

Reasons Why to Become a Certified School Nurse



March 19th is Certified Nurses Day. Certification represents a national standard of preparation, knowledge, and practice. Congratulations to the 67 Alaska School Nurses who are nationally certified!

To find out more about Certified Nurses Day, go to this link
<http://www.certifiednursesday.org/about.htm>

To find out more about the online practice test, go to this link
http://ptcny.com/clients/NBCSN/index.html#Online_Practice_Test_for_School_Nurse

To find out more about school nurse certification (NCSN), go to this link
<http://www.nbcsn.com>

To find out more about the Alaska School Nurse Association (ASNA), go to this link
<http://www.alaskasna.org>

To find out more about the ASNA Spring Conferences, go to this link
<http://www.alaskasna.org/conferences.html>

To find out more about the National Association of School Nurses (NASN), go to this link
<http://www.nasn.org>

To find out more about the NASN Summer Conferences, go to this link
<http://www.nasn.org/Default.aspx?tabid=109>

To view the certification article below, go to this link
<http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/717805>

From American Nurses Credentialing Center -Preparing for ANCC Certification Why Certify? The Benefits of Nursing Certification. Posted: 03/05/2010 -Preparing for ANCC Certification Why Certify? The Benefits of Nursing Certification. Posted: 03/05/2010.

In celebration of Certified Nurses Day, March 19, ANCC believes it is important for all nurses to understand the value of nursing certification. Congratulations to all the nurses who have achieved this important career milestone, and for those still considering it, here are some excellent reasons to pursue specialty-nursing certification.

Credentialing advances the profession of nursing by both encouraging and recognizing professional achievement. [1]

Some of the most important purposes for credentialing programs include the following [2]:

- * Protecting the public
- * Meeting the needs of employers, practitioners, and the public by identifying individuals with certain knowledge and skills
- * Assuring consumers that professionals have met standards of practice
- * Demonstrating an individual's commitment to a profession and to lifelong learning
- * Providing an individual with a sense of pride and professional accomplishment

Certification is the formal process by which a certifying agency, such as American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), validates a nurse's knowledge, skills, and abilities in a defined role and clinical area of practice, based on predetermined standards. Nurses achieve certification credentials through specialized education, experience in a specialty area, and a qualifying exam.

Certification is a profession's official recognition of achievement, expertise, and clinical judgment. It is a mark of excellence that requires continued learning and skill development to maintain. Professional Recognition and Accomplishment. Certification holds numerous benefits for nurses. Whether professional or personal, tangible or intangible, these benefits make a powerful case for pursuing nursing specialty certification.

Professional Recognition and Credibility. Certified nurses are recognized and respected. Certification confirms a nurse's competence and capabilities to peers, patients, supervisors, and administrators. In a survey of more than 11,000 certified and non-certified nurses conducted by the American Board of Nursing Specialties (ABNS), [3] more than 90% agreed that certification validates specialized knowledge, enhances professional credibility, and indicates a level of clinical competence; more than 80% agreed that certification promotes recognition from peers and other health professionals.

Professional Achievement. Certified nurses have distinguished themselves in their specialty area. As healthcare delivery and patient acuity become ever more complex, the demand for experienced, highly skilled care providers with a depth and breadth of knowledge is on the rise. The preparation and study necessary for successful completion of certification examinations improve a nurse's ability to care for acute, chronic, or critically ill patients. Continued competency requirements for certification renewal ensure that certified nurses remain up-to-date with the latest developments in their specialties. Certified nurses are not only in demand, they also are raising the stature of the nursing profession.

Career Advancement. Certified nurses advance in the workplace. In a survey of nurse managers, [4] 86% indicated that they would hire a certified nurse over a non-certified nurse if everything else were equal. The most common reasons cited were that certified nurses have a proven knowledge base in a given specialty and that they demonstrate a greater professional commitment to lifelong learning. In the same survey, it was reported that 74% of institutions gave one or more incentives to promote and recognize specialty-nursing certification.

Professional Opportunities. Certified nurses have influence and input. They are invited to join expert panels, participate in item development workshops, and contribute their expertise to standard setting and role delineation studies for certification exams. Opportunities abound to network and interact with other certified nurses from around the country and around the world.

Personal Accomplishment. Certified nurses routinely report a sense of pride, fulfillment, and empowerment. In the ABNS survey [5] of certified and non-certified nurses, 97% of respondents agreed that certification provides personal satisfaction and 88% agreed that certification enhances personal confidence in clinical abilities.

Higher Pay. Certified specialty nurses earn more money. The 2006 salary survey [6] conducted by Nursing found that, among registered nurses, those certified in a specialty made \$7300 more per year than registered nurses who weren't certified.

Benchmark of Success. The value of certification extends beyond the individual nurse. It is a mark of autonomy for the nursing profession and benefits nurse managers, hospital administrators, and other employers in significant ways.

Component of a Positive Work Environment. Professional work environments promote certification. Hospitals pursuing ANCC Magnet Recognition®, the AACN Beacon Award for Critical Care Excellence®, and the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award recognize that certification of nursing staff is a key component of excellence and enhances their potential for distinction. Certification also helps with Joint Commission accreditation and grant funding.

Quality Indicator. Certification is an indicator of quality that attracts patients. In other fields, consumers seek out certified professionals when they need a variety of services, and public awareness of the value of nurse certification is growing. It is an important indicator to patients that nurses are qualified and experienced, and have met rigorous requirements to achieve the additional credential of a specialty certification. Patients and families expect knowledgeable caregivers at the bedside and certification offers them reassurance of their nurses' competence.

Patient Care. Most important, certification contributes to better patient care. A growing body of research indicates a link between certification and nurse knowledge, techniques, and judgment that affect patient safety. For example, one study [7] found that the higher the proportion of certified nurses in intensive care units, the fewer total falls occurred. Other researchers have found that nurses certified in wound care had more knowledge about the classification of pressure ulcers, [8] oncology-certified nurses had greater pain knowledge, [9] and hospice-certified nurses performed better on appropriate inhaler use. [10] Another study [11] found that nurses certified in emergency and critical care performed better on a simulated mass-casualty triage test.

Why ANCC? Nurses of all ages, experience levels, and specialty areas achieve their personal best through ANCC certification.

ANCC offers board certification in dozens of specialties and advanced practice for individuals whose nursing skills and knowledge meet predetermined standards of excellence. In the last two decades, ANCC has certified more than a quarter of a million nurses.

As the largest and most prestigious nurse certification organization in the world, ANCC uses a rigorous and extensive in-house test development process to ensure that its exams are fair and accurate measures of professional competency. Exams are built on the results of role delineation studies that identify the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for competent practice in a particular specialty. ANCC board-certified nurses write the test questions in each exam specialty under the guidance of measurement professionals who address the psychometric soundness and legal defensibility of all tests.

As a result, ANCC certification is recognized by all state boards of nursing and the U.S. military, and is highly regarded by national and local agencies throughout the country. It is gaining momentum at the international level as well.

Nurses who receive their certification from ANCC have nationally recognized credentials akin to board certification for physicians from an organization with 35-years experience in nursing certification.

ANCC has successfully achieved ISO 9001:2008 certification for professional services rendered in the administration of its nursing certification program. ISO 9001:2008 certification is the firmly established global standard for assuring stakeholders of an organization's ability to satisfy quality related requirements. This internationally recognized model measures the quality and consistency of an organization's processes. By conforming to these rigorous service criteria, ANCC provides its customers --the nursing and healthcare community -- with confidence in its ability to consistently deliver the highest quality credentialing services.

The benefits of specialty certification reach throughout the healthcare system -- from nurses, the nursing profession, and employers to hospitals, patients, and families. Certification validates nurses' knowledge and skills, improves quality and safety, and gives patients a benchmark to measure the level of care they can expect to receive at a healthcare facility. As patient acuity becomes increasingly complex and nurses are called upon to perform ever more sophisticated care, certification helps ensure that their expertise and clinical judgment keep pace.

This article may be ordered for free as a brochure to distribute to nurses. Visit <http://www.nursecredentialing.org/certapp/catrequest.cfm> to order.

This content is provided by American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) for publication on the Medscape.com website.

ANCC's internationally renowned credentialing programs certify nurses in specialty practice areas; recognize healthcare organizations for promoting safe, positive work environments through the Magnet Recognition Program® and the Pathway to Excellence® Program; and accredit providers of continuing nursing education. In addition, ANCC's Institute for Credentialing Innovation® provides leading-edge information and education services and products to support its core credentialing programs.

ANCC is passionate about helping nurses on their journey to nursing excellence. Visit ANCC's web site at www.nursecredentialing.org

The American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) is a subsidiary of the American Nurses Association (ANA).

Sincerely,
Nurse Becky Hansen, RN, NCSN
NBCSN Liaison