

# Acute / Critical Care **Nursing Certification** Programs



**Certification**  
that works  
for you



AMERICAN  
ASSOCIATION  
*of* CRITICAL-CARE  
NURSES

# Let Certification Work for You

Becoming certified validated my clinical judgment, increased my confidence and reassured my patients about the quality of my care.



Take the next step in your nursing career and become certified in your specialty or subspecialty.

Being certified benefits ...

- **Your Patients and Families** — Certification demonstrates that you care enough to be tested against rigorous standards and keep current on the latest evidence-based practices, confirming your knowledge in acute/critical care.
- **Your Employers** — Certified nurses help create an environment of professionalism, contributing to staff retention and increased patient safety.
- **Your Colleagues** — As a certified nurse, you are a role model for professional development, lifelong learning and dedication to excellence in patient care.
- **And You** — Certified nurses routinely report a sense of pride, fulfillment and empowerment. Being certified positions you for career advancement, as research shows nurse leaders prefer hiring a nurse who is certified.

All AACN certifications are accepted by the Magnet Recognition Program®.

## AACN

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# CERTIFICATION CORPORATION

Get more for your certification dollars through our discount programs.

### **Certification Group Discount**

For 10 or more exam candidates applying together

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# Acute/Critical Care

# CCRN<sup>®</sup> Direct Care Eligibility Pathway

CCRN specialty certification via the Direct Care Eligibility Pathway validates your knowledge and experience in the direct care of acutely/critically ill adult, pediatric or neonatal patients and their families. It works for you, because it's the gold standard in critical care nursing.

When you become CCRN certified, you join more than 102,000 of your colleagues who have demonstrated their acute/critical care knowledge and have distinguished themselves as leaders in direct care.

Research shows that certification increases your confidence and empowers you to provide the finest care possible for your patients, ensuring their safety and bringing about the best outcomes.

CCRN via the Direct Care Eligibility Pathway may be obtained through completion of an initial exam or as a renewal option for certificants holding CCRN via the Knowledge Professional or Tele-critical Care Eligibility Pathways.





## Direct Care Eligibility Pathway

Earning my  
CCRN certification  
validated the hard  
work I do day in and  
day out.

<p><i>Who is it for?</i></p>	<p>RNs or APRNs who provide <b>direct care to acutely/critically ill adult, pediatric or neonatal patients</b>, often working in such units as intensive care, cardiac care, combined ICU/CCUs, medical/surgical ICUs, trauma units or critical care transport/flight</p>
<p><i>What are the practice eligibility requirements?</i></p>	<p>1,750 hours of <b>direct care</b> in the previous two years, with 875 of those hours accrued in the most recent year preceding application</p> <p>OR</p> <p>At least 2,000 hours of <b>direct care</b> during the previous five years, with 144 of those hours accrued in the most recent year preceding application</p> <p>Majority of hours for eligibility must focus on <i>critically ill</i> patients</p>

## Acute/Critical Care

# CCRN<sup>®</sup> Knowledge Professional Eligibility Pathway

CCRN specialty certification via the Knowledge Professional Eligibility Pathway is for nurses who influence the care delivered to acutely/critically ill adult, pediatric or neonatal patients but do not primarily or exclusively provide direct care. You may be eligible for this credential if you work in roles such as:

- Clinical or Patient Educator
- Academic Faculty
- Nursing Administrator
- Manager/Supervisor
- Clinical Director
- Case Manager
- Transitional Care Coordinator

CCRN via the Knowledge Professional Eligibility Pathway may be obtained through completion of an initial exam or as a renewal option for certificants holding CCRN via the Direct Care or Tele-critical Care Eligibility Pathways.



Certification challenges me to innovate, advocate and foster growth within my team.



## Knowledge Professional Eligibility Pathway

<p><i>Who is it for?</i></p>	<p>RNs or APRNs who do not primarily provide direct care but <b>in their practice apply knowledge in a way that influences patients, nurses and/or organizations to have a positive impact on the care delivered to acutely/critically ill adult, pediatric or neonatal patients and their families</b></p>
<p><i>What are the practice eligibility requirements?</i></p>	<p>1,040 hours of practice within the previous two years, with 260 of those hours accrued in the most recent year preceding application</p> <p>Practice hours may be a combination of non-direct care and direct patient care</p> <p>Majority of hours for eligibility must focus on <i>critically ill</i> patients</p>

Acute/Critical Care

# CCRN<sup>®</sup> Tele-critical Care Eligibility Pathway

CCRN specialty certification via the Tele-critical Care Eligibility Pathway is for nurses who monitor and/or care for acutely/critically ill adult patients remotely in a tele-critical care setting.

Many RNs now contribute their knowledge and experience in these tele-critical care settings to monitor patients and clinical data, as well as provide consultation to bedside nurses.

CCRN certification via the Tele-critical Care Eligibility Pathway may be obtained through the successful completion of an initial exam or as a renewal option for certificants holding CCRN via the Direct Care or Knowledge Professional Eligibility Pathways.





## Tele-critical Care Eligibility Pathway

Validating my knowledge through certification has opened doors and provided new opportunities for me.

<p><i>Who is it for?</i></p>	<p>RNs or APRNs who <b>primarily or exclusively monitor and care for acutely/critically ill adult patients in a tele-critical care setting</b></p>
<p><i>What are the practice eligibility requirements?</i></p>	<p>1,750 hours of practice in the previous two years, with 875 of those hours accrued in the most recent year preceding application</p> <p><i>OR</i></p> <p>At least 2,000 hours of practice during the previous five years, with 144 of those hours accrued in the most recent year preceding application</p> <p>Practice hours may be a combination of tele-critical care and direct care</p> <p>Majority of hours for eligibility must focus on <i>critically ill</i> patients</p>

# Progressive Care

# PCCN<sup>®</sup> Direct Care Eligibility Pathway

PCCN specialty certification via the Direct Care Eligibility Pathway is for nurses who provide direct care to acutely ill adult patients who are moderately stable with an elevated risk of instability. They require a high intensity of care and vigilance, and are commonly found in units known as progressive care.

While progressive care units may have different names, nurses in these units provide care for a wide variety of patients. Progressive care units can be very specialized with care focused on a specific system such as cardiac or more generalized, as in the care of patients with multisystem problems.

PCCN certification via the Direct Care Eligibility Pathway may be obtained through the successful completion of an initial exam or as a renewal option for certificants holding PCCN via the Knowledge Professional Eligibility Pathway.



Being certified  
has given me pride  
in who I am and  
how well I care for  
my patients.



## Direct Care Eligibility Pathway

<p><i>Who is it for?</i></p>	<p>RNs or APRNs who <b>provide direct care to acutely ill adult patients</b>, often working in areas such as intermediate care, direct observation, stepdown, telemetry or transitional care units</p>
<p><i>What are the practice eligibility requirements?</i></p>	<p>1,750 hours of <b>direct care</b> in the previous two years, with 875 of those hours accrued in the most recent year preceding application</p> <p><i>OR</i></p> <p>At least 2,000 hours of <b>direct care</b> during the previous five years, with 144 of those hours accrued in the most recent year preceding application</p>

Progressive Care

# PCCN<sup>®</sup> Knowledge Professional Eligibility Pathway

PCCN specialty certification via the Knowledge Professional Eligibility Pathway is for nurses who influence the care delivered to acutely ill adult patients but do not primarily or exclusively provide direct care. You may be eligible for this credential if you work in roles such as:

- Clinical or Patient Educator
- Academic Faculty
- Nursing Administrator
- Manager/Supervisor
- Clinical Director
- Case Manager
- Transitional Care Coordinator

PCCN certification via the Knowledge Professional Eligibility Pathway may be obtained through completion of an initial exam or as a renewal option for certificants holding PCCN via the Direct Care Eligibility Pathway.



The PCCN  
Knowledge  
Professional  
credential  
acknowledges my  
continued influence  
on the care of acutely  
ill adult patients.



## Knowledge Professional Eligibility Pathway

<p><i>Who is it for?</i></p>	<p>RNs or APRNs who do not primarily provide direct care but <b>in their practice apply knowledge in a way that influences patients, nurses and/or organizations to have a positive impact on the care delivered to acutely ill adult patients and their families</b></p>
<p><i>What are the practice eligibility requirements?</i></p>	<p>1,040 hours of practice within the previous two years, with 260 of those hours accrued in the most recent year preceding application</p> <p>Practice hours may be a combination of non-direct care and direct patient care</p>

# Cardiac Medicine

## CMC<sup>®</sup>

CMC subspecialty certification works for you, if you care for acutely/critically ill adult cardiac patients.

Being CMC certified validates to patients, families and colleagues that you have the unique qualifications to work in the evolving field of cardiac care.

Eligibility for CMC certification includes a current clinical nursing specialty certification accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) or the Accreditation Board for Specialty Nursing Certification (ABSNC).





It was challenging,  
but I've taken that  
extra step to validate  
my knowledge in  
cardiac care.

*Who is it for?*

Specialty-certified RNs or APRNs who provide **direct care to acutely/critically ill adult cardiac patients** often working in CCU, medical ICU, telemetry, progressive care, heart failure clinics, interventional cardiology, cardiac cath labs and/or electrophysiology units

*What are the practice eligibility requirements?*

1,750 hours of **direct care** in the previous two years, with 875 of those hours accrued in the most recent year preceding application

*OR*

At least 2,000 hours of **direct care** during the previous five years, with 144 of those hours accrued in the most recent year preceding application and 1,000 of the hours in the care of cardiac patients

# Cardiac Surgery

## CSC<sup>®</sup>

CSC subspecialty certification works for you, if you care for acutely/critically ill adult patients within the first 48 hours after cardiac surgery.

If you are a specialty-certified nurse working in cardiovascular surgery, cardiothoracic surgery or post-anesthesia care, your role in the postoperative care of your patients is vital to their positive outcomes.

Eligibility for CSC certification includes a current clinical nursing specialty certification accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) or the Accreditation Board for Specialty Nursing Certification (ABSNC).





My commitment to certification and certification renewal keeps me up-to-date on evidence-based practice.

<p><i>Who is it for?</i></p>	<p>Specialty-certified RNs or APRNs who provide <b>direct care to acutely/critically ill adult cardiac surgery patients within the first 48 hours postoperatively</b></p>
<p><i>What are the practice eligibility requirements?</i></p>	<p>1,750 hours of <b>direct care</b> in the previous two years, with 875 of those hours accrued in the most recent year preceding application and 875 in the care of cardiac surgery patients within the first 48 hours postoperatively</p> <p><i>OR</i></p> <p>At least 2,000 hours of <b>direct care</b> during the previous five years, with 144 of those hours accrued in the most recent year preceding application and 1,000 of the hours in the care of cardiac surgery patients within the first 48 hours postoperatively</p>

# Advanced Practice

We understand the indispensable role APRNs play in caring for the most vulnerable patient populations. Our advanced practice credentials work for you, because they validate your knowledge and provide the certification required for APRN licensure.

## **Advanced Practice Consensus Model-Based Certifications:**

ACNPC-AG® – Adult-Gerontology Acute Care NP

ACCNS-AG® – Adult-Gerontology CNS (wellness through acute care)

ACCNS-P® – Pediatric CNS (wellness through acute care)

ACCNS-N® – Neonatal CNS (wellness through acute care)

## **Advanced Practice Certifications:**

*ACNPC and CCNS certifications are available as renewal options only.*

ACNPC® – Adult Acute Care NP

CCNS® – Acute/Critical Care CNS (Adult, Pediatric and Neonatal)



ACNPC-AGACCNS-AGACCNS-PACCNS-N

AACN's APRN credentials validate my knowledge and provide the certification necessary for APRN licensure.

*Who is it for?*

Nurses educated with a master's degree or higher to provide advanced nursing care in the role of an acute care nurse practitioner (ACNP) or clinical nurse specialist (CNS)

*What are the practice eligibility requirements?*

Completion of an accredited graduate-level advanced practice education program meeting the following requirements:

- Separate advanced pathophysiology, pharmacology and physical assessment courses
- Didactic and clinical coursework in alignment with a specific APRN role and patient population
- 500 supervised clinical hours as an ACNP or CNS in direct care of a single patient population

Find the **certification** that **works** for you.



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

AACN

CERTIFICATION  
CORPORATION

*AACN Certification Corporation, the credentialing arm of the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses, drives patient health and safety through the comprehensive credentialing of acute and critical care nurses, advancing practice consistent with standards of excellence.*