



spotlight on health care

Anesthesia Helps Nervous Patients Through MRIs

(NAPSA)—Apprehensive patients who previously might not have been willing to undergo a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) test can now rest easier knowing anesthesia is an option to calm their nerves, according to the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA).

MRI is a diagnostic technique that uses a large, powerful magnet to create paper-thin sectional images of any part of the body—including the heart, arteries and veins—from any angle and direction without surgical invasion. The drawback is that these procedures, while painless, require patients to be immobile for 20 minutes to well over an hour, often in a close space.

Patients who may need anesthesia care during an MRI test include children, people who suffer from claustrophobia, psychiatric patients and the critically ill. More often than not, the anesthesia provider who keeps patients safe and comfortable throughout MRI tests is a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA). A CRNA's involvement may be necessary for a number of reasons, such as dealing with a patient's inability to lie perfectly still or monitoring a patient's vital signs.

"Administering anesthesia to a patient undergoing an MRI procedure allows the machine to take the best possible images free from any complications caused by the individual moving about," said Sandra Tunajek, CRNA, DNP, director of the Council for Public Interest in Anesthesia (CPIA). "It is also the responsibility of the anesthetist to ensure that the patient has a safe and comfortable anesthetic experience, and leaves the facility with positive feelings about the MRI



For some people, anesthesia can be a big help in undergoing a lengthy—though necessary—MRI exam.

test."

An "open" MRI takes place in a cylinder that is rounded on the top and bottom and open along the sides. By contrast, in a "closed" MRI machine, the patient lies in a tube that is open at one end only. According to research, about one in four people cannot tolerate being in closed MRI machines because they suffer from claustrophobia, and therefore require some form of anesthesia to help them through the experience.

To help alleviate patient concerns about MRI through information and education, the CPIA, which focuses on patient care and practitioner wellness, has published a new brochure titled "Magnetic Resonance Imaging: What You Should Know About MRI." The brochure answers commonly asked questions about MRI and the use of anesthesia for the procedure.

To learn more about anesthesia and MRIs or to order a free copy of the CPIA brochure, call (847) 655-1116 or e-mail at bookstore@aana.com.