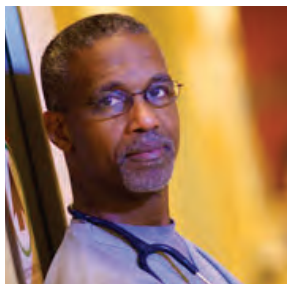


welcome  
to our community of  
exceptional nurses  
member guide



AMERICAN  
ASSOCIATION  
of CRITICAL-CARE  
NURSES

# thank you for joining our community



As a new member of AACN, you now belong to a group of committed professionals who elevate nursing practice in every way through a shared passion for and commitment to professional excellence. Through our community, we strengthen, support, challenge and learn from one another to bring out our best.

You belong to the world's largest professional organization for acute and critical care nurses—more than 100,000 members strong—with unlimited access to the evidence-based and standard-setting resources we create with our members. Whether we are helping patients face death with dignity or working together to find solutions that change our work environment and make it healthier, our ability to provide the best care for our patients and their families requires education, resources and tools. It requires active sharing and networking with colleagues and co-workers. It also requires a commitment to growth, both professional and personal.

As our community helps you on your individual journey, you can contribute to ours. Please let us know at any time how we can make your participation in our community more meaningful. We look forward to checking in with you periodically to guide you to all we have to offer—including a connection to shared expertise, experience, wisdom, resources and standards—so that, together, we ensure excellent care for patients and their families.

Questions? Concerns? Please contact Customer Care:

**M-F 7:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. (PT)**

**800-899-AACN (2226)**

**Fax 949-362-2020**

**[info@aacn.org](mailto:info@aacn.org)**

**[www.aacn.org](http://www.aacn.org)**

**101 Columbia, Aliso Viejo, CA 92656**

# getting to **know our community**

Setting up your membership account is simple. Here are some of the most frequently asked questions once you've become a member.

## What is my AACN Member/Customer Number?

We assign an AACN Member/Customer Number (sometimes referred to as a Customer ID or User ID) to help us serve you quickly. You will find it on your member card, subscription labels and product packing lists. To avoid creating a duplicate profile or account, please use this number or your email address whenever logging onto [www.aacn.org](http://www.aacn.org) to take full advantage of your member benefits.

## Why is my postal address information important?

Having your current postal address ensures that you receive our mailings and publications without interruption. Please advise us right away if you move. You can update your postal address in your customer profile under My Account online or by calling Customer Care.

## Why should I update my profile information?

Completing and regularly updating your profile online under My Account helps us get to know you better. This in turn enables us to offer resources, programs and services specifically tailored to your practice and interests.

## Why do you need my email address?

Because so many valuable AACN resources and communications are delivered electronically, it's important that we have your current (and unblocked) email address. You can update your email address at [www.aacn.org/myaccount](http://www.aacn.org/myaccount) or by calling Customer Care. Please be assured that we do not sell your email information to outside companies. We use it to:

- Send membership and certification renewal notifications.

- Deliver your *CriticalCare eNewsline* and online editions of our journals and monthly member magazine.
- Assist you with your account if you use the "forgot password" function.
- Facilitate an online purchase if a receipt is desired.
- Contact you if we have questions about an application you've submitted or returned mail.

## What benefits and journal subscriptions come with my membership?

All AACN online and journal CEs are free to members. We offer special member rates on AACN products and services, certification, the National Teaching Institute & Critical Care Exposition (NTI), educational resources and Professional Liability Insurance through Mercer Health & Benefits Administration LLC.

Your membership includes subscriptions to the print and online versions (great for reading on laptops, tablets and smartphones) of our bimonthly journals, *Critical Care Nurse* and the *American Journal of Critical Care*. Also included are subscriptions to our monthly magazine, *AACN Bold Voices*, and our electronic newsletter, *CriticalCare eNewsline*. Please access these at [www.aacn.org/publications](http://www.aacn.org/publications).

You may also choose to subscribe to our quarterly peer-reviewed journal, *AACN Advanced Critical Care*, at a special member price of \$35—more than 60 percent off the regular price (U.S. residents only).

## connecting with our community



Taking advantage of the value of belonging to the AACN community has never been easier. Through [www.aacn.org](http://www.aacn.org), we provide access to whatever you need—whenever you need it—to support your nursing practice and professional development. Learn about the latest developments in acute and critical care, renew your membership or certification, register and make hotel accommodations for the National Teaching Institute & Critical Care Exposition (NTI) or shop for educational and recognition products. It's all in one place and accessible at your convenience.

The AACN website offers easy navigation through these main portals:

### Clinical Practice

Because AACN sets the standards for acute and critical care nursing, our online clinical practice resources are cutting-edge and evidence-based, enabling you to provide the highest-quality care to your patients and their families. In this area of the website, we gather the knowledge of experts into easy-to-understand clinical practice tools—many of which are free of charge—to help you navigate your dynamic, constantly changing profession. We also feature information about Healthy Work Environments, the Beacon Award for Excellence and Evidence-Based Practice.

### Certification

Our certification organization—AACN Certification Corporation—has created this section of the website to offer a wealth of information and tools for all of our certification and certification renewal programs. You'll find detailed outlines about the benefits of certification, tips for promoting certification and evidence supporting the value of certification.

### Education

Education has always been our number one priority. The information in this area of [www.aacn.org](http://www.aacn.org) is designed to help you develop and advance

professionally by giving you access to up-to-date, evidence-based knowledge that is directly applicable to your practice. You'll find a wide variety of educational resources and tools that fit your individual learning style. Most educational opportunities come with continuing education hours to help fulfill your professional requirements.

### Marketplace

You can shop for educational resources in the AACN Marketplace, where we have compiled a wealth of resources that build your knowledge and enhance your practice. Because they are organized according to role and setting, you can easily locate the resources you need in our online bookstore.

### Publications

Access the online versions of *AACN Bold Voices* and our award-winning journals, which are widely respected for the evidence-based, clinical information they present. In addition, our journal websites are searchable and feature content you won't find in the print editions.

[www.aacn.org](http://www.aacn.org)

[facebook.com/aacnface](https://facebook.com/aacnface)

[twitter.com/aacnme](https://twitter.com/aacnme)

## finding what you need

Membership in the AACN community provides you with access to a number of significant benefits, resources and services. Here are some of the most frequently asked questions about them.

### How can AACN help me stay current in my practice?

Everything our community does—from our journals to the National Teaching Institute & Critical Care Exposition (NTI)—is designed to help you stay current in your practice. Some of the helpful resources available to you as an AACN member include the following:

Practice Alerts are short, dynamic documents available online from AACN that are supported by authoritative evidence to ensure excellence in practice and a safe and humane work environment. These easy-to-read directives are designed to close the research/practice gap, provide guidance, standardize practice and keep you informed about advances and trends. [www.aacn.org/alert](http://www.aacn.org/alert)

The Practice Resource Network (PRN) is an easy way to access valuable, timely, research-based information. You can access the PRN by email or through links to discussion groups that allow you to share information with others.

[www.aacn.org/prninfo](http://www.aacn.org/prninfo)

You also have access to the CINAHL Plus database, including full-text articles from 80 nursing journals and abstracts and references from other professional publications. [www.aacn.org/cinahl](http://www.aacn.org/cinahl)

### How do I get free CE hours?

In the AACN Online CE Center, you can explore hundreds of CE offerings and take advantage of features such as anytime access to your personal transcript and the ability to print your CE certificates. Every CE activity in the AACN Online CE Center is FREE to you as a member of AACN.

[www.aacn.org/ce](http://www.aacn.org/ce)

### What is the National Teaching Institute & Critical Care Exposition?

The annual National Teaching Institute & Critical Care Exposition (NTI) brings together the AACN community for an inspirational experience centered on learning and networking. As the world's largest educational conference for nurses who care for acutely and critically ill patients, NTI provides a time to learn about the latest practices, network with peers, rejuvenate, earn CE hours and have lots of fun. As a benefit of belonging to AACN, you receive a substantial discount on the regular registration fee.

[www.aacn.org/nti](http://www.aacn.org/nti)

### Does AACN offer books and other educational products?

You can access a wide range of educational resources in the AACN Marketplace to enhance your knowledge and make your practice easier. You'll find the latest clinical resources—all organized so you can find what you need, regardless of your professional role or specialty. As a benefit of your membership, you will often receive a discount on the list price of items we offer.

[www.aacn.org/marketplace](http://www.aacn.org/marketplace)

### Does AACN offer online educational courses?

We offer high-quality, up-to-date, Web-based educational courses that are convenient, self-paced, accessible anytime and easy to use. These courses—which are offered through your hospital and also through individual sale for personal use—provide the opportunity to learn in safe, simulated environments by utilizing state-of-the-art multimedia techniques. Visit the E-Learning area of the AACN website to view available courses.

[www.aacn.org/elearning](http://www.aacn.org/elearning)

## becoming **involved**



As a member of the AACN community, you have many opportunities—both at the local and national levels—to advance your professional development and positively influence your workplace and colleagues by getting involved with AACN. We make it easy for you to contribute to and advocate for all the great work done by nurses through their association with AACN. We also honor and support acute and critical care nursing through national recognition programs, research grants and scholarships.

### **How can I participate where I live?**

In the U.S. and internationally, there are more than 225 local AACN chapters that deliver continuing education, mentoring and networking to nurses to help enhance their clinical skills and leadership abilities. Becoming involved with the chapter near you is also a good way to serve your local community, since many chapters create service projects that benefit their communities. Go to our website to learn more about becoming an AACN chapter member. [www.aacn.org/chapters](http://www.aacn.org/chapters)

### **What is an AACN ambassador?**

AACN ambassadors link their organizations and local communities to AACN's national efforts. They play a key role in helping to advance the mission of AACN by sharing information and resources with their colleagues. [www.aacn.org/ambassador](http://www.aacn.org/ambassador)

### **Are there volunteer opportunities?**

We depend on volunteers from within the AACN community. In fact, each year more than 1,000 volunteers serve the organization by participating on review panels, work groups and advisory teams. Through their contributions, we are able to produce the latest practice resources and support meaningful recognition of nurses' contributions.

[www.aacn.org/volunteers](http://www.aacn.org/volunteers)

### **How can my unit receive recognition for its great work?**

The Beacon Award for Excellence recognizes any hospital unit (wherever a patient receives principal nursing care after hospital admission) that cares for high acuity and critically ill patients and meets evidence-based standards of excellence and patient safety. The Beacon Award for Excellence provides a road map and tools to assist units on their path to excellence. [www.aacn.org/beacon](http://www.aacn.org/beacon)

### **Does AACN recognize individuals?**

We honor nurses who exemplify excellence, which includes our prestigious national award, the AACN Circle of Excellence Award. Nominating a deserving colleague is a meaningful way to recognize exceptional contributions. [www.aacn.org/awards](http://www.aacn.org/awards)

### **Does AACN offer grants?**

AACN awards grants in collaboration with other professional associations to support research that drives change in high acuity and critical care nursing practice.

[www.aacn.org/grants](http://www.aacn.org/grants)

### **Does AACN offer scholarships?**

AACN offers scholarships that support members in their continuing professional development. This includes learning experiences that reach beyond traditional academic education. Programs outside nursing may also qualify when the link to outcomes of nursing practice is made.

[www.aacn.org/scholarships](http://www.aacn.org/scholarships)

## becoming **certified**



AACN Certification Corporation offers certification and certification renewal programs that allow you to proudly demonstrate the specialized knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for safe and effective acute and critical care nursing practice. Achieving and maintaining certification assures employers, colleagues, patients and families that you have met rigorous requirements in your specialized area of practice. In many organizations, certification also provides opportunities for professional advancement and increased compensation.

### **CCRN/CCRN-E/CCRN-K**

These credentials are for acute/critical care nurses. CCRN is for nurses who provide direct bedside care to adult, pediatric or neonatal patients. CCRN-E is for nurses who monitor and care for adult patients from a remote location in a tele-ICU. CCRN-K is for nurses whose non-bedside practice influences the care delivered to acutely and/or critically ill adult, pediatric or neonatal patients.

### **PCCN**

Progressive care nurses working at the bedside of acutely ill adult patients in areas such as intermediate care units, direct observation units, stepdown units, telemetry units and transitional care units are candidates for this credential. PCCN certification is also appropriate for nurses who practice in cardiac catheterization labs and emergency departments.

### **ACNPC/ACNPC-AG**

These entry-level advanced practice credentials are for acute care nurse practitioners educated at the graduate level who provide nursing care that meets the specialized psychological and physiological needs of the adult (ACNPC) or adult-gerontology (ACNPC-AG) patient population. The ACNPC-AG exam aligns with requirements of the APRN Consensus Model.

### **CCNS/ACCNS**

These entry-level advanced practice credentials are for clinical nurse specialists educated at the

graduate level to meet the specialized needs of a specific patient population. CCNS is for nurses working with acutely and/or critically ill adult, pediatric or neonatal patients. ACCNS is for those educated to provide care across the spectrum of wellness through acute care to adult-gerontology (ACCNS-AG), pediatric (ACCNS-P) or neonatal (ACCNS-N) patients. The ACCNS exams align with requirements of the APRN Consensus Model.

### **CNML**

Nurse managers and leaders can validate their knowledge with this credential as they strive to excel in their demanding roles that directly affect the quality of care to patients and their families. AONE Credentialing Center and AACN Certification Corporation collaborate to offer this certification.

### **CMC**

Nurses in cardiac medicine who already have a nationally accredited clinical nursing specialty certification and subspecialize in cardiac patient care can validate their expertise with this credential.

### **CSC**

Nurses who subspecialize in caring for cardiac surgery patients within the first 48 hours post-operatively and who already have a nationally accredited clinical nursing specialty certification can validate their expertise with this credential.

[www.aacn.org/certification](http://www.aacn.org/certification)



**our community** is guided by the following principles. They infuse all that we do and focus our purpose as a vibrant community of exceptional nurses.

**Our Mission**

Patients and their families rely on nurses at the most vulnerable times of their lives. Acute and critical care nurses rely on AACN for expert knowledge and the influence to fulfill their promise to patients and their families. AACN drives excellence because nothing less is acceptable.

**We Are ...**

A community of exceptional high acuity and critical care nurses.

A connection to shared expertise, experience, wisdom, resources and standards, so our community can provide excellent care to patients and their families.

A resource that helps us learn and develop expertise.

A sounding board when we're faced with a tough patient care or work situation.

**We Believe ...**

Nurses make a vital contribution to patients, families and society.

Nursing isn't a job; it's a calling, a distinguished profession, an indispensable career.

Nurses have an obligation to be the best they can be and to protect the contributions of nursing.

Nurses must be agents of positive change in their organizations.

We need to work together — each individual member, member volunteers, boards of directors and staff — to steward our mission.

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A Community of Exceptional Nurses