

UCI Health

Advanced Practice Providers Program

ADVANCED PRACTICE NEWS

Celebrate

NATIONAL CRNA WEEK

JANUARY 22-28, 2023



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Advanced Practice News

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OUR VISION STATEMENT

The UCI Health Advanced Practice Providers Program aims to be a leader in **patient-centered care, research, and “top of the license practice.”** We believe that when APPs are used to their fullest potential, the entire healthcare system benefits.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR OF ADVANCED PRACTICE PROVIDERS

VASCO DEON KIDD, DHSC, MPH, MS, PA-C



Happy New Year! Welcome to the 11th edition newsletter to commemorate National CRNA week from January 22-28, 2023.

Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs) have been providing anesthesia care for nearly 150 years. There are about 59,000 CRNAs practicing anesthesia across the country. CRNAs are highly qualified, skilled, and exhibit a high degree of competency. The CRNA profession remains in high demand as underscored by The Bureau of Labor

Statistics (BLS), which predicts 14% growth of CRNAs by the end of the decade, making it one of the fastest-growing health care occupations in America. Currently, UCI has 63 CRNAs providing professional services in a variety of settings such as the Douglas hospital, interventional radiology, labor and delivery, GI suites, Cath lab, and provide pre and post operative patient assessments. Our CRNAs play a vital role in keeping our operating rooms and procedural areas running smoothly and efficiently. Please join me in acknowledging and celebrating National CRNA Week.

In closing, I am extremely grateful and appreciative of everyone's relentless commitment, hard work, and dedication in 2022 in helping us achieve our tripartite mission. Moreover, I would like to thank you ALL for your tireless efforts in improving the health and wellness of our communities. I wish you ALL success, happiness, resilience, and prosperity in 2023. Please stay healthy and strong!

Best regards,

Vasco Deon Kidd

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF AN APP: CRNA

Gabriel Punsalan, Sr. CRNA

1. Tell us about your path to become a CRNA.

I discovered the CRNA specialty back in 2000, during one of my nursing school rotations in rural Northern California. While learning about Operating Room nursing responsibilities, a gentleman behind the blue drape called me over to help him intubate his patient. I informed him that I was not a medical student, and that he may have confused me with someone else. I soon learned after assisting him that he was a CRNA and that was the pivotal moment that dictated my path to becoming one as well. I proceeded to accept a position in the Cardiothoracic ICU at UCLA, which started my journey in building the experience necessary to become a CRNA. In 2007, my dream began at USC Keck School of Nurse Anesthesia, and I have been happily enjoying my career for the past 14 years.

2. Tell us about your day-to-day on the job.

The role of a CRNA is diverse depending on the environment you operate in. The shift's length, surgical coverage, and daily responsibility vary tremendously. Speaking from a clinical care perspective, at UCI we work in an Anesthesia Care Team model where we provide care in collaboration with our physician Anesthesiologist colleagues. As a brief overview of our daily responsibilities, we start with reviewing the surgical case load for the day. I proceed to setting up the operating room in regards both to equipment and medications that will be utilized and administered. As the rest of the operating room staff prepare the surgical equipment and room, I visit the patient in the pre-operative suite to evaluate and discuss the anesthesia plan. I bring the patient back to the OR and proceed with inducing a safe anesthetic to help achieve a successful surgical outcome. At the completion of the surgical case, my responsibilities entail emerging the patient safely out of anesthesia and delivery to the recovery room where I hand off care to the PACU team.



3. What is the most rewarding part of your job?

I find the scope of practice in my career is the most rewarding part of my job. CRNAs have great diversity in skill sets, whether its developing treatment plans for a critically unstable patient to the hands-on procedures such as standard and emergent intubations, advanced central access capabilities, and placement of regional/neuraxial blocks. Having the full trust of a patient to keep them safe through a surgical procedure is one of our highest levels of responsibility. This full spectrum of doing what is best for the patient and being able to participate in all levels of their care is important and rewarding to me as a clinician.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF AN APP: CRNA

Gabriel Punsalan, Sr. CRNA

4. What advice would you give an aspiring CRNA?

Anesthesiology is a very rewarding career. The requirements and schooling are extensive but necessary due to the responsibilities you hold as a clinician. While the allure of delivering anesthesia could be the only factor that drives you to this specialty, the first step should be to shadow a CRNA to get a better understanding of the daily life of our profession. Once the decision has been made to pursue the path, I highly recommend a high intensity ICU with critical patients that require mechanical ventilation and a variety of vasoactive medication administration. Understanding the physiology and pharmacokinetics of these highly utilized medications will provide critical experience once you get to the operation suite. While one year of experience in an intensive care unit is required, I highly recommend 2-3 years of experience in several different ICU specialties as well as emergency medicine. In addition, assistance with advanced procedures can only help solidify a basic understanding once you are accepted to a CRNA program. All of this together will help build a solid foundation of experience.



5. What does National CRNA week mean to you?

CRNA week is an opportunity to showcase a very specialized nursing career path. Even to this day, after 100+ years of providing excellent anesthetic care, the role of CRNAs is still not often understood within the general public. This week is essential to celebrating our past, to bringing awareness to our advanced skill sets and excellent patient care in the present and building a stronger group of highly specialized advance practice nurses for the future.

6. What is one fun fact that most people do not know about you?



I really enjoy technology and innovation in medicine. Through my endless curiosity, I am developing a new medical device to assist in emergent intubations. So far, my project has received an NIH Phase I SBIR grant which has helped my new startup, IVOS Medical, hit the ground running with the ambitious goal of developing a superior endotracheal intubation platform for healthcare professionals.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF AN APP: CRNA

Nilu Patel, Sr. CRNA

1. Tell us about your path to become a CRNA.

My interest in the Certified Registered Nurse Anesthesiology (CRNA) profession piqued after speaking with a nurse anesthesia trainee during my final semester of nursing school at the University of Southern California (USC). I learned that a CRNA is an advanced practice nurse with specialty training in anesthesiology. At the time, CRNAs were considered “the best kept secret in healthcare” so I decided to investigate further. I met with the USC nurse anesthesia program director and discussed the path to become a CRNA. I was advised to first read *Watchful Care: A History of America's Nurse Anesthetists* by Marianne Bankert. It was fascinating to learn that the emergence of the nurse anesthesia profession occurred during the early 19th century.



Surprisingly, nurse anesthetists were the first professionals to administer anesthesia because medical students tasked with dropping ether were more interested in observing surgery. Shadowing CRNAs in the operating room was the next step in my discovery of the CRNA profession. I observed the remarkable skill CRNAs possessed with communicating on a specialized level with patients, patient’s families, and the perioperative team. It was impressive to see these advanced practice nurses managing high-technology machinery and anesthesia tools with ease. I was in awe by their expertise at intubating, placing central venous access and arterial lines, and using critical judgement to independently manage a patient’s vital signs during surgery. The information I gained from my discovery process solidified my decision to pursue a master’s degree in nursing and become a CRNA. After completing a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) at USC, I set off on my journey to become a CRNA. I was hired into a competitive new graduate training program in a combined medical, surgical, and cardiothoracic intensive care unit (ICU), a prerequisite for admission into a nurse anesthesia program. Fourteen months later I entered the USC Program of Nurse Anesthesia (PNA). Shortly after graduating from the program, I moved to Boston, passed the board examination, and proudly started my first appointment as a CRNA.

2. Tell us about your day-to-day on the job.

I can unequivocally say each day is unique at the University of California, Irvine (UCI) Health. Typically, my workday begins at 0630 a.m. after I confirm my operating room (OR) assignment in the event a change occurred overnight. Then, I review my cases for the day in EPIC, paying particular attention to the preoperative evaluation for the first surgical patient. I conduct an anesthesia machine check, set up the OR with the medications and equipment necessary for the first case. I greet my patient in the preoperative patient care unit (PPCU) and verify the medical history and perform a physical examination with a focus on the airway assessment. I confer with the supervising anesthesiologist and review any specific details pertaining to the patient and the surgical procedure. The patient is then informed of the anesthetic plan, possible anesthetic complications, and is consented. I transport the patient to the OR by 0715 a.m. The patient is positioned on the OR table and standard monitors are applied.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF AN APP: CRNA

Nilu Patel, Sr. CRNA

I initiate an individualized anesthesia delivery process which is determined by the patient's comorbidities and the anesthetic needs specific for the planned surgery. Sometimes, I am assigned to the airway and/or trauma team where I respond to hospital-wide code blue situations or assess incoming trauma patients. I also provide break relief for CRNAs, physician anesthesiologists, medical and nurse anesthesia residents working in various anesthetizing locations. I participate with preoperative evaluation and assessment of inpatients or add-on surgical procedures. Additionally, I am a resource person for newly hired CRNAs and nurse anesthesia residents.

3. What is the most rewarding part of your job?

The most rewarding part of my job is meeting the patient in the PPCU. I embrace the time I have to connect, build trust, and ease a patient's concerns before surgery. I am further satisfied when a patient's emergence from anesthesia is smooth, and a patient is comfortable after surgery. Mastering my craft and working with a perioperative team that is focused on helping and healing one patient at a time is very fulfilling.

4. What advice would you give an aspiring CRNA?

The advice I'd give to an aspiring CRNA is to "work hard and take it one day at a time". I received this advice in my training and, although sounding elementary, these words helped me to stay focused on the present. In turn, it also made my training more manageable while I learned the complexities of anesthesiology. Further, I grew to better regulate the stress of being in graduate school. For the aspiring CRNA, whether it is the prerequisite time needed in critical care, the experience of the interview process for a CRNA program, or eventually studying for the CRNA board exam, work hard and take it one day at a time. The rewards are endless.

5. What does National CRNA week mean to you?

CRNA week is meaningful because it is a time where my profession is recognized and celebrated for being valued members of the healthcare community. The week reminds all CRNAs that they are appreciated and acknowledged for their hard work, commitment to patient care, and to lifelong learning. This year, the theme for CRNA Week is "CRNAs: The Original Anesthesia Experts. Established in 1863", illustrating how far this profession has grown from the hard work and the vast contributions made by my predecessors. I am proud to be one of nearly 59,000 practicing CRNAs who safely administer over 50 million anesthetics in the United States annually. Simply, CRNA week reinforces the value and contributions that I and my CRNA colleagues offer in healthcare.

6. What is one fun fact that most people do not know about you?

A fun fact that most people don't know about me is that I learned how to swim at age 30. My CRNA coworkers encouraged me to sign-up and train with them for a sprint mini triathlon. They confessed that they too needed to learn how to swim so I took the plunge with them. I practiced every day, even after work during the winter months in order to be ready for the race. Thank goodness for muscle memory because I managed to improve each day, even if it was swimming one extra stroke compared to the day before. I was fortunate to have CRNA friends who guided me on my first open-water ocean swim in preparation for the triathlon. It was reassuring to know that they could resuscitate me if necessary. I successfully completed that sprint triathlon. I am grateful to have learned a life skill and to have made wonderful memories in the process.

SPOTLIGHT ON APP ACHIEVEMENTS FOR WINTER 2023



The purpose of this section is to recognize any achievements of the APP workforce during the Winter of 2023. Future newsletters will continue to highlight APP awards, research publications, book chapters, poster presentations, and leadership nominations in your professional associations or at UCI Health. We firmly believe in giving spotlight to our amazing and dedicated APP workforce.

Stephanie Au, DNP, MSN, APRN, FNP-c, Assistant Clinical Nursing Professor, School of Nursing.

Au S. The outcomes of interprofessional education in prelicensure nursing education: An integrative review. *Nurse Educ Today*. 2022 Dec 22;121:105703. doi:

10.1016/j.nedt.2022.105703. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 36577287. [See Link to article:](#)

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New APP Hires

We are pleased to welcome new advanced practice providers to our team in FY2023

Anesthesiology & Perioperative Care

- Karine Pauzuolis, CRNA
- Martha Peck, CRNA

Orthopedic surgery

- Mariah Montgomery

Surgery

- Aaron Manshaem, PA

Urology

- Caroline Nguyen, PA