anesthesia to complex surgical cases, solve a variety of problems, and make recommendations to the supervising Anesthesiologist for improved case management. The AA must have a thorough understanding of the effects of anesthesia agents and human physiology in order to intubate patients and to monitor their vital signs during the surgical procedure.

Knowledge and ability to use basic and advanced airway interventions.

Ability to administer vasoactive drugs and infusions; adjuvant and accessory drugs; and blood, blood products and supportive fluids.

Ability to perform advanced cardiac life support.

Factor 2. Supervisory Controls

The AA is given assignments with general instructions and works under the medical direction of an Anesthesiologist. The AA carries out assignments and consults with the supervisor and with other health care professionals on the team in identifying and resolving potential problems. The AA's work is observed by the Anesthesiologist for technical adequacy and conformance with procedures and practices applicable to surgical procedure. The supervising Anesthesiologist periodically performs record reviews and other assessments to determine the competency of the AA.

Factor 3. Guidelines

The AA follows the plan approved by the supervising Anesthesiologist. The AA uses established methods and techniques in gathering patient history; explaining the risks, benefits, and options of anesthesia; administering and monitoring anesthesia; and responding to emergency situations. The AA may initiate minor deviations to standard practice to meet patient needs during procedures. Major deviations or serious problems are immediately referred to the supervising Anesthesiologist.

Factor 4. Complexity

The AA performs the full range of functions required by anesthesiology as part of a surgical team including taking patient history, conducting pre-anesthetic physicals, explaining the risks and benefits of anesthesia, administering and monitoring anesthesia, and identifying and responding to problems and emergency situations. The AA is expected to provide airway skills, initiate and utilize multi-parameter monitoring, administer supportive drug therapies, and calculate and replace fluids as necessary. The AA must adhere to the approved plan, identify the need for and make minor adjustments during procedures, and recognize and respond to major

problems and emergencies. The AA participates in a broad and diverse range of complex surgical procedures and variable and complex cases.

Factor 5. Scope and Effect

The purpose of the work is to perform as a physician extender in planning and administering anesthesia for a wide range of surgical procedures. The work encompasses the full range of the process from gathering patient history, through administering and monitoring anesthesia, and including identifying and responding to problems and emergencies. The work enables the medical center to provide more efficient and effective care to patients and directly impacts the individual patient's experience and well-being.

Factor 6. Personal Contacts

The AA interviews patients and their families in order to obtain physical history information necessary to determine a safe dosage of anesthesia. At times, this information may be difficult to obtain, but it is essential for a successful surgical outcome. In addition, the AA has frequent contacts with numerous professionals and staff in the VA medical center, especially in the Recovery Room, Intensive Care Unit, Step-Down Units, Outpatient Surgical areas, inpatient wards, and Diagnostic Laboratory Services.

Factor 7. Purpose of Contacts

The purpose of contacts is to gather and give information and technical assessments, and to persuade individuals and groups to accept findings and reach agreement on the technical points of the procedures. Contacts with patients require skill in listening, explaining, and establishing rapport to communicate effectively to patients the risks and benefits associated with the proposed anesthetic to ensure an informed consent and to allay the fears and concerns of the patients and their families.

Factor 8. Physical Demands

The AA's work requires the extremely precise application of anesthetic agents in an aseptic environment and includes long periods of standing, sitting, and bending. The incumbent must use the appropriate technique to physically assist the patient.

Factor 9. Work Environment

The AA's work is typically performed in a surgical suite setting that may expose the incumbent to the communicable diseases common to the patient population. Uncontrolled exposure to some anesthesia agents can be dangerous especially for prolonged exposure.

Other Significant Facts: ADP Security

The AA protects printed and electronic files containing sensitive data in accordance with the provisions of the Privacy Act of 1974 and other applicable laws, Federal regulations, VA statutes

and policy, and VHA policy. The AA protects the data from unauthorized release or from loss, alteration, or unauthorized deletion; and follows applicable regulations and instructions regarding access to computerized files, release of access codes, etc., as set out in the computer access agreement that the employee signs.