



House Health Policy Committee
Chair Bronna Kahle
Committee Members
124 North Capitol Avenue
Lansing, MI 48933

March 4, 2021

Chairwoman Kahle and Members of the House Health Policy Committee,

We are writing today to **strongly oppose House Bill 4359**. We oppose the legislation as physician anesthesiologists, as former nurses and as patients. More specifically, we ask you to oppose this effort to allow the practice of medicine by legislation instead of education.

Dr. VanDop practiced a nurse anesthetist and Dr. Wahl was a critical care nurse for years before enrolling in medical school and pursuing additional education to better prepare us to meet the needs of our patients.

Prior to those additional years of training, we felt unprepared to independently practice at the level we knew necessary for the safe, effective delivery of anesthesia care.

While most of us agree that technological advances have made routine anesthesia practice safe, we submit that medical education and the four years of post doctoral training are necessary for the independent medical practice of anesthesiology.

We encounter, on a regular basis, decisions that need to be made in a timely manner that draw on our medical training. Those years in intensive care, cardiac anesthesia and intensive pediatric and neonatal medicine provide a framework in the formulation of day -to -day clinical anesthesia decisions. This rigorous education process that demands independent medical judgment is the essence of physician training.

We ask you to reflect back to 1910, when the Carnegie Foundation directed Abraham Flexner to address the haphazard nature of medical training that existed in the United States. The Flexner Report provided the path to rigorous university based scientific medical education. A new standard for medical education was established.

Despite the push for advance practice nursing doctoral programs, the rigor and intensity found in medical education is not found in those nursing curricula.

In our current positions we have the opportunity to supervise nurse anesthetists. We are pleased to vouch for their commitment to safe anesthesia care and for their enthusiasm to participate in the

anesthesia care team. We share that vision. It has become clearer to us since assuming our roles that it is our responsibility to supervise and provide medical direction.

The suggestion that independent nurse anesthesia practice, will at best cause no harm, is a step back in time of over 100 years. The evidence does not support this contention. For the safety of Michigan patients, we ask you each to oppose House Bill 4359.

Sincerely,

Dr. Bruce VanDop, D.O. (Former CRNA)
Muskegon, MI

Dr. Mark Wahl, M.D. (Former RN)
Kalamazoo, MI