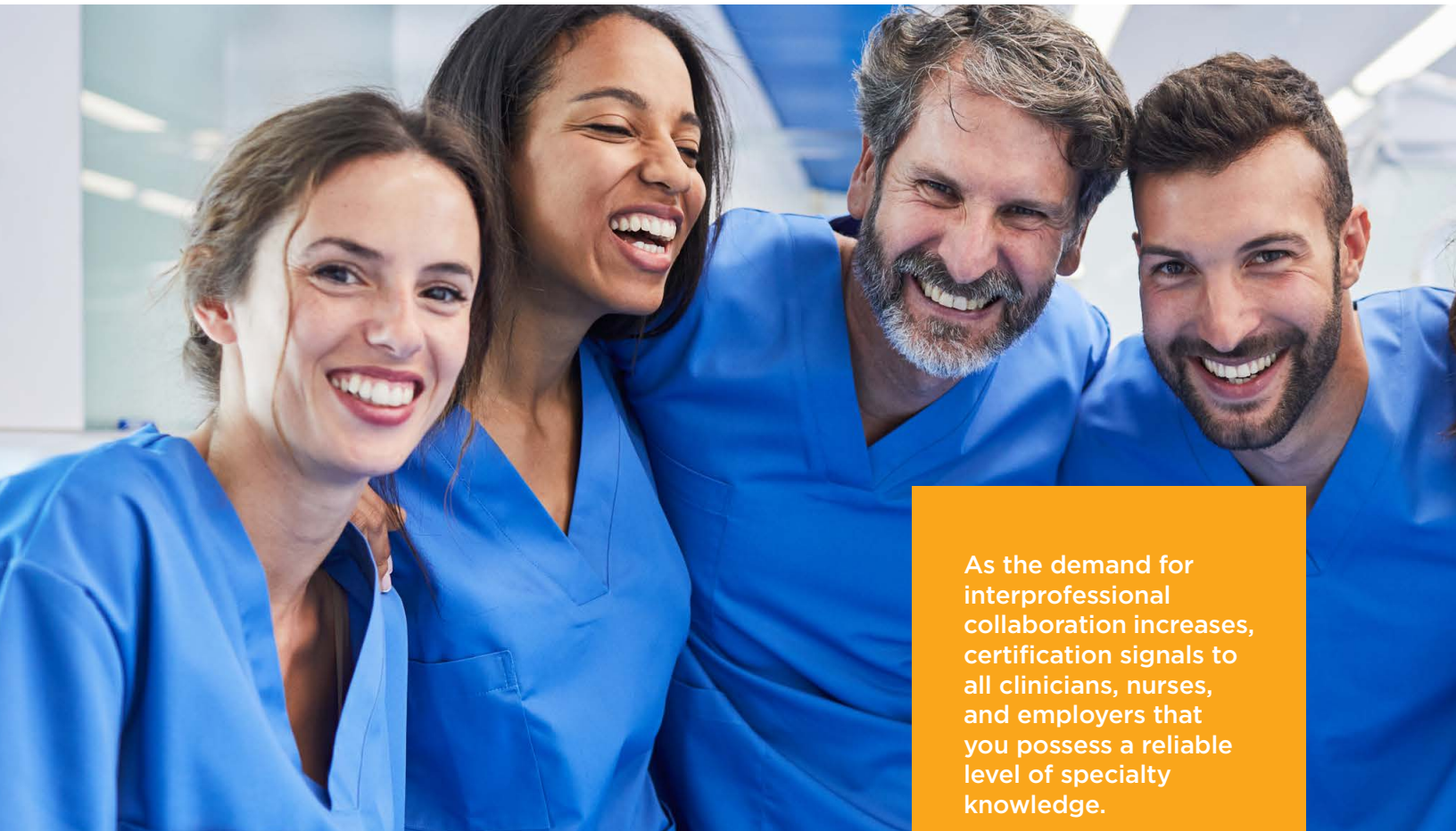


# Certification for Lifelong Learning

ADVANCE YOUR KNOWLEDGE AND IMPROVE PATIENT CARE



As the demand for interprofessional collaboration increases, certification signals to all clinicians, nurses, and employers that you possess a reliable level of specialty knowledge.

In today's ever-more complex health care environment, the demand for well-informed, skilled nursing professionals is higher than ever before. How do nurses like you stay current with knowledge and skills to navigate this rapidly changing landscape?

**SUCCESS** requires that nurses go beyond in-service seminars and mandatory education to a place of personal and professional gain. Lifelong learning and continuing professional development are essential. In its landmark report, *The Future of Nursing*, the Institute of Medicine advocates lifelong learning as a key strategy to ensure nurses take a leadership role in meeting the nation's current and future health care needs.<sup>1</sup>

Certification is an important mechanism to promote and foster lifelong learning. It ensures that nurses not only maintain competence, but also obtain additional, essential skills to keep pace with rising patient acuity, new regulatory requirements, safety imperatives, and growing competition.

Certification can aid career progression and serve as a criterion for increased pay, recognition, and leadership opportunities.

## WHY PURSUE CERTIFICATION?

Certification affirms advanced knowledge, skill, and practice to meet the challenges of modern nursing and our shared goal of a healthy population. Certified nurses promote environments of excellence that can lead to better outcomes. There's growing evidence that certification contributes to increased patient safety and satisfaction, as well.<sup>2</sup>

At an individual level, certification brings value to every nurse's career.

**Certification makes you more marketable**, especially to Magnet®-recognized and Pathway to Excellence®-recognized organizations. Certification can aid career progression and serve as a criterion for increased pay, recognition, and leadership opportunities. As the demand for interprofessional collaboration increases, certification signals to all practitioners and employers that you possess a reliable level of specialty knowledge. Plus, your credentials are transportable as you move throughout your career.

**Certification makes you more credible**. Employers, patients, and colleagues recognize certification as a true gauge of a nurse's ability to provide excellent care. Certified nurses are experts in their specialties and set the standard for quality in clinical practice and patient outcomes.

**Certification inspires confidence**, in yourself and others. Nurses whose knowledge is initially validated through a certification exam and maintained through an evidence-based renewal process make decisions with greater confidence.<sup>3</sup> Your patients trust you as a recognized expert.

**Certification makes you a better nurse**. As certified nurses attest, the process of preparing for a certification exam expands horizons, and once on the job there's a greater sense of empowerment, personal accomplishment, and satisfaction.<sup>4</sup>

Certified nurses are more likely to be active in a professional association, stay up to date in their specialty practice, write articles, and give conference presentations.

## RAISE YOUR VISIBILITY

Certification opens professional networking opportunities that can raise your visibility within the nursing profession. For example, once you're certified you can serve as a content expert with colleagues from across the country and help develop the next exam. American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) exams are systematically reviewed to ensure certifications keep pace with the latest nursing evidence. As a certified nurse, you provide essential insights and best practice knowledge to assist with exam development and help shape the future of your specialty.

Certification keeps you engaged in the learning process and provides a structured approach to professional development. Renewal occurs every five years. To maintain a certified status, you must provide evidence of continual learning by completing contact hours or professional activities such as publications, research, preceptor hours, and professional service. Certified nurses are more likely to be active in a professional association, write articles, and give conference presentations.



## WHY ANCC?

As the world's leading nurse credentialing organization, ANCC offers more certifications than any other credentialing body. We are the only one to offer RN, APRN, and interprofessional health care certification in emerging specialties. Our certification programs are developed to meet accreditation standards from organizations such as the National Commission for Certifying Agencies and the Accreditation Board for Specialty Nursing Certification. In addition, we are the first and only nurse credentialing organization in the world to attain full International Organization for Standardization (ISO) certification, which means our credentialing programs meet rigorous quality management principles.

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## IGNITE YOUR PASSION AND IMPROVE PATIENT CARE

Nurses who pursue certification say it ignites a fire to continue to advance their professional development, learn more, and grow in the job. Those who achieve and maintain credentials contribute not only to improved patient care, but also to nursing. Certification raises the stature of nursing and adds a level of expertise that strengthens the professional nursing body.

As lifelong learners, certified nurses are poised to impact the future of nursing and the future of health care, both here in the United States and throughout the world.

For more information, visit [nursingworld.org/ancc](http://nursingworld.org/ancc)

## Tips for Success

**Two common barriers to certification are time constraints and fear of failure.**

If you think you don't have the time to study for a certification exam, take it in small steps.

**Find a few minutes each night to open a nursing review book and read just a page or two.**

Even if you only study a bit at a time, the very act of studying will improve your nursing practice.

**Nervous you may not pass? Pursue certification with your colleagues.**

Form a cohort. Evidence shows that when you study and take the exam together, you increase your knowledge and have better results.

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### REFERENCES

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