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Dear Colleague

TITLE CHANGE OF THE CURRENT ANAESTHETIC ASSISTANT ROLE IN SCOTLAND

1. This Directors' Letter follows the letter of 1 February 2023, which advised you of the upcoming UK statutory regulation of Anaesthesia Associates (AA) and the resultant requirement to change the title of the Anaesthetic Assistant (also AA) role in Scotland.

BACKGROUND

2. In February 2019, the then Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport agreed with UK Ministers' proposals to bring the medical associate professions (MAPs) of Physician Associate (PA) and Physicians' Assistant (Anaesthesia) (PA(A)), into UK-wide statutory regulation by the General Medical Council.
3. However, in July 2019, the professional membership body for PA(A)s changed the name of their organisation to the Association of Anaesthesia Associates, with universities shortly thereafter beginning to present courses using the new *de facto* title.
4. Work is progressing to enable the necessary legislation to be laid in the UK and Scottish Parliaments by the end of this year. Following Parliamentary approval, this will bring these roles into statutory regulation and thereby make Physician Associate and Anaesthesia Associate *protected titles* in law.
5. The widespread use by NHS Boards of the Anaesthetic Assistant (AA) title means there is a likelihood of two distinct yet related roles, with the same initials but different scopes of practice, working together in theatre services.
6. In view of the potential risks this scenario presents, the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care agreed

From the Director of Health Workforce

Gillian Russell
From the Chief Nursing Officer
Professor Alex McMahon

13 April 2023

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Addresses

For action

Chief Executives
HR Directors
Medical and Nursing Directors

For information

Royal College of Anaesthetists
Royal College of Nursing
Academy of Medical Royal Colleges and Faculties in Scotland

Further Enquiries

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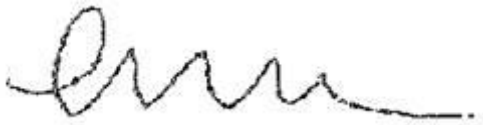
that use of the title *Anaesthetic Assistant* in NHS Scotland should cease at the earliest opportunity.

7. The Scottish Executive Nurse Directors Group has acknowledged the potential risks and agreed in principle that *Anaesthetic Practitioner* would be a suitable alternative. This proposal is supported by NHS Education for Scotland, the Chief Nursing Officer and the Director of Health Workforce and aligns with the NES NMaHP Perioperative Career Framework' <https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/22616>.
8. The title change has no bearing on terms and conditions, job description or other contractual obligations.

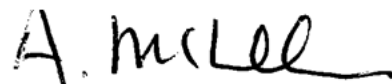
ACTION

9. NHS Boards are asked to replace the Anaesthetic Assistant title with Anaesthetic Practitioner, as soon as practicably possible, in order to ensure patient safety.
10. The Scottish Government encourages a "Once for Scotland" approach to ensure consistency throughout the NHS in Scotland.

Yours sincerely



Gillian Russell
Director of Health Workforce



Professor Alex McMahon
Chief Nursing Officer