Anesthesiologist Assistants
Overview

Anesthesiologist Assistants are highly skilled professionals who work under the direction of licensed anesthesiologists (doctors) and exclusively within the Anesthesia Care Team environment as described by the American Society of Anesthesiologists (ASA) to design and implement anesthesia care plans.

Under supervision, they operate anesthesia equipment, monitor patients, and assist in providing quality care. They may accompany the patient before, during and after anesthesia to ensure quality and continuity of care. In an emergency, Anesthesiology Assistants are trained to assist in life saving measures, such as CPR, and life support.

Anesthesia Assistants are in high demand, because of rising health care costs and the need for skilled personnel to monitor the patient under anesthesia. Anesthesiology Assistants operate as physician and nurse extenders, performing critical tasks that ensure the safety of the patient and promote optimal health outcomes.

Salary: $110,000 - $120,000 [*]
Years in school: 6 - 8 after high school graduation
Job outlook: Excellent

Related Careers
Nurse Anesthetist
Physician Assistant
Surgical Technologist

Working Conditions

Anesthesiology Assistants usually work in hospitals under the direction of a licensed Anesthesiologist and exclusively within the Anesthesia Care Team environment as described by the American Society of Anesthesiologists (ASA).

The profession maintains a typical work-week with options for on-call, evening or weekend assignments. The Anesthesiology Assistant’s responsibilities include:

- Taking a complete health history of the patient.
- Performing physical exams to identify any issues that may affect the anesthesia care plan.
- Administering necessary diagnostic and laboratory tests (such as taking blood).
- Preparing the patient to be monitored, using noninvasive and invasive methods, as determined by the physician.
- Assisting with preparatory procedures, such as pulmonary artery catheterization, electroencephalographic spectral analysis, echocardiography and evoked potentials.
- Pre-testing and calibrating of anesthesia delivery systems and monitors.
- Assisting with inducing, sustaining and adjusting anesthesia levels.
- Ensuring continuity of care through the postoperative recovery period.
- Assisting with life support, where required including airway management.
Accompanying the physician or Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CNRA) on patient rounds.
Performing functions in the intensive care unit and pain clinic.
Taking progress notes, preparing case summaries and transcribing physician orders.
Training and supervising health workers in the calibration, maintenance and operation of patient monitors.
Performing administrative duties, research and clinical instruction.

**Working Conditions**

Anesthesiologist Assistants must first complete a four-year college degree, with course work in general and organic chemistry, advanced college math, general and advanced biology, and physics.

The two-year, master’s level Anesthesiology Assistant training program focuses on course work that enhances basic science knowledge in physiology, pharmacology, anatomy, and biochemistry with special emphasis on the cardiovascular, respiratory, renal, nervous, and neuromuscular systems.

Clinical instruction educates students extensively in patient monitoring, anesthesia delivery systems, life support systems, patient assessment and in the skills needed to provide compassionate and quality care.

Look for a program that is accredited by the Council on Accreditation of Allied Health Educational Programs (CAAHEP), works closely with a medical school, and is taught by physicians who are board-certified in anesthesiology.

Students complete 600 hours of coursework in the classroom and laboratory, a minimum of 63 didactic hours and 2000 hours of clinical training. During the clinical portion, students will administer as many as 600 different anesthetics during a variety of surgeries. Clinical training also prepares student to monitor patients, operate anesthesia delivery systems and life support systems, and accurately assess patients.

A solid grasp of safety protocols and effective communication skills are also essential to help the Anesthesiology Assistant excel as part of the treatment team.

The student must pass a 6-hour certification exam administered by the National Commission for the Certification of Anesthesiology Assistants (NCCAA). Anesthesiology Assistants are also required to complete 40 hours of Continuing Medical Education (CME) every two years and pass a qualifying exam every six years.

**Professional Associations**

American Academy of Anesthesiology Assistants
American Society of Anesthesiologists

**Funding Opportunities**

Search for funding opportunities in this field
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**Source**

www.anesthetist.org

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Allied Health Professions