MISSION

AACN Certification Corporation drives patient health and safety through comprehensive credentialing of acute and critical care nurses ensuring practice consistent with standards of excellence.

VISION

All nurses caring for acutely and critically ill patients and their families are certified.

VALUES

As the Corporation advances its mission and vision to fulfill its purpose and inherent obligation of ensuring the health and safety of patients experiencing acute and critical illness, the Corporation is guided by a set of deeply rooted values:

- **Providing leadership** to bring all stakeholders together to create and foster cultures of excellence and innovation.
- **Acting with integrity** and upholding ethical values and principles in all relationships and the provision of sound, fair and defensible credentialing programs.
- **Committing to excellence** in credentialing programs by striving to exceed industry standards and expectations.
- **Promoting leading edge, research-based credentialing programs** for all nurses who care for and influence the care of acutely and critically ill patients.
- **Demonstrating stewardship** through fair and responsible management of resources and cost-effective business processes.

ETHICS

AACN and AACN Certification Corporation consider the American Nurses Association (ANA) Code of Ethics for Nurses foundational for nursing practice, providing a framework for making ethical decisions and fulfilling responsibilities to the public, colleagues and the profession. AACN Certification Corporation’s mission of public protection supports a standard of excellence that certified nurses have a responsibility to read, understand and act in a manner congruent with the ANA Code of Ethics for Nurses.

The following AACN Certification Corporation programs have been accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA), the accreditation arm of the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE):

- CCRN<sup>®</sup> (Adult)
- CCRN<sup>®</sup> (Pediatric)
- CCRN<sup>®</sup> (Neonatal)
- CCRN-E™ (Adult)
- PCCN<sup>®</sup>
- CMC<sup>®</sup>
- CSC<sup>®</sup>
- ACCNS-AG<sup>®</sup>
- ACCNS-P<sup>®</sup>
- ACCNS-N<sup>®</sup>
- ACNPC-AG<sup>®</sup>

Our advanced practice certification programs, ACCNS-AG, ACCNS-P, ACCNS-N and ACNPC-AG, meet the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) criteria for APRN certification programs.
As healthcare becomes increasingly complex and challenging, certification has emerged as a mark of excellence showing patients, employers and the public that a nurse possesses a defined body of knowledge and has met the rigorous requirements to achieve specialty and/or subspecialty certification.

AACN Certification Corporation programs were created to protect healthcare consumers by validating the knowledge of nurses who care for and/or influence the care delivered to the acutely and critically ill. We are pleased to provide you with this handbook with information about our programs and how to apply for and take the CCRN certification exam.

Today, more than 100,000 practicing nurses hold one or more of these certifications from AACN Certification Corporation:

**Specialty Certifications**

- **CCRN®** is for nurses providing direct care to acutely/critically ill adult, pediatric or neonatal patients.
- **CCRN-K™** is for nurses whose non-direct care practice influences patients, nurses and/or organizations to have a positive impact on the care delivered to acutely/critically ill adult, pediatric or neonatal patients.
- **CCRN-E™** is for nurses working in a tele-ICU monitoring/caring for acutely/critically ill adult patients from a remote location.
- **PCCN®** is for progressive care nurses providing direct care to acutely ill adult patients.
- **PCCN-K™** is for nurses whose non-direct care practice influences patients, nurses and/or organizations to have a positive impact on the care delivered to acutely ill adult patients.

**Subspecialty Certifications**

- **CMC®** is for certified nurses providing direct care to acutely/critically ill adult cardiac patients.
- **CSC®** is for certified nurses providing direct care to acutely/critically ill adult patients during the first 48 hours after cardiac surgery.

**Advanced Practice Consensus Model-Based Certifications**

- **ACNPC-AG®** is for the adult-gerontology acute care nurse practitioner educated at the graduate level.

  The ACCNS credentials are for clinical nurse specialists educated at the graduate level to provide care across the continuum from **wellness through acute care**:

- **ACCNS-AG®** is for the adult-gerontology clinical nurse specialists educated to care for adult-gerontology patients.
- **ACCNS-P®** is for the pediatric clinical nurse specialists educated to care for pediatric patients.
- **ACCNS-N®** is for the neonatal clinical nurse specialists educated to care for neonatal patients.

**Advanced Practice Certifications**

With implementation of the Consensus Model in 2015, ACNPC and CCNS are available as **renewal options only**:

- **ACNPC®** is for acute care nurse practitioners educated to provide care to adult patients.
- **CCNS®** is for acute/critical care clinical care specialists educated to provide care to adult, pediatric or neonatal patients.

We continually seek to provide quality certification programs that meet the changing needs of nurses and patients. Please visit www.aacn.org/certification, or call 800-899-2226 for more information about the above certifications.

Thank you for your commitment to patients and their families and to becoming certified.
Please direct inquiries to:
AACN Certification Corporation, 101 Columbia, Aliso Viejo, CA 92656-4109
800-899-2226 • Fax: 949-362-2020 • certification@aacn.org

Please include your AACN customer number with all correspondence to AACN Certification Corporation.
CCRN® is a specialty certification for nurses who provide direct care to acutely/critically ill adult, pediatric or neonatal patients and their families. These patients may be found in such units as: intensive care, cardiac care, combined ICU/CCU, medical/surgical ICU, trauma unit or critical care transport/flight.

CONTENTS

Certification Program ..........................................................................................................................5
Exam Eligibility ......................................................................................................................................7
Application Fees ..................................................................................................................................8
Application Process ...........................................................................................................................9
Certification Renewal ........................................................................................................................11-12
AACN Synergy Model for Patient Care ............................................................................................13-14

Test Plans
- Adult ............................................................................................................................................15-18
- Pediatric .........................................................................................................................................21-24
- Neonatal .......................................................................................................................................27-30

Sample Questions
- Adult ............................................................................................................................................19-20
- Pediatric .........................................................................................................................................25-26
- Neonatal .......................................................................................................................................31-32

Exam Bibliography ............................................................................................................................33-34
AACN Products for CCRN Exam Preparation ....................................................................................35-36

Forms
CCRN Exam Application (1st and 2nd pages of 3-page application) ....................................................37-38
CCRN Exam Honor Statement (3rd page of 3-page application) ........................................................39

The following information can be found in the Certification Exam Policy Handbook online at www.aacn.org/certification > Preparation Tools & Handbooks:
- AACN Certification Programs
- Name and Address Changes
- Confidentiality of Exam Application Status
- Testing Site Information
- Exam Scheduling and Cancellation
- On the Day of Your Exam
- Duplicate Score Reports
- Recognition of Certification
- Use of Credentials
- Denial of Certification
- Revocation of Certification
- Review and Appeal of Certification Eligibility
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CCRN® Registered Service Mark

CCRN is a registered service mark and denotes certification in acute/critical care nursing as granted by AACN Certification Corporation. Registered nurses who have not achieved CCRN certification, whose CCRN certification has lapsed or who have chosen Inactive status are not authorized to use the CCRN credential.

Although a common misconception, CCRN is not an acronym for “critical care registered nurse.” This would imply that nurses are registered as critical care nurses, which is not accurate.

Purpose and Rationale

CCRN certification is a specialty certification for nurses who provide direct care to acutely/critically ill adult, pediatric or neonatal patients.

The CCRN exam is based on a study of practice, also known as a job analysis. The job analysis, conducted at least every five years, validates the knowledge, skills and abilities required for safe and effective practice as an RN or APRN who provides direct care to acutely/critically ill patients in one of the following patient populations: adult, pediatric or neonatal.

The test plan, which provides an outline of exam content, is developed by an expert CCRN panel based on the results of the study of practice. The organizing framework for all AACN Certification Corporation exams is the AACN Synergy Model for Patient Care™.

Clinical practice requirements have been validated by subject matter experts. The required hours of clinical practice correspond to the third stage of competence in Benner’s Stages of Clinical Competence. CCRN-K certification denotes to the public those practitioners who possess a distinct and clearly defined body of knowledge called acute/critical care nursing.

CCRN Exam Content

The CCRN exams are 3-hour tests consisting of 150 multiple-choice items. Of the 150 items, 125 are scored and 25 are used to gather statistical data on item performance for future exams.

The CCRN exams focus on adult, pediatric and neonatal patient populations. Eighty percent (80%) of each exam focuses on Clinical Judgment and is age-specific for the adult, pediatric and neonatal populations. The remaining 20% covers Professional Caring and Ethical Practice. Professional Caring and Ethical Practice questions may be asked about any age across the life span while Clinical Judgment questions are restricted to adult, neonatal or pediatric populations.

CCRN Test Plans

The content of the CCRN exams is described in the test plans included in this handbook. Candidates are tested on a variety of patient care problems that are organized under major categories. Please note the percentage of the CCRN exam devoted to each category.

Passing Point/Cut Score

A criterion-referenced standard setting process, known as the modified Angoff, is used to establish the passing point/cut score for the exam. Each candidate’s performance on the exam is measured against a predetermined standard.

The passing point/cut score for the exam is established using a panel of subject matter experts, an exam development committee (EDC), who carefully reviews each exam question to determine the basic level of knowledge or skill that is expected. The passing point/cut score is based on the panel’s established difficulty ratings for each exam question.

Under the guidance of a psychometrician, the panel develops and recommends the passing point/cut score, which is reviewed and approved by AACN Certification Corporation. The passing point/cut score for the exam is established to identify individuals with an acceptable level of knowledge and skill. All individuals who pass the exam, regardless of their score, have demonstrated an acceptable level of knowledge.
CCRN EXAM ELIGIBILITY

Licensure

Current, unencumbered U.S.* RN or APRN licensure is required.

- An unencumbered license is not currently being subjected to formal discipline by any state board of nursing and has no provisions or conditions that limit the nurse’s practice in any way. This applies to all RN or APRN licenses you currently hold.
- If selected for audit, you will be asked to provide a copy of your RN or APRN license.
- Candidates and CCRN-certified nurses must notify AACN Certification Corporation within 30 days if any restriction is placed on their RN or APRN license(s).

Practice

Candidates must meet one of the following clinical practice requirement options:

- Practice as an RN or APRN for 1,750 hours in direct care of acutely/critically ill patients during the previous 2 years, with 875 of those hours accrued in the most recent year preceding application.

  OR

- Practice as an RN or APRN for at least 5 years with a minimum of 2,000 hours in direct care of acutely/critically ill patients, with 144 of those hours accrued in the most recent year preceding application.

Eligible hours are those spent caring for the patient population (adult, pediatric or neonatal) in alignment with the exam for which you are applying. A majority of the total practice hours and those within the year prior to application for CCRN exam eligibility must focus on critically ill patients.

Orientation hours spent shadowing/working with another nurse who is the one with the patient assignment cannot be counted toward clinical hours for CCRN eligibility; however, orientation hours during which you are the assigned nurse providing direct care to acutely/critically ill patients may be counted.

Clinical practice hours must be completed in a U.S.-based* or Canada-based facility or in a facility determined to be comparable to the U.S. standard of acute/critical care nursing practice as evidenced by Magnet® designation or Joint Commission International accreditation.

Nurses serving as manager, educator (in-service or academic), APRN or preceptor may apply hours spent supervising nursing students or nurses at the bedside.

- Nurses in these roles must be actively involved in direct patient care; for example, demonstrating how to measure pulmonary artery pressures or supervising a new employee or student nurse performing a procedure.

Practice Verification

The name and contact information of a professional associate must be given for verification of eligibility related to clinical practice hours. If you are selected for audit, this associate will need to verify in writing that you have met the clinical hour requirements.

- A professional associate is defined as your clinical supervisor or a colleague (RN or physician) with whom you work.

AACN Certification Corporation may adopt additional eligibility requirements at its sole discretion. Any such requirements will be designed to establish, for purposes of CCRN certification, the adequacy of a candidate’s knowledge in care of the acutely/critically ill.

*Includes District of Columbia and U.S. territories of Guam, Virgin Islands, American Samoa and Northern Mariana Islands
### APPLICATION FEES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>AACN Members</th>
<th>Nonmembers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CCRN Computer-Based Exam</strong></td>
<td>$235</td>
<td>$340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CCRN Retest</strong></td>
<td>$170</td>
<td>$275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CCRN Renewal by Exam</strong></td>
<td>$170</td>
<td>$275</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Payable in U.S. funds. Fees are subject to change without notice. A $15 fee will be charged for a returned check.

Computer-based testing discounts are available for groups of **10 or more** candidates submitting their AACN certification exam applications in the same envelope. Employers may pre-purchase exam vouchers at a further discounted rate.

For details about Group and Value Program Discounts, visit [www.aacn.org/certification > Explore Certification Volume Discounts](http://www.aacn.org/certification > Explore Certification Volume Discounts), email certification@aacn.org or call 800-899-2226.
Use your legal name on the application.
This name must match photo identification used for exam entry and will be the name printed on your certificate.

1. Receive notice of processed application
   • AACN will send you an email confirming that you have successfully applied to take the CCRN exam.

2. Receive approval-to-test email
   • AACN’s testing service (PSI/AMP) will send an email and mail a postcard to eligible candidates within 5 to 10 days after the confirmation email that will include:
     o A toll-free number and online instructions to schedule your testing appointment
     o The 90-day period during which you must schedule and take the exam
     o Your exam identification number, which is your unique AACN customer number preceded by the letter “C” (e.g., C00123456).
   • If you do not receive an email or postcard from PSI/AMP within 2 weeks of receiving confirmation email, please contact AACN Customer Care at 800-899-2226.

3. Schedule the exam
   • Upon receipt of PSI/AMP’s email or postcard:
     o Confirm that you are scheduled for the correct certification exam
     o Promptly schedule your exam appointment for a date and time that falls within your 90-day testing window
   • Testing is offered twice daily, Monday through Friday, at 9 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.. Saturday appointments are available at most locations.
   • To locate one of the more than 300 PSI/AMP testing centers within the U.S., visit www.goAMP.com.

4. Sit for the exam
   • Upon completion of computer-based exams, results with a score breakdown will be presented on-site.
   • Results of paper and pencil exams will be mailed to candidates 3 to 4 weeks following paper testing.
   • Successful candidates will receive their wall certificate within 3 to 4 weeks of passing the exam.

Please ensure that AACN has your current contact information on record.
Updates may be made online at www.aacn.org/myaccount or emailed to info@aacn.org.
For name changes, please call AACN Customer Care at 800-899-2226.
Purpose and Limitations of Renewal Options

The purpose of certification renewal is to promote continued competence. The renewal process helps to maintain an up-to-date knowledge base through continuing education and practice hours, or practice hours and passing the certification exam.

Following are the limitations to the components of the renewal options:

- CE/CERP limitations include content quality and relevance to practice as well as an individual’s ability to self-select CE/CERPs most pertinent to the individual’s practice and educational needs.
- Limitations of practice hours include the quality of the practice environment and limitations on learning opportunities.
- One limitation of the exam is not assessing new competencies, as exam competencies were validated through initial certification.

Requiring two components for renewal, rather than one, decreases the limitations and furthers the goal of continued competence.

Renewal Period

CCRN certification is granted for a period of 3 years. Your certification period begins the first day of the month in which the CCRN certification exam is passed and ends 3 years later; for example, July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2020.

Renewal notifications will be mailed and emailed to you starting 4 months before your scheduled CCRN renewal date. You are responsible for renewing your certification even if you do not receive renewal notification. Refer to www.aacn.org/certification > Renew Certification for current information.

Eligibility

Candidates for CCRN renewal must meet the following requirements:

- Current, unencumbered U.S.* RN or APRN license that was not subjected to formal discipline by any state board of nursing during the 3-year certification renewal period
- Completion of 432 hours of direct care of acutely/critically ill patients as an RN or APRN within the 3-year certification period, with 144 of those hours in the 12-month period preceding the scheduled renewal date
  - Eligible hours are those spent caring for the patient population (adult, pediatric or neonatal) in which certification is held.
  - A majority of the total practice hours and those within the year prior for renewal eligibility must focus on critically ill patients.
- Completion of the required CERPs or take/pass the CCRN exam for the applicable patient population (adult, pediatric or neonatal) of practice.

*Includes District of Columbia and U.S. territories of Guam, Virgin Islands, American Samoa and Northern Mariana Islands

continued
Renewal Options

You may seek certification renewal via Renewal by Synergy CERPs or Renewal by Exam, or you may choose Inactive, Retired or Alumnus status. Do not apply for more than one option. Online Renewal is available to all active certificants as early as 4 months prior to their scheduled renewal date. Visit www.aacn.org/certification > Renew Certification.

- **Option 1 - Renewal by Synergy CERPs**
  - Meet eligibility requirements for CCRN renewal and complete the Continuing Education Recognition Point (CERP) Program, which requires 100 CERPs in various categories (A, B & C).
  - For more details, refer to the Renewal by Synergy CERP Brochure and other Synergy CERP resources online at www.aacn.org/certification > Renew Certification.

- **Option 2 - Renewal by Exam**
  - Meet the eligibility requirements for CCRN renewal and successfully apply for and schedule your exam.
    - The CCRN exam must be completed before your scheduled renewal date.
    - You may not take the exam early, then attempt to renew by CERPs if you do not pass.

- **Option 3 - Inactive Status**
  - Inactive status is available to CCRN-certified nurses who do not meet the renewal eligibility requirements but do not wish to lose their CCRN certification status. Inactive status provides additional time, up to 3 years from the scheduled renewal date, to meet the renewal eligibility requirements.
    - During the time of Inactive status, the CCRN credential may not be used.
    - Inactive status may be held more than once, but not for two consecutive renewal periods.

For more details, refer to the CCRN Renewal Handbook online at www.aacn.org/certification > Preparation Tools & Handbooks.

**CCRN-E Certification**

If you work primarily or exclusively in a tele-ICU caring for critically ill adult patients from a remote location and do not meet the requirements for CCRN renewal, CCRN-E renewal may be an option.

For more details, refer to the CCRN-E Renewal Handbook online at www.aacn.org/certification > Preparation Tools & Handbooks.

**CCRN-K Certification**

CCRN-K is a program that validates the clinical specialty knowledge of acute/critical care nurses who do not exclusively or primarily provide direct care. Eligible practice hours include those in which the nurse applies 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.

- Nurses with practice hours in roles such as Clinical or Patient Educator, Academic Faculty, Manager/Supervisor, Clinical Director, Nursing Administrator, Case Manager, Transitional Care Coordinator may qualify. This is not an all-inclusive list, nor does it mean all nurses working in these roles are eligible for CCRN-K renewal.

For more details, refer to the CCRN-K Renewal Handbook online at www.aacn.org/certification > Preparation Tools & Handbooks.
Synergy is an evolving phenomenon that occurs when individuals work together in mutually enhancing ways toward a common goal. AACN Certification Corporation is committed to ensuring that certified nursing practice is based on the needs of patients. Integration of the AACN Synergy Model for Patient Care into AACN Certification Corporation’s certification programs puts emphasis on the patient and says to the world that patients come first.

The Synergy Model creates a comprehensive look at the patient. It puts the patient in the center of nursing practice. The model identifies nursing’s unique contributions to patient care and uses language to describe the professional nurse’s role. It provides nursing with a venue that clearly states what we do for patients and allows us to start linking ourselves to, and defining ourselves within, the context of the patient and patient outcomes.

**Patient Characteristics**

The Synergy Model encourages nurses to view patients in a holistic manner rather than the “body systems” medical model. Each patient and family is unique, with a varying capacity for health and vulnerability to illness. Each patient, regardless of the clinical setting, brings a set of unique characteristics to the care situation. Depending on where they are on the healthcare continuum, patients may display varying levels of the following characteristics:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resiliency</td>
<td>Capacity to return to a restorative level of functioning using compensatory/coping mechanisms; the ability to bounce back quickly after an insult.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulnerability</td>
<td>Susceptibility to actual or potential stressors that may adversely affect patient outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stability</td>
<td>Ability to maintain a steady-state equilibrium.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complexity</td>
<td>Intricate entanglement of two or more systems (e.g., body, family, therapies).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource Availability</td>
<td>Extent of resources (e.g., technical, fiscal, personal, psychological and social) the patient/family/community bring to the situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in Care</td>
<td>Extent to which patient/family engages in aspects of care.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in Decision Making</td>
<td>Extent to which patient/family engages in decision making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predictability</td>
<td>A characteristic that allows one to expect a certain course of events or course of illness.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FOR EXAMPLE:**

A healthy, uninsured, 40-year-old woman undergoing a pre-employment physical could be described as an individual who is (a) stable (b) not complex (c) very predictable (d) resilient (e) not vulnerable (f) able to participate in decision making and care, but (g) has inadequate resource availability.

On the other hand: a critically ill, insured infant with multisystem organ failure can be described as an individual who is (a) unstable (b) highly complex (c) unpredictable (d) highly resilient (e) vulnerable (f) unable to become involved in decision making and care, but (g) has adequate resource availability.

*continued*
Nurse Characteristics

Nursing care reflects an integration of knowledge, skills, abilities and experience necessary to meet the needs of patients and families. Thus, nurse characteristics are derived from patient needs and include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nurse Characteristic</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clinical Judgment</strong></td>
<td>Clinical reasoning, which includes clinical decision making, critical thinking and a global grasp of the situation, coupled with nursing skills acquired through a process of integrating education, experiential knowledge and evidence-based guidelines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advocacy/Moral Agency</strong></td>
<td>Working on another's behalf and representing the concerns of the patient/family and nursing staff; serving as a moral agent in identifying and helping to resolve ethical and clinical concerns within and outside the clinical setting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Caring Practices</strong></td>
<td>Nursing activities that create a compassionate, supportive and therapeutic environment for patients and staff, with the aim of promoting comfort and healing and preventing unnecessary suffering. These caring behaviors include but are not limited to vigilance, engagement and responsiveness of caregivers. Caregivers include family and healthcare personnel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collaboration</strong></td>
<td>Working with others (e.g., patients, families, healthcare providers) in a way that promotes/encourages each person's contributions toward achieving optimal/realistic patient/family goals. Collaboration involves intra- and inter-disciplinary work with colleagues and community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Systems Thinking</strong></td>
<td>Body of knowledge and tools that allow the nurse to manage whatever environmental and system resources that exist for the patient/family and staff, within or across healthcare systems and non-healthcare systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Response to Diversity</strong></td>
<td>The sensitivity to recognize, appreciate and incorporate differences into the provision of care. Differences may include, but are not limited to, individuality, cultural, spiritual, gender, race, ethnicity, lifestyle, socioeconomic, age and values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Facilitation of Learning</strong></td>
<td>The ability to facilitate learning for patients/families, nursing staff, other members of the healthcare team and community. Includes both formal and informal facilitation of learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clinical Inquiry</strong></td>
<td>The ongoing process of questioning and evaluating practice and providing informed practice. Creating changes through evidence-based practice, research utilization and experiential knowledge.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nurses become competent within each continuum at a level that best meets the fluctuating needs of their population of patients. More compromised patients have more severe or complex needs, requiring nurses to have advanced knowledge and skills in an associated continuum.

**FOR EXAMPLE:**
If the patient were stable but unpredictable, minimally resilient and vulnerable, primary competencies of the nurse would be centered on clinical judgment and caring practices (which includes vigilance). If the patient were vulnerable, unable to participate in decision making and care, and inadequate resource availability, the primary competencies of the nurse would focus on advocacy and moral agency, collaboration and systems thinking.

Although all eight competencies are essential for contemporary nursing practice, each assumes more or less importance depending on a patient’s characteristics. **Synergy results when a patient’s needs and characteristics are matched with the nurse’s competencies.**

Based on the most recent AACN Certification Corporation study of nursing practice, the test plans for our certification exams reflect the Synergy Model as well as findings related to nursing care of the patient population studied, e.g., adult, pediatric and neonatal.

For more information about the AACN Synergy Model for Patient Care visit www.aacn.org.
I. CLINICAL JUDGMENT (80%)

A. Cardiovascular (18%)

1. Acute coronary syndromes (including unstable angina)
2. Acute myocardial infarction/ischemia (including papillary muscle rupture)
3. Acute peripheral vascular insufficiency
   a. Carotid artery stenosis
   b. Endarterectomy
   c. Fem-pop bypass
   d. Peripheral stents
4. Acute pulmonary edema
5. Arterial venous occlusion
   a. Peripheral vascular insufficiency
6. Cardiac/vascular catheterization
   a. Diagnostic
   b. Interventional
7. Cardiogenic shock
8. Cardiomyopathies
   a. Dilated
   b. Hypertrophic
   c. Idiopathic
   d. Restrictive
9. Dysrhythmias
10. Heart failure
11. Hypertensive crisis
12. Myocardial conduction system defects
13. Structural heart defects (acquired and congenital, including valvular disease)
14. Ruptured or dissecting aneurysm (e.g., thoracic, abdominal, thoracoabdominal)

B. Pulmonary (17%)

1. Acute pulmonary embolus
2. Acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS), to include acute lung injury (ALI) and respiratory distress syndrome (RDS)
3. Acute respiratory failure
4. Acute respiratory infection (e.g., pneumonia)
5. Air-leak syndromes
6. Aspiration
7. Chronic conditions (e.g., COPD, asthma, bronchitis, emphysema)
8. Failure to wean from mechanical ventilation
9. Pulmonary fibrosis
10. Pulmonary hypertension
11. Status asthmaticus
12. Thoracic surgery
13. Thoracic trauma (e.g., fractured rib, lung contusion, tracheal perforation)

C. Endocrine/Hematology/Gastrointestinal/Renal/Integumentary (20%)

1. Endocrine
   a. Acute hypoglycemia
   b. Diabetes insipidus
   c. Diabetic ketoacidosis
   d. Hyperglycemia
   e. Hyperglycemic hyperosmolar nonketotic syndrome (HHNK)
   f. Syndrome of inappropriate secretion of antidiuretic hormone (SIADH)
2. Hematology/Immunology
   a. Anemia
   b. Coagulopathies (e.g., ITP, DIC, HIT)
   c. Immune deficiencies
   d. Leukopenia
   e. Thrombocytopenia
3. Gastrointestinal
   a. Acute abdominal trauma
   b. Acute GI hemorrhage
   c. Bowel infarction/obstruction/perforation (e.g., mesenteric ischemia, adhesions)
   d. Gastroesophageal reflux
   e. GI surgeries
   f. Hepatic failure/coma (e.g., portal hypertension, cirrhosis, esophageal varices, fulminant hepatitis, biliary atresia)
   g. Malnutrition and malabsorption
   h. Pancreatitis
4. Renal/Genitourinary
   a. Acute kidney injury (AKI), acute renal failure, acute tubular necrosis (ATN)
   b. Chronic kidney disease
   c. Incontinence
   d. Infections
   e. Life-threatening electrolyte imbalances

continued
ADULT CCRN TEST PLAN (CONTINUED)

5. Integumentary
   a. IV infiltration
   b. Pressure ulcer
   c. Wounds
      i. Infectious
      ii. Surgical
      iii. Trauma

D. Musculoskeletal/Neurology/Psychosocial (13%)
   1. Musculoskeletal
      a. Infections
      b. Functional issues (e.g., immobility, falls, gait disorders)
   2. Neurology
      a. Brain death
      b. Encephalopathy
      c. Hemorrhage
         i. Intracranial (ICH)
         ii. Intraventricular (IVH)
         iii. Subarachnoid (traumatic or aneurysmal)
      d. Ischemic stroke
      e. Neurologic infectious disease (e.g., viral, bacterial, fungal)
      f. Neurosurgery
      g. Seizure disorders
      h. Space-occupying lesions (e.g., brain tumors)
         i. Traumatic brain injury (e.g., epidural, subdural, concussion, non-accidental trauma)
   3. Behavioral/Psychosocial
      a. Agitation
      b. Antisocial behaviors, aggression, violence
      c. Delirium
      d. Dementia
      e. Medical non-adherence
      f. Mood disorders, depression, anxiety
      g. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
      h. Risk-taking behavior
         i. Substance dependence or abuse (e.g., withdrawal, drug-seeking behavior, chronic alcohol or drug dependence)
         j. Suicidal ideation and/or behaviors

E. Multisystem (14%)
   1. Bariatric complications
   2. Comorbidity in patients with transplant history
   3. End of life
   4. Healthcare-associated infections (HAI)
      a. Central line-associated bloodstream infections (CLABSI)
      b. Catheter-associated urinary tract infection (CAUTI)
      c. VAP (i.e., ventilator-associated event or VAE)
   5. Hypotension
   6. Infectious diseases
      a. Multidrug-resistant organisms (e.g., MRSA, VRE, CRE)
      b. Influenza (e.g., pandemic or epidemic)
   7. Multi-organ dysfunction syndrome (MODS)
   8. Multisystem trauma
   9. Pain
   10. Palliative care
   11. Rhabdomyolysis
   12. Sepsis continuum (systemic inflammatory response syndrome (SIRS), sepsis, severe sepsis, septic shock)
   13. Shock states
      a. Distributive (e.g., anaphylactic, neurogenic)
      b. Hypovolemic
   14. Sleep disruption (including sensory overload)
   15. Thermoregulation
   16. Toxin/drug exposure (including allergies)
   17. Toxic ingestions/inhalations (e.g., drug/alcohol overdose)

II. PROFESSIONAL CARING & ETHICAL PRACTICE (20%)
   A. Advocacy/Moral Agency
   B. Caring Practices
   C. Response to Diversity
   D. Facilitation of Learning
   E. Collaboration
   F. Systems Thinking
   G. Clinical Inquiry

Order of content does not necessarily reflect importance.
The sum of these percentages is not 100 due to rounding.
ADULT CCRN TEST PLAN
TESTABLE NURSING ACTIONS

• Assess pain considering patient's cognitive status and age
• Identify and monitor normal and abnormal diagnostic test results
• Manage patients receiving:
  ○ medications (e.g., safe administration, monitoring, polypharmacy)
  ○ complementary alternative medicine and/or non-pharmacologic interventions
• Monitor patients and follow protocols for pre- and postoperative care
• Recognize indications for and manage patients requiring:
  ○ central venous access
  ○ SVO₂ monitoring
• Recognize normal and abnormal developmental assessment findings and provide developmentally appropriate care
• Recognize normal and abnormal:
  ○ physical assessment findings
  ○ psychosocial assessment findings
• Recognize signs and symptoms of emergencies, initiate interventions and seek assistance as needed
• Apply leads for cardiac monitoring
• Identify, interpret and monitor cardiac rhythms
• Monitor hemodynamic status, and recognize signs and symptoms of hemodynamic instability
• Recognize indications for and manage patients requiring:
  ○ 12-lead ECG
  ○ arterial catheter
  ○ cardiac catheterization
  ○ cardioversion
  ○ central venous pressure monitoring
  ○ defibrillation
  ○ invasive hemodynamic monitoring
  ○ IABP
  ○ percutaneous coronary interventions
  ○ vascular stenting
• Interpret blood gas results
• Recognize indications for and manage patients requiring:
  ○ endotracheal tubes
  ○ bronchoscopy
  ○ chest tubes
  ○ conventional modes of mechanical ventilation
  ○ non-conventional modes of mechanical ventilation (e.g., high-frequency)
  ○ noninvasive positive pressure ventilation (e.g., BiPAP, CPAP, high-flow nasal cannula)
  ○ oxygen therapy delivery device
  ○ prevention of complications related to mechanical ventilation (ventilator bundle)
  ○ prone positioning (lateral rotation therapy)
  ○ pulmonary therapeutic interventions related to mechanical ventilation:
    • airway clearance
    • intubation
    • weaning
    • extubation
  ○ respiratory monitoring devices (e.g., SPO₂, SVO₂, ETCO₂) and report values
  ○ therapeutic gases (e.g., oxygen, nitric oxide, heliox, CO₂)
  ○ thoracentesis
  ○ tracheostomy
  ○ tracheostomy with mechanical ventilation
• Manage patients receiving transfusion of blood products
• Monitor patients and follow protocols pre-, intra-, post-intervention for hematology and immunology problems (e.g., plasmapheresis, exchange transfusion, leukocyte depletion)
• Monitor patients and follow protocols related to blood conservation
• Monitor patients and follow protocols for pre-, intra-, post-procedure for gastrointestinal problems (e.g., EGD, peg placement)

continued
• Recognize indications for and manage patients requiring:
  ◦ gastrointestinal monitoring devices (e.g., intra-abdominal compartment pressure)
  ◦ gastrointestinal drains
• Recognize indications for and complications of enteral and parenteral nutrition
• Intervene to address barriers to nutritional/fluid adequacy (e.g., chewing/swallowing difficulties, alterations in hunger and thirst, inability to self-feed)
• Recognize indications for and manage patients requiring renal therapeutic intervention (e.g., hemodialysis, CRRT, peritoneal dialysis)
• Manage patients receiving electrolyte replacement
• Monitor patients and follow protocols pre-, intra-, post-renal procedure (e.g., renal biopsy, ultrasound)
• Recognize indications for and manage patients undergoing therapeutic integumentary interventions (e.g., wound VACs, pressure reduction surfaces, fecal management devices, IV infiltrate treatment)
• Manage patients requiring progressive mobility
• Monitor patients and follow protocols for neurologic procedures (e.g., pre-, intra-, post-procedure)
• Recognize indications for and monitor/manage patients requiring neurologic monitoring devices and drains (e.g., ICP, ventricular drain)
• Manage age-related communication problems
• Respond to behavioral emergencies (e.g., non-violent crisis intervention, de-escalation techniques)
• Recognize indications for and manage patients requiring:
  ◦ behavioral therapeutic interventions
  ◦ restraints
• Utilize behavioral assessment tools (e.g., delirium, alcohol withdrawal, mini-mental status)
• Recognize indications for and manage patients undergoing:
  ◦ therapeutic hypothermia
  ◦ intermittent sedation
  ◦ continuous sedation
  ◦ procedural sedation
    ◦ minimal sedation
    ◦ moderate sedation
    ◦ deep sedation
ADULT CCRN SAMPLE EXAM QUESTIONS

The purpose of the sample questions is to familiarize candidates with the style and format of the certification exam items.

1. The nursing staff is resisting being assigned to a disruptive patient. An appropriate resolution would be to
   A. ask the physician to transfer the patient.
   B. rotate the patient assignment among staff.
   C. confront the family and demand an end to the behavior.
   D. hold a nursing team conference to discuss care needs.

2. A patient with unstable angina has an IABP inserted. Hemodynamics are:
   HR 148 (sinus tachycardia)
   MAP 40 mm Hg
   PAOP 25 mm Hg
   CI 1.4 L/min/m²
   Which of the following should be included in this patient’s plan of care?
   A. checking timing of the IABP, decreasing balloon to 1:2 frequency
   B. obtaining an echocardiogram and administering furosemide (Lasix)
   C. infusing dobutamine (Dobutrex) and obtaining a 12-lead ECG
   D. administering adenosine (Adenocard) rapidly and checking results of Hgb and Hct

3. The family of a critically ill patient wishes to spend the night, which is contrary to visiting policy. The nurse’s best action would be to
   A. adhere to the visiting policy.
   B. allow the family to stay in the room.
   C. obtain a motel room near the hospital where the family can spend the night.
   D. allow one or two family members to stay and evaluate the patient’s response.

4. A patient with a recent myocardial infarction suddenly develops a loud systolic murmur. The most likely cause is which of the following?
   A. pulmonary embolism
   B. congestive heart failure
   C. ruptured papillary muscle
   D. increased systemic vascular resistance

5. Members of the nursing staff are developing written patient education materials for a group of patients with diverse reading abilities. It would be most effective for the staff to
   A. design individual handouts for each patient.
   B. develop a computer-based education series.
   C. write the materials at a fourth-grade reading level.
   D. limit text and provide color pictures.

6. A patient who is 72 hours postoperative repair of a ruptured abdominal aortic aneurysm suddenly becomes dyspneic with an increased respiratory rate from 24 to 40. An arterial blood gas sample obtained while the patient is receiving oxygen at 6 L/min via nasal cannula reveals the following results:
   pH 7.50
   pCO₂ 31
   pO₂ 48
   A chest x-ray is obtained and a “ground-glass-like appearance” is reported. Auscultation of the lungs reveals basilar crackles that were not previously present. The nurse should suspect that the patient has developed
   A. a pulmonary embolus.
   B. bacterial pneumonia.
   C. chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.
   D. acute respiratory distress syndrome.

continued
7. A patient on mechanical ventilation is post-operative day 5 for spinal injury sustained playing college football. He was unusually disengaged the previous day. Today he is agitated, combative during care and forgot his family was at the bedside an hour ago. Other physiological factors are ruled out. The nurse should recognize the patient is most likely experiencing
   A. acute dementia.
   B. acute delirium.
   C. alcohol withdrawal.
   D. steroid withdrawal.

8. A patient who is one day post-gastroplasty has a sudden onset of restlessness, dyspnea and chest pain. His heart rate is 122, and auscultation of heart sound reveals an increased intensity of a pulmonary S2. The most likely cause is
   A. aspiration pneumonia.
   B. a spontaneous pneumothorax.
   C. a pleural effusion.
   D. a pulmonary embolus.

**Answers**
1. D
2. A
3. D
4. C
5. C
6. D
7. B
8. D
I. CLINICAL JUDGMENT (80%)

A. Cardiovascular (15%)
1. Acute pulmonary edema
2. Cardiac surgery (e.g., congenital defects)
3. Cardiac/vascular catheterization
   a. Diagnostic
   b. Interventional
4. Cardiogenic shock
5. Cardiomyopathies
   a. Dilated
   b. Hypertrophic
   c. Idiopathic
   d. Restrictive
6. Dysrhythmias
7. Heart failure
8. Hypertensive crisis
9. Myocardial conduction system defects
10. Structural heart defects (acquired and congenital, including valvular disease)

B. Pulmonary (16%)
1. Acute pulmonary embolus
2. Acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS), to include acute lung injury (ALI) and respiratory distress syndrome (RDS)
3. Acute respiratory failure
4. Acute respiratory infection (e.g., pneumonia)
5. Air-leak syndromes
6. Aspiration
7. Bronchopulmonary dysplasia
8. Congenital anomalies (e.g., diaphragmatic hernia, tracheoesophageal fistula, choanal atresia, tracheal malacia, tracheal stenosis)
9. Chronic conditions (e.g., asthma, bronchitis)
10. Failure to wean from mechanical ventilation
11. Pulmonary hypertension
12. Status asthmaticus
13. Thoracic surgery
14. Thoracic trauma (e.g., fractured rib, lung contusion, tracheal perforation)

C. Endocrine/Hematology/Gastrointestinal/Renal/Integumentary (19%)
1. Endocrine
   a. Acute hypoglycemia
   b. Diabetes insipidus
   c. Diabetic ketoacidosis
   d. Hyperglycemia
   e. Inborn errors of metabolism
   f. Syndrome of inappropriate secretion of antidiuretic hormone (SIADH)
2. Hematology/Immunology
   a. Anemia
   b. Coagulopathies (e.g., ITP, DIC, HIT)
   c. Immune deficiencies
   d. Leukopenia
   e. Oncologic complications
   f. Sickle cell crisis
   g. Thrombocytopenia
3. Gastrointestinal
   a. Acute abdominal trauma
   b. Acute GI hemorrhage
   c. Bowel infarction/obstruction/perforation (e.g., mesenteric ischemia, adhesions)
   d. Gastroesophageal reflux
   e. GI abnormalities (e.g., omphalocele, gastroschisis, volvulus, imperforate anus, Hirschsprung disease, malrotation, intussusception)
   f. GI surgeries
   g. Hepatic failure/coma (e.g., portal hypertension, cirrhosis, esophageal varices, fulminant hepatitis, biliary atresia)
   h. Malnutrition and malabsorption
4. Renal/Genitourinary
   a. Acute kidney injury (AKI), acute renal failure, acute tubular necrosis (ATN)
   b. Chronic kidney disease
   c. Infections
   d. Life-threatening electrolyte imbalances
5. Integumentary
   a. IV infiltration
   b. Pressure ulcer
   c. Wounds
      i. Infectious
      ii. Surgical
      iii. Trauma

continued
D. Musculoskeletal/Neurology/Psychosocial (16%)

1. Musculoskeletal
   a. Infections
2. Neurology
   a. Acute spinal cord injury
   b. Brain death
   c. Congenital neurological abnormalities (e.g., AV malformation, myelomeningocele, encephalocele)
   d. Encephalopathy
   e. Head trauma
   f. Hemorrhage
      i. Intracranial (ICH)
      ii. Intraventricular (IVH)
      iii. Subarachnoid (traumatic or aneurysmal)
   g. Hydrocephalus
   h. Ischemic stroke
      i. Neurologic infectious disease (e.g., viral, bacterial, fungal)
   j. Neuromuscular disorders
   k. Neurosurgery
   l. Seizure disorders
   m. Space occupying lesions (e.g., brain tumors)
   n. Spinal fusion
   o. Traumatic brain injury (e.g., epidural, subdural, concussion, non-accidental trauma)
3. Behavioral/Psychosocial
   a. Abuse, maltreatment, neglect
   b. Agitation
   c. Developmental delays
   d. Failure to thrive
   e. Medical non-adherence
   f. Suicidal ideation and/or behaviors

4. Healthcare-associated infections (HAI)
   a. Central line-associated bloodstream infections (CLABSI)
   b. Catheter-associated urinary tract infection (CAUTI)
   c. VAP (i.e., ventilator-associated event or VAE)
5. Hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS)
6. Hypotension
7. Infectious diseases
   a. Multidrug-resistant organisms (e.g., MRSA, VRE, CRE)
   b. Influenza (e.g., pandemic or epidemic)
8. Multi-organ dysfunction syndrome (MODS)
9. Multisystem trauma
10. Pain
11. Palliative care
12. Sepsis continuum (systemic inflammatory response syndrome (SIRS), sepsis, severe sepsis, septic shock)
13. Shock states
   a. Distributive (e.g., anaphylactic, neurogenic)
   b. Hypovolemic
14. Sleep disruption (including sensory overload)
15. Submersion injuries
16. Thermoregulation
17. Toxic ingestions/inhalations (e.g., drug/alcohol overdose)
18. Toxin/drug exposure (including allergies)

II. PROFESSIONAL CARING & ETHICAL PRACTICE (20%)

A. Advocacy/Moral Agency
B. Caring Practices
C. Response to Diversity
D. Facilitation of Learning
E. Collaboration
F. Systems Thinking
G. Clinical Inquiry

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  - psychosocial assessment findings
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  - defibrillation
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  - vascular stenting
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  - prone positioning (lateral rotation therapy)
  - pulmonary therapeutic interventions related to mechanical ventilation:
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    - intubation
    - weaning
    - extubation
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  - therapeutic gases (e.g., oxygen, nitric oxide, heliox, CO₂)
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  - tracheostomy
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• Monitor patients and follow protocols for pre-, intra-, post-procedure for gastrointestinal problems (e.g., EGD, peg placement)
• Recognize indications for and manage patients requiring:
  ○ gastrointestinal monitoring devices (e.g., intra-abdominal compartment pressure)
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• Intervene to address barriers to nutritional/fluid adequacy (e.g., chewing/swallowing difficulties, alterations in hunger and thirst, inability to self-feed)
• Recognize indications for and manage patients requiring renal therapeutic intervention (e.g., hemodialysis, CRRT, peritoneal dialysis)
• Manage patients receiving electrolyte replacement
• Monitor patients and follow protocols pre-, intra-, post-renal procedure (e.g., renal biopsy, ultrasound)
• Recognize indications for and manage patients undergoing therapeutic integumentary interventions (e.g., wound VACs, pressure reduction surfaces, fecal management devices, IV infiltrate treatment)
• Manage patients requiring progressive mobility
• Monitor patients and follow protocols for neurologic procedures (e.g., pre-, intra-, post-procedure)
• Recognize indications for and monitor/manage patients requiring neurologic monitoring devices and drains (e.g., ICP, ventricular drain)
• Manage patients requiring spinal immobilization
• Manage age-related communication problems
• Respond to behavioral emergencies (e.g., non-violent crisis intervention, de-escalation techniques)
• Recognize indications for and manage patients requiring:
  ○ behavioral therapeutic interventions
  ○ restraints
• Recognize indications for and manage patients undergoing:
  ○ therapeutic hypothermia
  ○ intermittent sedation
  ○ continuous sedation
  ○ procedural sedation
  • minimal sedation
  • moderate sedation
  • deep sedation
1. While caring for a patient with salicylate overdose, the nurse should anticipate administration of which of the following as a primary treatment measure?
   A. protamine sulfate
   B. glucose
   C. packed red blood cells
   D. fluid and electrolytes

2. An adolescent with the developmental age of a 4-year-old requires placement of a chest tube. The best way to prepare the patient for this procedure is to
   A. use short simple sentences and limit descriptions to concrete explanations.
   B. show the patient a chest tube and explain how it will feel.
   C. explain in detail why a chest tube is needed and how it works.
   D. tell the parents what will be done so they can explain it to their child.

3. A child is admitted with a gunshot wound to the head, accidentally inflicted by an older sibling. The parents are overcome with grief and appear to be ignoring the following statements made by the older sibling: “It was an accident. I didn’t mean to do it. I’m sorry!” Which of the following actions by the nurse would be most appropriate?
   A. Discuss the importance of gun safety with the older sibling while the parents are at the bedside.
   B. Seek additional support for the parents for ways they can assist the older sibling.
   C. Tell the parents that they need to provide support for the older sibling.
   D. Tell the older sibling, “Accidents happen. I know you didn’t mean to do it.”

4. Which of the following laboratory findings is indicative of the syndrome of inappropriate ADH secretion (SIADH)?
   A. increased serum sodium
   B. decreased serum osmolality
   C. decreased blood urea nitrogen (BUN)
   D. increased serum potassium

5. A 3-year-old is receiving aggressive management for an episode of rapidly worsening asthma. Vital signs:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Admission</th>
<th>Current</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HR</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RR</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SpO₂</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
   The nurse notes diminishing breath sounds with inspiratory and expiratory wheezing, intercostal retraction and increased somnolence. Which of the following should the nurse anticipate next?
   A. administration of NaHCO₃
   B. fluid resuscitation
   C. racemic epinephrine
   D. endotracheal intubation

6. A 2-year-old is admitted for digoxin (Lanoxin) toxicity. BP is 94/60, capillary refill time is 2 seconds and the electrocardiogram reveals 1st degree AV block with a heart rate of 60. The nurse should
   A. prepare for cardioversion
   B. administer Atropine
   C. perform vasovagal maneuvers
   D. continue to monitor

continued
7. An adolescent with asthma is readmitted just a week after discharge from the hospital. On questioning, the nurse learns that the patient refuses to use the inhalers at school. The nurse should
   A. inform the teen about long-term consequences if the treatment plan is not followed.
   B. consult the school nurse to find out why they are not monitoring the medications at school.
   C. suggest the parents set up a disciplinary contract with the teen.
   D. arrange for the teen to attend an asthma support group.

8. The parent of an unconscious 5-month-old reports the baby fell off the table during a diaper change by an older sibling. What findings would indicate further inquiry of the history?
   A. a cephalic bruise
   B. poorly reactive pupils
   C. retinal hemorrhage
   D. a linear skull fracture

Answers
1. D
2. A
3. B
4. B
5. D
6. D
7. D
8. C
NEONATAL CCRN TEST PLAN

I. CLINICAL JUDGMENT (80%)

A. Cardiovascular (5%)
   1. Cardiac surgery (e.g., congenital defects)
   2. Dysrhythmias
   3. Structural heart defects (acquired and congenital, including valvular disease)

B. Pulmonary (24%)
   1. Acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS), to include acute lung injury (ALI) and respiratory distress syndrome (RDS)
   2. Acute respiratory failure
   3. Acute respiratory infection (e.g., pneumonia)
   4. Air-leak syndromes
   5. Apnea of prematurity
   6. Aspiration
   7. Bronchopulmonary dysplasia
   8. Congenital anomalies (e.g., diaphragmatic hernia, tracheoesophageal fistula, choanal atresia, tracheal malacia, tracheal stenosis)
   9. Failure to wean from mechanical ventilation
  10. Meconium aspiration syndrome (MAS)
  11. Persistent pulmonary hypertension of the newborn (PPHN)
  12. Pulmonary hypertension
  13. Thoracic surgery
  14. Transient tachypnea of the newborn (TTNB)

C. Endocrine/Hematology/Gastrointestinal/Renal/Integumentary (24%)
   1. Endocrine
      a. Hyperglycemia
      b. Inborn errors of metabolism
      c. Neonatal hypoglycemia
   2. Hematology/Immunology
      a. Anemia
      b. Anemia of prematurity
      c. Coagulopathies (e.g., ITP, DIC, HIT)
      d. Immune deficiencies
      e. Hyperbilirubinemia
         i. Pathologic
         ii. Physiologic
      f. Leukopenia
      g. Rh incompatibilities, ABO incompatibilities, hydrops fetalis
   3. Gastrointestinal
      a. Bowel infarction/obstruction/perforation (e.g., mesenteric ischemia, adhesions)
      b. Gastroesophageal reflux
      c. GI abnormalities (e.g., omphalocele, gastroschisis, volvulus, imperforate anus, Hirschsprung disease, malrotation, intussusception)
      d. GI surgeries
      e. Malnutrition and malabsorption
      f. Necrotizing enterocolitis
   4. Renal/Genitourinary
      a. Acute kidney injury (AKI), acute renal failure, acute tubular necrosis (ATN)
      b. Infections
      c. Life-threatening electrolyte imbalances
      d. Polycystic kidney disease
   5. Integumentary
      a. IV infiltration
      b. Surgical wounds

D. Musculoskeletal/Neurology/Psychosocial (13%)
   1. Musculoskeletal
      a. Infections
      b. Osteopenia
   2. Neurology
      a. Birth injuries
      b. Brain death
      c. Congenital neurological abnormalities (e.g., AV malformation, myelomeningocele, encephalocoele)
      d. Encephalopathy
      e. Hemorrhage
         i. Intracranial (ICH)
         ii. Intraventricular (IVH)
         iii. Subarachnoid (traumatic or aneurysmal)
      f. Hydrocephalus
      g. Neurologic infectious disease (e.g., viral, bacterial, fungal)
      h. Neurosurgery
         i. Seizure disorders

continued
Neonatal CCRN Test Plan (continued)

3. Behavioral/Psychosocial
   a. Agitation
   b. Developmental delays
   c. Failure to thrive
   d. Stress in extremely low birth weight infants
   e. Substance dependence or abuse (e.g., withdrawal, chronic alcohol or drug dependence)

E. Multisystem (15%)
   1. Asphyxia
   2. End of life
   3. Healthcare-associated infections (HAI)
      a. Central line-associated bloodstream infections (CLABSI)
      b. Catheter-associated urinary tract infection (CAUTI)
      c. VAP (i.e., ventilator-associated event or VAE)
   4. Hypotension
   5. Infectious diseases
      a. Multidrug-resistant organisms (e.g., MRSA, VRE, CRE)
      b. Influenza (e.g., pandemic or epidemic)
   6. Life-threatening maternal-fetal complications (e.g., eclampsia, HELLP syndrome, maternal-fetal transfusion, placental abruption, placenta previa)
   7. Low birth weight/prematurity
   8. Multi-organ dysfunction syndrome (MODS)
   9. Pain
   10. Palliative care
   11. Sepsis continuum (systemic inflammatory response syndrome (SIRS), sepsis, severe sepsis, septic shock)
   12. Shock states:
      a. Distributive (e.g., anaphylactic, neurogenic)
      b. Hypovolemic
   13. Sleep disruption (including sensory overload)
   14. Thermoregulation
   15. Toxin/drug exposure (including allergies)

II. Professional Caring & Ethical Practice (20%)
   A. Advocacy/Moral Agency
   B. Caring Practices
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   E. Collaboration
   F. Systems Thinking
   G. Clinical Inquiry

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• Assess pain considering patient's cognitive status and age
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• Manage patients receiving:
  ○ medications (e.g., safe administration, monitoring, polypharmacy)
  ○ complementary alternative medicine and/or non-pharmacologic interventions
• Monitor patients and follow protocols for pre- and postoperative care
• Recognize indications for and manage patients requiring:
  ○ central venous access
  ○ SVO2 monitoring
• Recognize normal and abnormal developmental assessment findings and provide developmentally appropriate care
• Recognize normal and abnormal:
  ○ physical assessment findings
  ○ psychosocial assessment findings
• Recognize signs and symptoms of emergencies, initiate interventions and seek assistance as needed
• Apply leads for cardiac monitoring
• Identify, interpret and monitor cardiac rhythms
• Monitor hemodynamic status, and recognize signs and symptoms of hemodynamic instability
• Recognize indications for and manage patients requiring:
  ○ 12-lead ECG
  ○ arterial catheter
  ○ cardiac catheterization
  ○ cardioversion
  ○ central venous pressure monitoring
  ○ invasive hemodynamic monitoring
  ○ umbilical catheter
• Recognize normal fetal circulation and transition to extrauterine life
• Interpret blood gas results
• Recognize indications for and manage patients requiring:
  ○ endotracheal tubes
  ○ bronchoscopy
  ○ chest tubes
  ○ conventional modes of mechanical ventilation
  ○ non-conventional modes of mechanical ventilation (e.g., high-frequency)
  ○ noninvasive positive pressure ventilation (e.g., BiPAP, CPAP, high-flow nasal cannula)
  ○ oxygen therapy delivery device
  ○ prevention of complications related to mechanical ventilation (ventilator bundle)
  ○ prone positioning (lateral rotation therapy)
  ○ pulmonary therapeutic interventions related to mechanical ventilation
    ○ airway clearance
    ○ intubation
    ○ weaning
    ○ extubation
  ○ respiratory monitoring devices (e.g., SPO2, SVO2, ETCO2) and report values
  ○ therapeutic gases (e.g., oxygen, nitric oxide, heliox, CO2)
  ○ thoracentesis
  ○ tracheostomy
  ○ tracheostomy with mechanical ventilation
• Manage patients receiving transfusion of blood products
• Monitor patients and follow protocols pre-, intra-, post-intervention for hematology and immunology problems (e.g., plasmapheresis, exchange transfusion, leukocyte depletion)
• Monitor patients and follow protocols related to blood conservation
• Monitor patients and follow protocols for pre-, intra-, post-procedure for gastrointestinal problems (e.g., EGD, peg placement)
• Recognize indications for and manage patients requiring:
  o gastrointestinal monitoring devices (e.g., intra-abdominal compartment pressure)
  o gastrointestinal drains
• Recognize indications for and complications of enteral and parenteral nutrition
• Recognize indications for and manage patients requiring renal therapeutic intervention (e.g., hemodialysis, CRRT, peritoneal dialysis)
• Manage patients receiving electrolyte replacement
• Monitor patients and follow protocols pre-, intra-, post-renal procedure (e.g., renal biopsy, ultrasound)
• Recognize indications for and manage patients undergoing therapeutic intervention (e.g., neonatal skin care, humidity)
• Monitor patients and follow protocols for neurologic procedures (e.g., pre-, intra-, post-procedure)
• Recognize indications for and monitor/manage patients requiring neurologic monitoring devices and drains (e.g., ICP, ventricular drain)
• Manage age-related communication problems
• Respond to behavioral emergencies (e.g., nonviolent crisis intervention, de-escalation techniques)
• Recognize indications for and manage patients undergoing:
  o therapeutic hypothermia
  o intermittent sedation
  o continuous sedation
  o procedural sedation
    • minimal sedation
    • moderate sedation
    • deep sedation
NEONATAL CCRN SAMPLE EXAM QUESTIONS

The purpose of the sample questions is to familiarize candidates with the style and format of the certification exam items.

1. After application of a warm saline-soaked gauze dressing to an infant’s abdominal wall defect, the most effective method for preventing evaporative heat loss is to
   A. place the infant in a warmed isolette.
   B. place the infant under a radiant heat source.
   C. moisten the gauze dressing every 30 minutes.
   D. cover the gauze dressing with plastic.

2. An infant has just been intubated for respiratory failure due to respiratory distress syndrome (RDS). The infant’s breath sounds are heard on the right side but not on the left. Which of the following interventions would be most appropriate?
   A. leave the tube in position and increase bag pressure
   B. advance the tube until breath sounds are heard bilaterally
   C. withdraw the tube until breath sounds are heard bilaterally
   D. remove the tube and re-intubate the infant

3. A preterm infant with necrotizing enterocolitis and resultant bowel perforation has returned from the operating room with an ileostomy. Which of the following would best facilitate management of the ostomy?
   A. contacting the dietitian for recommendations regarding easily digested formula
   B. contacting the enterostomal nurse to provide a pattern for the ostomy appliance
   C. applying a dry sterile dressing over the ostomy
   D. clini-testing stool to determine degree of malabsorption

4. An infant at 38-weeks-gestation is born via cesarean section. At 4 hours of age, heart rate is 155 and respiratory rate is at 60. Physical assessment reveals grunting, mild retractions and nasal flaring. A chest x-ray reveals perihilar streaking bilaterally. The following arterial blood gas (ABG) results are obtained:
   \[
   \begin{align*}
   \text{pH} & \quad 7.4 \\
   \text{pCO}_2 & \quad 35 \\
   \text{pO}_2 & \quad 40 \\
   \text{HCO}_3 & \quad 22
   \end{align*}
   \]
   Appropriate management of this patient would consist of
   A. intubation and mechanical ventilation.
   B. surfactant replacement therapy.
   C. chest tube insertion.
   D. oxygen administration via hood.

5. A meeting is planned to discuss the parents’ ethical concerns regarding life support interventions for their neonate with Trisomy 18. The nurse’s role would be to
   A. assist the parents in articulating their questions and concerns.
   B. provide legal information regarding end-of-life decisions.
   C. describe reasons for the infant’s poor prognosis.
   D. inform the parents that the goal of the meeting is to obtain a DNR order.

6. An infant with documented hypoglycemia is being started on a continuous dextrose infusion following a bolus injection of glucose. An appropriate rate of dextrose infusion would be
   A. 1 - 3 mg/kg/min.
   B. 4 - 8 mg/kg/min.
   C. 9 - 12 mg/kg/min.
   D. 13 - 16 mg/kg/min.

continued
7. An infant with isometric hydrops is delivered at 28-weeks-gestation by cesarean section. Which of the following interventions should be anticipated in the initial management of this infant?
   A. administration of sodium polystyrene sulfonate (Kayexalate)
   B. placement of an umbilical venous catheter and slow push of O-positive whole blood
   C. thoracentesis and/or paracentesis
   D. a difficult intubation

8. The following results were obtained from a cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) sample obtained by lumbar puncture:
   40 WBC/mm
   65% polymorphonuclear cells
   Glucose 50 mg/dL
   Protein 165 mg/dL
   Bacteria shown by Gram-staining
   On the basis of these results, the most appropriate additional study would include
   A. drawing blood for sedimentation rate.
   B. obtaining surface cultures.
   C. continuing monitoring without intervention.
   D. obtaining blood and urine cultures.

9. The mother of an infant with severe persistent pulmonary hypertension of the newborn (PPHN) would like to hold her infant. The infant’s oxygen saturation is 88% to 92% at rest and mean blood pressure is 28. The nurse’s best response should be to
   A. explain signs and symptoms that demonstrate instability of the infant.
   B. assist the mother in holding the infant skin-to-skin.
   C. encourage the mother to talk to the infant.
   D. teach the mother how to provide gentle infant massage.

10. Lab tests from the mother of a neonate reveal the presence of cocaine. The baby demonstrates irritability, hypertonicity and sleep disturbances. Nursing care for the neonate should include
    A. swaddling and periods of undisturbed rest.
    B. removal of parental rights and designation of a guardian.
    C. encouragement of breast feeding and increased frequency of feedings.
    D. mechanical ventilation and sedation.

Answers
1. D
2. C
3. B
4. D
5. A
6. B
7. C
8. D
9. A
10. A
Clinical Judgment - Adult


Clinical Judgment - Pediatric


continued
Clinical Judgment - Neonatal


Professional Caring and Ethical Practice


Curley MA. Synergy: The Unique Relationship Between Nurses and Patients. Indianapolis, IN: Sigma Theta Tau; 2007.


Many references are available through AACN; visit www.aacn.org > Store.

More current versions may be available.

PUBLISHER CONTACTS:

AACN – 800-899-2226
American Heart Association – 800-242-8721
Blackwell Publishing – 877-762-2974
Elsevier (including Mosby, W. B. Saunders and Hanley & Belfus) – 800-545-2522
F. A. Davis – 800-323-3555
Jones & Bartlett – 800-832-0034
Lippincott Williams & Wilkins – 800-638-3030
Sigma Theta Tau – 888-654-4968
# Products for CCRN Exam Preparation

Review Products Developed by AACN

AACN Certification Corporation does not participate in the development of AACN products and does not approve, endorse or recommend any specific exam preparation products.

## CCRN - Adult

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<tr>
<td>NEOCCRNOD</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>Adult CCRN/CCRN-E/CCRN-K Self-Assessment Exam (SAE) – mirrors content of CCRN, CCRN-E and CCRN-K exams; includes 60 questions with correct answers and rationales; score report upon completion to assess strengths and areas for further study; access for 90 days from purchase date.</td>
<td>Purchase online only at <a href="http://www.aacn.org">www.aacn.org</a>.</td>
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*continued*
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<td>The Clinical Practice of Neurological and Neurosurgical Nursing. 7th ed. (2013). Hickey JV. 816 pages.</td>
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PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY. PROCESSING WILL BE DELAYED IF INCOMPLETE OR NOT LEGIBLE. LEGAL NAME AS IT APPEARS ON YOUR GOVERNMENT-ISSUED ID CARD IS REQUIRED FOR EXAM.

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## AACN MEMBERSHIP

I would also like to join/renew/extend my AACN membership at this time and select member pricing for my exam fees:

(check one box only)

- 1-year AACN membership: $78
- 2-year AACN membership: $148
- 3-year AACN membership: $200

AACN membership includes nonrefundable $12 and $15 one-year subscriptions to *Critical Care Nurse®* and the *American Journal of Critical Care®,* respectively. AACN dues are not deductible as charitable contributions for tax purposes, but may be deducted as a business expense in keeping with Internal Revenue Service regulations.

### EXAM FOR WHICH YOU ARE APPLYING

- [ ] CCRN Adult
- [x] CCRN Pediatric
- [ ] CCRN Neonatal

(check one box only)

### CCRN

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Check one box only

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☐ Check this box if you’ve attached a request and supporting documentation for special testing accommodations.

## PAYMENT INFORMATION

- application must be accompanied by payment

☐ Check or money order attached – payable to AACN Certification Corporation. U.S. funds only.

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- [ ] MasterCard
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- [ ] Discover Card

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Name on Card __________________________ Signature _______________________

Amount Billed $__________ Address of Payor (if different than applicant) __________

☐ Please do not include my name on lists sold to other organizations.

Please complete pages 2 & 3 of application.
6. HONOR STATEMENT
Complete the Honor Statement on page 39.

7. SUBMIT APPLICATION
Attach Honor Statement to this application and submit with payment to:
AACN Certification Corporation
101 Columbia
Aliso Viejo, CA 92656-4109
or fax to: 949-362-2020

DO NOT mail AND fax your application - please choose only ONE method.

NOTE: Allow 2 to 3 weeks from the date received by AACN Certification Corporation for application processing.

Questions? Please visit www.aacn.org/certification, email certification@aacn.org or call us at 800-899-2226.

Please complete page 3 of application (honor statement).
PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY.

NAME: AACN CUSTOMER #: 

I hereby apply for the CCRN certification exam. Submission of this application indicates I have read and understand the exam policies and eligibility requirements as documented in the CCRN Exam Handbook and the Certification Exam Policy Handbook.

**LICENSURE:** I possess a current, unencumbered U.S. RN or APRN license. My _________________________ (state) nursing license _________________________ (number) is due to expire _________________________ (date).

An unencumbered license is not currently being subjected to formal discipline by any state board of nursing and has no provisions or conditions that limit my practice in any way. This applies to all RN or APRN licenses I currently hold. I understand that I must notify AACN Certification Corporation within 30 days if any disciplinary action is taken against my RN or APRN license(s) in the future.

**PRACTICE:** I have fulfilled one of the following clinical practice requirement options:

- Practice as an RN or APRN for 1,750 hours in direct care of acutely/critically ill patients during the past 2 years, with 875 of those hours accrued in the most recent year preceding application.

  OR

- Practice as an RN or APRN for at least 5 years with a minimum of 2,000 hours in direct care of acutely/critically ill patients, with 144 of those hours accrued in the most recent year preceding application.

These clinical hours were in direct care of the following acutely/critically ill patient population:

- Adult
- Pediatric
- Neonatal (check one box only)

A majority of the total practice hours and those within the year prior to application for exam eligibility were focused on critically ill patients.

Hours were completed in a U.S.-based or Canada-based facility or in a facility determined to be comparable to the U.S. standard of acute/critical care nursing practice as evidenced by Magnet® designation or Joint Commission International accreditation.

**PRACTICE VERIFICATION:** Following is the contact information for my clinical supervisor or a professional colleague (RN or physician) who can verify that I have met the clinical hour eligibility requirements:

**VERIFIER’S NAME:** 

**FACILITY NAME:** 

**VERIFIER’S PHONE NUMBER:** 

**VERIFIER’S EMAIL ADDRESS:**

*You may not list yourself or a relative as your verifier.*

**AUDIT:** I understand that my certification application is subject to audit, and failure to respond to or pass an audit will result in revocation of certification.

**ETHICS:** I understand the importance of ethical standards and agree to act in a manner congruent with the ANA Code of Ethics for Nurses.

**NON-DISCLOSURE OF EXAM CONTENT:** Submission of this application indicates my agreement to keep the contents of the exam confidential and not disclose or discuss specific exam content with anyone except AACN Certification Corporation. Per AACN Certification Corporation policy, sharing of exam content is cause for revocation of certification.

To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this application is accurate and submitted in good faith. My signature below indicates I have read this honor statement and meet the eligibility requirements as outlined.

Applicant’s Signature: Date: