

1 HASSARD BONNINGTON LLP  
2 PHILIP S. WARD, ESQ., State Bar No. 51768  
3 B. THOMAS FRENCH, ESQ., State Bar No. 65848  
4 PHILLIP J. GOLDBERG, ESQ., State Bar No. 121487  
5 Two Embarcadero Center, Suite 1800  
6 San Francisco, California 94111-3993  
7 Telephone: (415) 288-9800  
8 Fax: (415) 288-9801

9 Attorneys for Petitioners,  
10 California Society of Anesthesiologists  
11 and California Medical Association

12 CALIFORNIA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION  
13 FRANCISCO J. SILVA, ESQ., State Bar No. 214773  
14 ASTRID G. MEGHRIGIAN, ESQ., State Bar No. 120896  
15 LONG X. DO, ESQ., State Bar No. 211439  
16 1201 J Street, Suite 200  
17 Sacramento, California 95814-2906  
18 Telephone: (916) 444-5532  
19 Fax: (916) 551-2027

20 Attorneys for Petitioner,  
21 California Medical Association

22 IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
23 IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

24 CALIFORNIA SOCIETY OF  
25 ANESTHESIOLOGISTS, a California  
26 nonprofit corporation, and CALIFORNIA  
27 MEDICAL ASSOCIATION, a California  
28 nonprofit corporation  
Petitioners,

vs.

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER, as  
Governor of the State of California, and  
Does 1 through 50, inclusive,

Respondents.

No. **CPF-10-510191**

**PETITION FOR WRIT OF  
MANDATE, PROHIBITION, OR  
OTHER APPROPRIATE RELIEF  
AND REQUEST FOR  
DECLARATORY RELIEF**

ENDORSED  
FILED  
SAN FRANCISCO COUNTY  
SUPERIOR COURT

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SUBMITTED BY: \_\_\_\_\_ CLERK

BY: \_\_\_\_\_ CLERK



1 requirement. In addition, Petitioners ask this Court to enter a judgment declaring that,  
2 under California law, a CRNA providing anesthesia may do so only under physician  
3 supervision.

## 4 II. PARTIES

5 4. Petitioner California Society of Anesthesiologists (“CSA”) is a  
6 California nonprofit corporation with its principal place of business in San Mateo  
7 County, California. CSA is dedicated to promoting the highest standards of the  
8 profession of anesthesiology, to fostering excellence through continuing medical  
9 education, and to serving as an advocate for anesthesiologists and their patients. Its  
10 approximately 4,000 members are licensed physicians specializing in anesthesiology,  
11 including members practicing the subspecialty of pain medicine or pain management.  
12 Some of CSA members supervise CRNAs who administer anesthesia to their patients  
13 in hospitals and other health care facilities. The challenged action in this Petition  
14 would have a significant impact on CSA members’ practice of medicine, their ability to  
15 protect their patients, and their physician/patient relationships.

16 5. Petitioner California Medical Association (“CMA”) is a nonprofit  
17 corporation with its principal place of business in Sacramento, California. CMA’s  
18 purposes are to promote the science and art of medicine, the care and well-being of  
19 patients, the protection of the public health, and the betterment of the medical  
20 profession. Its members consist of approximately 35,000 physicians and medical  
21 students. Its physician members practice medicine in California in all specialties and  
22 settings, including anesthesiology. CMA’s physician members also will be affected if  
23 California is permitted to opt out of the Medicare requirement that physicians supervise  
24 any CRNA who administers anesthesia.

25 6. Petitioners California Society of Anesthesiologists and California  
26 Medical Association are duly authorized to bring this action on behalf of their own  
27 interests and in a representative capacity on behalf of their physician members who are  
28 being harmed by the unlawful conduct described herein.



1           12.     The opt-out provision states in full:

2           A hospital may be exempted from the requirement for physician supervision of  
3           CRNAs as described in paragraph (a)(4) of this section, if the State in which the  
4           hospital is located submits a letter to CMS signed by the Governor, following  
5           consultation with the State's Boards of Medicine and Nursing, requesting  
6           exemption from physician supervision of CRNAs. The letter from the Governor  
7           must attest [1] that he or she has consulted with State Boards of Medicine and  
8           Nursing about issues related to access to and the quality of anesthesia services  
9           in the State and [2] has concluded that it is in the best interests of the State's  
10          citizens to opt-out of the current physician supervision requirement, and [3] that  
11          the opt-out is consistent with State law. (42 C.F.R. §482.52(c)(1).)

12           13.     For more than eight years after establishment of this opt-out  
13          option, Petitioners do not believe California has attempted to opt-out of the physician  
14          supervision requirement for the administration of anesthesia by CRNAs. In or about  
15          June 2009, Governor Schwarzenegger submitted a letter dated June 10, 2009 to CMS  
16          whereby he purported to exercise "the option to exempt the State of California from the  
17          requirement that certified registered nurse anesthetists be supervised by a physician"  
18          (hereinafter referred to as "Respondent's Opt-out Decision"). A true and correct copy  
19          of the Governor's letter dated June 10, 2009, is attached hereto as Exhibit A.

20           14.     Petitioners have found no evidence that the Governor ever  
21          consulted with the Medical Board of California – the state agency responsible for the  
22          enforcement of the Medical Practice Act – on issues concerning administering of  
23          anesthesia by CRNAs. While the Medical Board did receive an inquiry from the  
24          California State and Consumer Services Agency in the first half of 2009 concerning the  
25          scope of practice of nurse anesthetists, there is no evidence of communication or  
26          consultation during this same period between the Governor or any members of his staff  
27          and the Medical Board regarding access to and quality of anesthesia services. The  
28          Medical Board, in a letter dated March 2, 2009 to Leslie Lopez, Deputy Secretary and

1 General Counsel, California State and Consumer Services Agency did in fact state that  
2 it “appears that a nurse anesthetist is required to have physician . . . supervision.”

3 15. The fact that CRNAs are required to have physician supervision is  
4 recognized in the Nursing Practice Act, Business & Professions Code §§2700 *et seq.*  
5 That Act as a whole contemplates physician supervision, the levels of which vary  
6 depending upon the nature and complexity of the tasks to be performed.

7 16. The administration of anesthesia by registered nurses under  
8 physician supervision has been recognized as lawful in California at least since the  
9 decision of the California Supreme Court in *Chalmers-Francis v. Nelson* (1936) 6  
10 Cal.2d 402, which upheld such actions by nurses when done “under the immediate  
11 direction and supervision of the operating surgeon and his assistants.” *Chalmers-*  
12 *Francis v. Nelson, supra*, at 404. In subsequent cases, and in numerous Opinions by  
13 the California Attorney General, and in the November 6, 2009 opinion of the  
14 Legislative Counsel Bureau, it has been confirmed that registered nurses must function  
15 under physician supervision when administering anesthesia. Those decisions are  
16 consistent with numerous California statutes, and no statute eliminating this  
17 requirement has been enacted in California.

18 17. The Nurse Anesthetists Act (Business & Professions Code  
19 §§2825, *et seq.*) is silent with respect to CRNA scope of practice, except to provide in  
20 substance that such scope of practice is defined by the statutes defining the practice of  
21 registered nursing generally (Business & Professions Code §2833.6). The Board of  
22 Registered Nursing has not adopted any regulations defining the CRNA scope of  
23 practice.

24 18. In submitting the “opt-out” letter, Respondent Governor  
25 Schwarzenegger acted contrary to California laws that prohibit CRNAs from  
26 administering anesthesia without physician supervision. The “opt-out” letter also fails  
27 to satisfy 42 C.F.R. §482.52 in that opting-out of the physician supervision requirement  
28 was not and is not consistent with California law.

1           19. Under 42 C.F.R. §482.52(c)(2), a request for exemption under 42  
2 C.F.R. §482.52(c)(1) is effective upon submission and may be withdrawn at any time.  
3 Shortly after the Governor’s “opt-out” letter was submitted to CMS, Petitioners asked  
4 the Governor to withdraw the “opt-out” letter, explaining in detail why it was not  
5 consistent with State law as required by 42 C.F.R. §482.52. The Governor refused to  
6 withdraw the “opt-out” letter, asserting that it was consistent with California law.

7           20. Petitioners are informed and believe that certain hospitals in the  
8 State of California have, based on Respondent’s Opt-out Decision, already begun to  
9 take the position that CRNAs who administer anesthesia are not required to be  
10 supervised by a physician.

11  
12                           **PETITION FOR WRIT OF MANDATE, PROHIBITION**  
13                           **OR OTHER APPROPRIATE RELIEF AND**  
14                           **REQUEST FOR DECLARATORY RELIEF**

15           21. The allegations set forth in paragraphs 1 through 20, inclusive, are  
16 hereby incorporated by reference as if fully set forth at length.

17           22. Petitioners and their members have a direct and immediate  
18 beneficial interest in the matters to which this Petition relates. Anesthesiologists,  
19 including members of Petitioners CSA and CMA, are placed in particular peril, and  
20 suffer special damage and injury under present circumstances, because physicians have  
21 traditionally provided the supervision required by law in most facilities. Relationships  
22 between physicians, including but not limited to anesthesiologists, and CRNAs have  
23 been jeopardized and made uncertain by the Governor’s actions. Furthermore,  
24 hospitals, hospital medical staffs, and anesthesiologists serving as directors of  
25 anesthesia departments or services, as well as individual physicians, are uncertain as to  
26 their responsibilities due to Respondent’s Opt-out Decision.

27           23. The Governor has a clear, present and ministerial duty to act in  
28 strict conformance with the laws of the State of California and to avoid violations of  
the law. Respondent’s Opt-out Decision is contrary to California law and is therefore

1 unlawful.

2 24. Petitioners and their members have no plain, speedy and adequate  
3 remedy in the ordinary course of law, other than the relief sought by this Petition.

4 Petitioners and their members have suffered and will continue to suffer irreparable  
5 injury as a result of Respondent's Opt-out Decision.

6 25. Petitioners have no administrative remedy that will result in  
7 preventing or enjoining the illegal acts described herein and their unlawful impact on  
8 Petitioners and their members.

9 26. Petitioners are informed and believe and thereon allege that they  
10 have performed all conditions precedent to filing a petition for a writ of mandate,  
11 prohibition or other appropriate relief with respect to the matters that are the subject of  
12 this Petition.

13 27. An actual controversy has arisen and exists between Petitioners,  
14 Respondent Governor Schwarzenegger, and others regarding the legal authority of  
15 CRNAs and the existence of a requirement for physician supervision of CRNAs under  
16 California law, which disputes Respondent has purported to resolve by Respondent's  
17 Opt-out Decision, giving rise to an actual controversy between the parties as to the  
18 existence of a requirement under California law for physician supervision of CRNAs.

19 28. Petitioners and their members therefore desire a declaratory  
20 determination of the requirement of physician supervision of CRNA-administered  
21 anesthesia.

22 29. A declaration is necessary and appropriate at this time so that  
23 Petitioners and their members, as well as hospitals, physicians, other providers of  
24 health care, and patients can determine their rights and obligations with respect to the  
25 administration of anesthesia by CRNAs and the requirement that such activities be  
26 supervised by physicians.

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**PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

WHEREFORE, Petitioners prays for relief as follows:

1. That the Court issue a writ of mandate commanding Respondent Governor Schwarzenegger to withdraw the "opt-out" letter said Respondent submitted to CMS in or about June 2009, and to take no further action to effect an opt-out under 42 C.F.R. §482.52;

2. That the Court declare that Respondent Governor Schwarzenegger has and had no authority to submit said Respondent's "opt-out" letter to CMS because opting-out of the requirement that CRNAs be supervised by physicians was not and is not consistent with California law;

3. That the Court declare that, under California law, a CRNA is not authorized to administer anesthesia except under the supervision of a physician;

4. For costs of suit and attorneys' fees incurred in this proceeding;  
and

5. For such other and further relief as the Court may deem proper.

Dated: February 2, 2010

HASSARD BONNINGTON LLP

By:   
B. Thomas French

Attorneys for Petitioners, California  
Society of Anesthesiologists and  
California Medical Association

VERIFICATION


I, Dustin Corcoran, state that:

1. I am the Chief Executive Officer and Executive Vice President of Petitioner, California Medical Association, in the above-entitled matter.

2. I have read the foregoing Petition for Writ of Mandate, Prohibition, or Other Appropriate Relief and Request for Declaratory Relief and know the contents thereof. The facts stated therein are true of my own knowledge, except as to those matters alleged on information and belief, and as to those matters I believe it to be true.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on February 1, 2010, at Sacramento, California.



Dustin Corcoran

VERIFICATION

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I, Linda B. Hertzberg, M.D. state that:

1. I am the President of Petitioner, California Society of Anesthesiologists, in the above-entitled matter.

2. I have read the foregoing Petition for Writ of Mandate, Prohibition, or Other Appropriate Relief and Request for Declaratory Relief and know the contents thereof. The facts stated therein are true of my own knowledge, except as to those matters alleged on information and belief, and as to those matters I believe it to be true.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on February 1, 2010, at Fresno, California.



Linda B. Hertzberg, M.D.



GOVERNOR ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER

June 10, 2009

Ms. Charlene Fizzerra  
Acting Administrator  
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services  
314G Hubert Humphrey Building  
200 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Ms. Fizzerra,

Pursuant to the final rule published in the November 13, 2001, Federal Register, Volume 66, Number 219, I am exercising the option to exempt the State of California from the requirement that certified registered nurse anesthetists be supervised by a physician.

Having consulted with the California Board of Medicine and California Board of Registered Nursing and having determined that this exemption is consistent with state law, I have concluded that it is in the interests of the people of California to opt out of this requirement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Arnold Schwarzenegger'.

Arnold Schwarzenegger

/la

