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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Voting Floridians Strongly Support Physician-led Care According to Statewide Poll

Tallahassee, FL, March 3 – The Florida Society of Anesthesiologists (FSA) today released a poll showing that when it comes to the administration of anesthesia, the public overwhelmingly supports the direct involvement of an anesthesiologist physician with close supervision over nurse anesthetists.

Voters from across the state were asked a number of questions related to medical anesthesia services and they strongly agreed that when it comes to administering anesthesia, a physician – *and only a physician* -- should be in charge.

“These unequivocal findings are particularly relevant as the Florida Legislature debates an extreme bill which completely removes physicians from the anesthesia equation, something clearly not supported by a majority of their constituents,” stated FSA’s President Dr. Jay Epstein.

“The data confirms that when something as difficult and complex as administering anesthesia is in question, the vast majority of Floridians want a physician anesthesiologist – the person with the most education, training, and experience – directing their care,” added Dr. Epstein. Anesthesiologists receive a medical education that is twice as long as that of nurse anesthetists, equating to 10,000 to 14,000 hours of clinical training versus 1,000 to 2,500 hours for CRNAs.

Florida House bill 7071, filed pre-session by the Select Committee on Healthcare Workforce Innovation and permitting nurse anesthetists to give anesthesia without any physician guidance, would remove a public policy norm that is in place in 47 of the 50 states.

Dr. Epstein noted that “the citizens polled would be quite surprised to learn that our Legislature would even consider doing away with a safety standard that so many have relied upon for themselves, their families, and their friends when they have needed anesthesia care.”

Some of the findings from the poll include:

- When given the choice, 81% felt a doctor should be the chief decision-maker versus 12% who said a “nurse anesthetist should be on equal footing...when it comes to making decisions about anesthesia.” That’s a nearly 7:1 ratio!
- Likewise 79% felt a physician anesthesiologist was best qualified to administer anesthesia during surgery, versus 9% who said a nurse was best qualified. This ratio is an incredible 9:1.
- 87% agreed that, “giving anesthesia to patients is a complicated and difficult job that should only be performed directly by or under the supervision of a trained physician.”
- 92% said they “want an anesthesiology physician directing anesthetic care.”

The poll was conducted among 750 likely voters during the last week of August and has a margin of error of +/-3.57 at the 95% confidence level. An executive summary and poll questions are available at www.fsahq.org/fsasurvey.

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About the Florida Society of Anesthesiologists

The Florida Society of Anesthesiologists upholds the highest standards of anesthesia care and patient advocacy by promoting research, education, and innovation. FSA’s principals are rooted in the preservation of patient safety for all Floridians undergoing surgical, obstetric, or invasive procedures. For more information about the society, please visit www.fsahq.org.

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