

# The Benefits of Specialty Nursing Certification for Nurses, Healthcare Facilities and Patients

ABSNC Accreditation Highlights the Value of Nurses, Demonstrates a Facility's Commitment to Quality Care and Contributes to Better Patient Outcomes

Patient care by highly qualified certified nurses is an invaluable pursuit that assists in preventing illnesses, promoting wellness and healing, and aids in restoring people to health when they do become sick. Bringing quality of life to individual patients through outstanding health care has a ripple effect on the broader community, making it happier, healthier, and safer for everyone. Throughout every step of this process of care, there are nurses and non-nursing healthcare specialists utilizing their training and expertise to help guide patients to long-term health and wellbeing. Specialty certification in the profession of nursing has the ability to make an impact on not only the nurses who pursue and achieve the credentials, but also the facilities they support, as well as the patients for whom they care.

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## The Benefits of Specialty Certification: Nurses

- Performing the wide range of essential tasks that fall to nurses requires a broad skill set that is developed through extensive academic knowledge, skills development, and career experience. Certification in nursing provides a formal acknowledgment of skills and knowledge learned to further a career. Pursuing a specialty certification increases nurses abilities and opportunities. Additionally, boards of nursing value certification for nurses, since 34 states accept nursing certification as a proxy for continuing competence<sup>1</sup>.
- **Further education.** Specialist certification gives a certificant the chance to further their education, improving their knowledge base and allow them to offer better care. Because they must pass a test through the certification process confirming what they have learned, a certification provides not just a learning opportunity but also proof of the knowledge gained.
- **Professional respect.** When a nurse adds credentials to their title, it signifies their level of commitment and qualification they in their investment in the ongoing improvement of their professional capabilities. Certification also demonstrates to others the work that goes into nursing care and thereby positively

influences the public's perception of nursing, making nurses that much more valuable to their employers and their communities.

- **Increased job opportunities.** Certifications show potential employers that a nurse is committed to offering the highest level of professionalism in their job and with their patients and lets them know that they will be an asset to their organization.
- **Higher salary and career advancement.** Pursuing certification evidences to employers that the nurse has the capacity to set and achieve impressive personal and professional goals. This opens the door for professional advancement through both promotions within their organization and commensurate increases in pay.
- **Motivation.** Because maintaining a professional certification requires the nurse to both attain and maintain continuing competency, pursuing certification also motivates nurses to continue to build on previous successes, giving them room to grow in their career and increasing their confidence as they continue to build their knowledge and expertise.

## ABSNC Accreditation: The Gold Standard

Being a nurse is more than a career; it's a calling. Certification supports nurses in their provision of truly outstanding care to all those who rely on them for their health and safety. ABSNC is the ONLY accreditation body in the United States that deals solely with specialty nursing certification accreditation.

Nursing certification programs accredited by ABSNC undergo a rigorous peer-review process. This allows them to demonstrate compliance with the highest-quality national standards in the industry. Certification from an ABSNC-accredited organization demonstrates a commitment to the nursing profession, the patients those nurses care for, and the betterment of the health care system in which those certified nurses work.

## The Benefits of Specialty Certification: Healthcare Facilities

Employing nurses with specialist certification gives healthcare facilities an important edge in the competitive healthcare market. Demonstrating support of nurses furthering their educations and careers leads to a better and more effective healthcare environment.

- **Attracting high-quality employees.** Nurses know they can expect an accredited organization to maintain the highest standards and to support specialty certifications that help them advance their careers and work with their colleagues to achieve positive patient outcomes. Healthcare facilities that value certification are able to hire nurses who have shown high motivation and exceptional levels of skill.
- **Validation of facility's quality.** Facilities that utilize certified nurses signal to the public their commitment to the provision of quality care. Accreditation of certification programs through ABSNC offers evidence of rigorous review and the validation of compliance with published accreditation standards. It is those accredited programs that produce highly-qualified certified nurses for facilities to employ. It is the firm belief of ABSNC that these checks and balances help set apart facilities that hire certified nurses, from other organizations that do not support the certification of their nurses.
- **Proof of excellence.** Dottie Roberts, former executive director of the Orthopaedic Nurses Certification Board and ABSNC accreditation manager, said, "Accreditation is the obvious extension of individual professional certification. If you are offering a certification program, then you and your certificants need to be able to say, 'our program is the best. We have demonstrated compliance with 18 rigorous standards.' It's a mark of excellence that sets a certification program apart."
- **High standing with the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC).** The ANCC understands the importance of nursing certifications, and healthcare facilities seeking Magnet designation demonstrate their commitment to quality care through accreditation.

## The Benefits of Specialty Certification: Patients

The knowledge, skills, abilities, and values nurses hone by pursuing specialist certification directly benefit patients, whose care is the priority for any healthcare facility.

- **Higher quality care.** Certified nurses gain knowledge that they are immediately able to put to real-life use. “What we hear from nurses who hold the CEN credential is that both preparing for the exam, and maintaining their certification through the CE process, brings them knowledge and clinical practice improvement,” explains Board of Certification for Emergency Nursing’s past executive director Sandra Samargis.
- **Better health.** There is emerging evidence<sup>2</sup> that certification is linked to healthier patients, who benefit from being in an environment that prioritizes continuing education and competency and standards that are recognized at the national level as the highest in the field.
- **Improved processes.** Taking the steps required for accreditation encourages organizations to review the processes they have in place in all areas of their administration, with the outcome being that patients have better all-around experiences in their facilities.

## Certification from an ABSNC Accredited Organization

ABSNC accredits more than 72% of ABNS nursing certification programs and a number of other specialty nursing programs, providing a unified and authoritative voice with regulators, employers, and the public on specialty nursing certification issues. Like ABSNC, ABNS is focused on improving patient outcomes and consumer protection by promoting specialty nursing certification.

An accredited certification program represents excellence and attainment of the highest quality standards in continuing education and real-world

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application. In this consistently evolving industry, continuing education required for specialty certification and re-licensure equips professionals to better cope with constant change and the necessary knowledge to provide the highest quality of care to those that are served.

In addition to the private industry, the roster of organizations that have acknowledged the authority of the ABSNC includes NCSBN, Magnet, and medical centers. The full list can be found **here**.

ABSNC accreditation is available for American Board of Nursing Specialties (ABNS) members and non-member organizations. If your organization’s nursing certification program isn’t already one of the many organizations that are accredited by ABSNC, you can learn more about how to pursue accreditation by visiting <https://absnc.org/>.

## REFERENCES

- 1 American Nurses Association®, “States Which Require Continuing Education for RN Licensure,” 2013.
- 2 “The Value of Certification — Building a Business Case for Certification,” A National Convening, ABNS, March 3-5, 2016. <http://www.nursingcertification.org/resources/documents/research/ABNS-Value-of-Certification-Convening.pdf>