CCRN Credential

Policy Position

The American Association of Critical-Care Nurses (AACN) and AACN Certification Corporation, which represents over 58,000 certified acute and critical care nurses, strongly believes support for certification and acknowledgement of the credential through display is a meaningful way to demonstrate organizational support for the value of certification and commitment to assuring continued competency and the delivery of safe, high-quality healthcare.

Certification benefits patients, nurses and employers as a mark of excellence. As a voluntary process, specialty certification points to nurses’ commitment to career development and dedication to patient care. Support for continuing education and certification have been found to be drivers of nurses’ job satisfaction and have been identified as essential elements in recruitment and retention. Display of the credential provides validation that the nurse has demonstrated experience, knowledge and skills in the specialty of critical care.

The ability to prominently and legibly display credentials also demonstrates recognition of the healthcare providers’ obligation to the consumers’ rights to receive adequate information and to be informed about the person(s) responsible for their care and provides a means for patients to readily identify the qualifications of nursing personnel providing their care.

Opponents of credential display often claim that a certified person may be held to a higher standard of care. However, there is no available evidence to support the perception that the fact of certification has ever created the basis of liability for a higher standard of care and AACN asserts that signing a document with CCRN does not, in and of itself, increase the liability of the hospital or the nurse. The nurse is certified whether or not it is printed after his/her name or displayed on a nametag.

Therefore, AACN believes that those nurses who successfully meet the criteria for certification have earned the right to use and professionally display the CCRN credential on their name badge and following their signature when signing official records.

Use of the Credential

Candidates who pass the CCRN certification examination may use "CCRN" after the licensing credential. CCRN is a registered service mark. It is not punctuated with periods. The proper use of CCRN is as follows: Chris Smith, RN, CCRN.
Background

Definition
Certification is a process by which a nongovernmental agency validates, based upon predetermined standards, an individual nurse's qualification and knowledge for practice in a defined functional or clinical area of nursing.

Today's acutely and critically ill patients require heightened vigilance and extraordinarily intricate care. As skilled and responsible health professionals, the 516,000 critical care nurses in the United States must acquire the specialized knowledge and skills needed to provide this care and demonstrate their competence to the public, their employers and their profession. Certification provides validation of such specialized knowledge and skills. AACN Certification Corporation certifies critical care nurses in the United States. The Corporation is accredited by NCCA – the National Commission for Certifying Agencies.

Choosing to become credentialed enables a professional to demonstrate his or her continued competence and expertise in the complex specialty of critical care. In addition to successfully completing the certifying examination, nurses seeking certification in critical care must meet rigorous eligibility requirements such as a minimum of 1,750 hours of direct bedside care of critically ill patients within the last two years. Certification must be renewed every three years – renewal requires that a nurse comply with rigorous continuing education requirements or must retake the exam.

By providing a credentialing program, AACN Certification Corporation contributes to the field by setting standards for competence and excellence and assists the public and employers by providing a means by which to identify those who have met this standard.

References


