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FAQs

Responding to the Needs and Desires of Our Constituents and the Regulatory Bodies

1. Why is ANCC changing its advanced practice credentials? Didn't they just change in 2000?

More and more states are using the APRN terminology, and with the development of a model compact for advanced practice, still more adopted this credential. Consequently, in 2007 we face the fact that the public has more and more credentials to filter through and understand. Furthermore, our credential conflicts with regulatory titles in over 17 states that have this credential protected by regulation or law. We are therefore placed in the position of providing a credential that is consistent with our nurses desire to have something simple and recognizable.

In terms of past changes, many of you remember that ANCC has had other credentials in the past. In fact, when certification started in ANA in 1974 the credential was RN,C. When clinical specialists became more prominent and wanted recognition, and nurse practitioner programs came about in the late 70's, early 80's the "specialist" terminology was coming on to the scene. At this point the credential became leveled with RN,C for the generalist and RN,CS to show the higher level education and skill of these specialists.

In 2000 when ANCC wanted to recognize the bachelor prepared certified nurse with a different exam and credential, we instituted the RN,C and RN,BC for certified and board certified. At the same time the advanced practice credentials changed to more accurately reflect the roles of clinical nurse specialist and nurse practitioners, hence the APRN,BC.

We have recently (late 2006) changed our basic specialty credential to RN-BC for all nurses regardless of educational preparation, since our latest role delineation studies did not show significant difference across basic specialty RNs to warrant two separate exams.

2. What is the new credential for Clinical Nurse Specialists (CNSs)? And Nurse Practitioners (NPs)?

After surveying more than 6,000 advanced practice nurses to gather information about their desires regarding the credential and what they would like, it was determined that the new credential will contain the individual specialty areas. For both CNSs and NPs, the specialty will be annotated in front of the CNS or NP designation:

ACNS-BC (Adult CNS - Board Certified)

GCNS-BC (Gerontological CNS - Board Certified)

PCNS-BC (Pediatric CNS - Board Certified)

PMHCNS-BC (Psychiatric Mental Health CNS - Board Certified) - used for both Child/Adolescent and Adult

ACNP-BC (Acute Care Nurse Practitioner - Board Certified)

ANP-BC (Adult Nurse Practitioner - Board Certified)

FNP-BC (Family Nurse Practitioner - Board Certified)

GNP-BC (Gerontological Nurse Practitioner - Board Certified)

PNP-BC (Pediatric Nurse Practitioner - Board Certified)

PMHNP-BC (Family Psych and Mental Health Nurse Practitioner - Board Certified) (Family will be on the certificate and can be added if desired)

PMHNP-BC (Adult Psych and Mental Health Nurse Practitioner - Board Certified)

3. How will this affect my state status as an APN?

It should not affect your state status as an advanced practice nurse. We will be in communication with all state boards and the National Council of State Boards to inform them of the change and its implementation. NCSBN has already been notified of our intent to make a change and they in fact were a stimulus for the change in the first place because of state regulatory use of APRN.

4. How will this affect my reimbursement ability?

Once again, a good communication plan to the reimbursement organizations and CMS will be in place to let them know of the change in advance. CMS usually indicates organizations in their language rather than credentials.

5. How do I write my credentials?

Susan Smith, MS, FNP-BC would be one example, however, keep in mind that legally you are required to put after your name what the particular state tells you once you gain recognition in that state.

So for instance, it could be Susan Smith, MS, CS or it could be Susan Smith, MS, ARNP and then you could add your certification credential. So Susan Smith, MS, ARNP, FNP-BC could be your credential, or it might be Susan Smith, MS, APRN, GCNS-BC. More and more states are using APRN, but it is not universal.

6. When can I start using the new credentials?

You can start using your new credential as soon as January 1, 2008. You will receive your new certificate and notification late in the first quarter of 2008. We encourage you to start using it as soon as possible after that date even though you may not yet have renewed your certification.

7. Do I have to use the new credential? Can I still use APRN,BC since this is what I was awarded?

We would discourage you from continuing to use the APRN,BC unless you are in a state that has authorized you to use this title. Conflicting with state protected titles is one of the reasons for the change. And no, you do not have to use the new credential although we would hope that you would want to use it. The only credential you really have to use is the one the state board tells you to use.

8. What if I have more questions?

Please feel free to give us a call toll free at 800-284-2378 or email us at anccComm@ana.org.