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Colorado Society of Anesthesiologists Works to Ensure Veterans Have Safe, Timely Access to Anesthesia Care

DENVER – The Colorado Society of Anesthesiologists (CSA) is collaborating with the University of Colorado School of Medicine Department of Anesthesiology and several Denver area group practices to offer help to the VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System in response to recent reports of anesthesia service staffing shortages of both physician anesthesiologists and nurse anesthetists.

The CSA learned of the staffing problem after media reports on October 12 and immediately began looking for a solution to the temporary shortage caused by recent staff departures, including both anesthesiologists and nurse anesthetists. New physician anesthesiologists have been hired for all open VA positions and are expected to be on staff soon.

“It’s critical for our Veterans to receive safe and timely access to anesthesia care and we’re committed to helping the Denver VA and the Veterans it serves,” stated CSA President Joy L. Hawkins, M.D. “We are grateful to Vesna Jevtovic-Todorovic, M.D., Ph.D., M.B.A., Professor and Chair of Anesthesiology at the University of Colorado, for her offer of assistance. We are pleased that others in the physician anesthesiology community in Denver have also offered to help the VA through this temporary shortage.”

The University of Colorado School of Medicine has a long-standing relationship with the VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System. The VA Medical Center in Denver is a primary training site for residents in the University's anesthesiology residency program and VA physician anesthesiologists, while employed by the Department of Veterans Affairs, have faculty appointments with the University.

“CSA understands that contracts for VA services must go through the normal VA contracting process and that all physicians new to a hospital must go through credentialing, so we are unsure when these offers of assistance might be put in place,” commented Dr. Hawkins. “But we wanted to help and we were confident that Colorado’s physician anesthesiologists would step forward to ensure that this region’s Veterans get the care they have earned and deserve.”

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