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February 17, 2021

Honorable members of the HCIF Services Committee Members

This testimony is in favor of LD 254 A bill to allow Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists to bill for their services.

Early summer 2019, my husband Michael C Day, was examined by Dr Jeffrey Jordan, of Bangor Eye Surgery PA. Cataract surgery was recommended for his right eye. It was explained to him that a CRNA, (nurse anesthetist) from Nurse Anesthesia of Maine would administer anesthesia. He was scheduled for July 17, 2019, and advised to communicate with that office's Prior Authorizations person.

Michael has a Federal Employee Plan through Anthem Blue Cross. He was diligent about finding out if the nurse anesthetist is covered in his insurance plan network. He was told that they were not, and that no nurse anesthetists in the State of Maine are covered in his BC/BS network. He then called 2 different people at the Bangor Eye Surgery PA who handled Prior Authorizations. He was told repeatedly that coverage had "never been a problem" which was not what his insurer had said. Then I called Nurse Anesthesia of Maine and asked a representative in that office about coverage and their billing office said that there was a possibility he would get a surprise big bill as high as \$800 because they were not in network with BC/BS.

It became a frustrating run around, and so my husband just cancelled his surgery altogether. Eventually he will need to reschedule, and I do hope by that time that this insurance coverage issue regarding certified nurse anesthetists in Maine has been resolved. Nurse practitioners (all specialties) and Nurse Midwives are covered by health insurance policies and as far as I know there is no reason that CRNAs should not be covered.

Our experience was confusing and frustrating for Mike and he eventually decided to cancel the surgery. This should not be happening to patients. It simply should not be this complex to get needed procedures covered on by our insurance policies.

I have learned since our experience that Maine CRNAs bill for their services under the eye surgeon's name in order to get patients full coverage for their procedures. This convoluted and unnecessary method of billing seems ridiculous and it is very confusing for patients who are checking to make sure they are covered by their insurances. Please vote yes for LD 254.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Day RN, Michael C Day's wife