



Summary of Findings
Taking the Pulse - Key Influencer Survey

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INTRODUCTION

Research Objectives

The primary objective of this research is to assess current perceptions and opinions among healthcare and industry influencers about the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses (AACN) and the value of CCRN certification. Specifically, the study identifies:

- ◆ Awareness and perceptions of certification for critical-care nurses
- ◆ Perceived need for and benefits of certification
- ◆ Perceived impact of critical-care nurse certification on patient outcomes
- ◆ Receptivity to messages promoting AACN and certification

Research Methods

Telephone interviews were completed with a total of 78 key influentials, including:

- ◆ Hospital administrators who are directors or vice presidents of nursing or nursing services or chief nursing officers (15 interviews)
- ◆ Nurse managers who work in critical care (13 interviews)
- ◆ Nursing school faculty, including professors, associate professors, and assistant professors of nursing (12 interviews)
- ◆ Nurse educators responsible for educating critical-care nurses (12 interviews)
- ◆ Legislators and regulators identified by AACN (6 interviews)
- ◆ HMOs and healthcare consumer groups identified by (7 interviews)
- ◆ AACN/CCRN Ambassadors identified by AACN (13 interviews)

On February 18, 2002, the survey questionnaire was pretested with five AACN/CCRN Ambassadors to insure clarity. Following questionnaire revision based on this pretest, the interviews were conducted March 11-April 1, 2002, and averaged 15 minutes in length.

All nongovernmental/regulatory respondents were given an incentive of \$50-\$75, with the choice of receiving the incentive themselves or donating the incentive to a charity of their choice. For governmental and regulatory respondents, an incentive was donated in their name to a charity of their choice.

Survey results are presented in the aggregate (combining all seven groups) due to the small size of each group. However, interesting differences among the groups are noted.

1 FAMILIARITY WITH CCRN CERTIFICATION

Nearly 3 in 4 respondents are familiar with CCRN certification.

Of the 78 respondents, 73% are very/somewhat familiar and 15% are not very/not at all familiar with CCRN certification. Note: 12% were not asked this question because they are not familiar with AACN.

Compared to other medical groups, nursing school faculty members appear to be less familiar with CCRN certification. None of the six legislators/regulators are familiar with the CCRN certification.

Familiarity with CCRN Certification (Very/Somewhat Familiar)							
	Hospital Admin. (n=15)	Nurse Managers (n=13)	Nursing School Faculty (n=12)	Nurse Educators (n=12)	Legis./ Reg. (n=6)	HMOs/ Consumer Groups (n=7)	Ambas- sadors (n=13)
CCRN	87%	100%	50%	83%	--	43%	92%

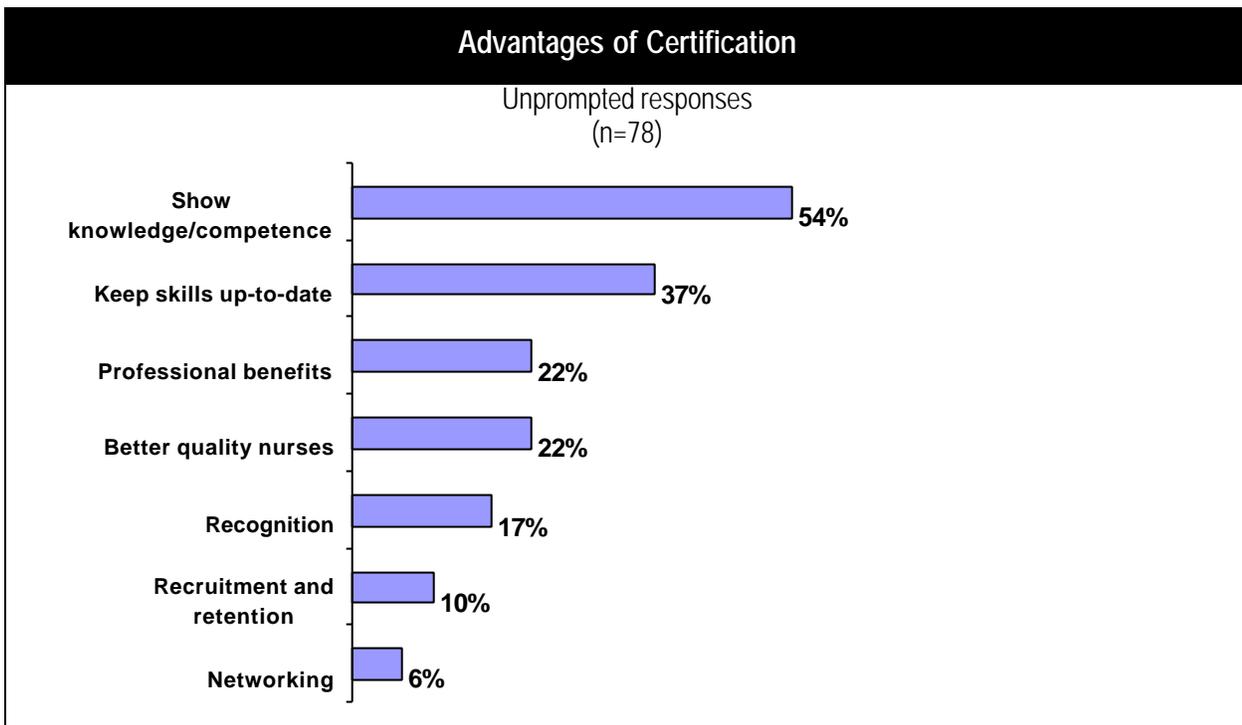
2 PERCEIVED IMPORTANCE AND ADVANTAGES OF CERTIFICATION

Influentials believe CCRN certification allows critical-care nurses to demonstrate their knowledge and competence.

Respondents were told that, “Through its Certification Corporation, the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses offers certification for critical-care nurses – a knowledge and practice-based certification program that allows critical-care nurses to validate their advanced clinical knowledge after two years of critical-care experience.” They were then asked what, in their opinion, would be the advantages of the certification.

More than half (54%) of all influentials note that certification allows critical-care nurses to demonstrate their knowledge and competence. At least one in five respondents mention keeping skills up-to-date (37%), professional benefits such as promotions and pay increases (22%), and better quality nurses (22%).

Other perceived benefits of certification include offering recognition to CCRNs because it’s viewed as a milestone and a “gold standard” (17%), aiding in recruitment and retention of nurses (10%), and providing networking opportunities (6%).



Influentials tend to agree that peers recognize certified nurses as leaders and experts in their specialty.

Nearly all influentials agree either “strongly” (60%) or “somewhat” (35%) that certified nurses receive peer recognition.

Nearly all respondents believe it is very important for critical-care nurses to use good clinical judgment (96%) and work with patients, families, and healthcare providers to meet patient goals (96%).

Respondents were asked if they consider it very, somewhat, not very, or not at all important for a critical-care nurse to validate his or her knowledge in specific areas.

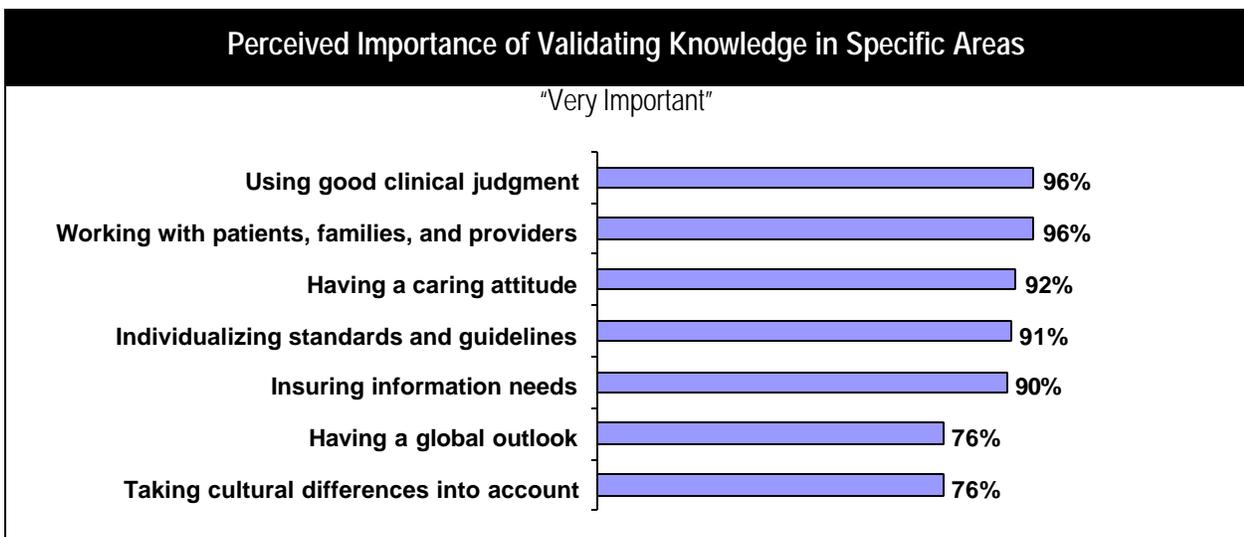
Strong majorities also believe it is very important for critical-care nurses to validate their knowledge in the following areas:

- ◆ Having a caring attitude that promotes a compassionate and therapeutic environment (92%)
- ◆ Individualizing standards and guidelines for particular patient situations and acquiring knowledge and skills as needed (91%)
- ◆ Insuring the patient and family have the healthcare information they need (90%)

Fewer, but still a majority, find the following “very important:”

- ◆ Having a global outlook and knowing when and how to negotiate the system on behalf of patients and families (76%)
- ◆ Taking cultural differences into account when providing patient care (76%)

All groups tend to agree on the importance of each item, except that legislators/regulators are somewhat less likely to rate “insuring the patient and family have the healthcare information they need” as “very important” (50%, compared with 90% of all respondents).



3 REACTION TO CERTIFICATION MESSAGES

A majority (81%) of influentials “strongly agree” that CCRN certification provides a mechanism for critical care nurses to validate their advanced clinical knowledge.

Majorities also “strongly agree” with the following statements:

- ◆ Employer support of certification is a positive factor in retaining and recruiting critical-care nurses (63%). *Note: hospital administrators are the group most likely to “strongly agree” with this statement (87%).*
- ◆ AACN certification demonstrates a nurse’s commitment to patients and families, employers, and colleagues (60%)
- ◆ AACN certification is a key factor in moving up the critical-care nursing clinical ladder (53%)

Agreement with Statements about AACN

	Strongly Agree	Some-what Agree	Some-what Dis-agree	Strongly Dis-agree	DON'T KNOW
CCRN certification program provides a mechanism for critical-care nurses to validate their advanced clinical knowledge.	81%	17%	--	--	3%
Employer support of certification is a positive factor in retaining and recruiting critical-care nurses.	63%	33%	1%	--	3%
AACN certification demonstrates a nurse’s commitment to patients and families, employers and colleagues.	60%	35%	3%	--	1%
AACN certification is a key factor in moving up the critical-care nursing clinical ladder.	53%	36%	5%	1%	5%

4 SUPPORT FOR AND BARRIERS TO CERTIFICATION

A majority of influentials indicate their organizations support nurses in acquiring the CCRN certification.

Of 65 hospital administrators, nurse managers, nursing school faculty, nurse educators, and AACN/CCRN Ambassadors, 72% say their organizations support nurses in their certification efforts.

The top reasons for supporting certification include helping nurses keep their skills up-to-date (34%), displaying the competency and professionalism of nurses (20%), enhancing the quality of patient care (15%), and supporting and recognizing nurses (15%).

The top reasons for not supporting certification are the cost of certification (12%) and the fact that a hospital does not have an ICU or critical-care unit (9%).

Reasons for Supporting or Not Supporting Certification (n=65)

Organization supports certification		Organization does not support certification	
	72%		28%
Keeps skills up-to-date	34%	Financial/cost reasons	12%
Displays the competency and professionalism of nurses	20%	No ICU or critical-care unit at hospital	9%
Enhances the quality of patient care	15%	No recognition or rewards from employer (Ambassadors)	3%
Supports and recognizes nurses	15%	No clinical ladder (nursing school)	2%
Lends credibility and prestige to the nurses and their unit or institution	9%		
Aids in recruiting and retaining critical-care nurses	5%		
Provides nurses with networking and resources	3%		
It's in the union contract	2%		

Strategies to increase certified nursing practice tend to focus on incentives to nurses, including financial support from employers (42%), promotions and recognition (27%), and peer support (18%).

Other nurse-focused strategies include providing time to study (8%), providing on-site classes (6%), and providing tutoring and preparation classes (5%).

Other types of strategies include advertising or other methods to generate awareness (18%) and recruiting certified nurses or requiring nurses to become certified (10%).

