



TRANSPORT NURSE CERTIFICATION

BACKGROUND

Certification is the process by which a non-governmental agency or association validates, based on predetermined standards, an individual registered nurse's qualifications and knowledge for practice in a defined functional or clinical area of nursing. Because of the rapid advances in medical research and technology and subsequent changes in the sophistication of nursing practice, it has become increasingly apparent that specialty-nursing practice is a necessity. With the increase in specialization, it is also apparent that state licensure alone is not sufficient to assure safe nursing practice in all specialty areas. Certification programs fill the gap by identifying and measuring the knowledge base required for specialty practice.

Specialty certification is also an avenue for promoting quality patient care. By assuring that only those individuals who maintain the predetermined standards required for specialty practice are granted certification, certification enables the consumer, the government, third-party payers, and other health-care professionals to identify those who have attained a qualifying level of knowledge. This is not to say that those who are not certified are not competent, it only means that those who are certified have had their knowledge validated and are equipped to provide the nursing care required for practice in a specialty.

Specialty certification is positively associated with patient safety and positive patient outcomes, and almost all hospital nurse managers prefer to employ certified nurses, feel that certification is valuable to the staff, and report better workplace performance by certified nurses than from their non-certified counterparts. Organizations who support certification have reduced employee turnover rates, training costs along with seeing more personnel management savings secondary to higher staff job satisfaction rates.

Transport nursing is one of the specialty areas of nursing practice, as transport nurses care for a particularly acute and complex patient population in a uniquely demanding environment. Transport nurses need a mechanism by which competence in the knowledge base essential for safe, high quality transport nursing practice can be identified by employers, patients, regulatory agencies, third party payers, and the public at large. In July of 1991, ASTNA entered into a joint certification venture with the Board of Certification for Emergency Nursing (BCEN) leading to the development of the first transport-specific certification, the Certified Flight Registered Nurse (CFRN). In 2006, in recognition of the increasing role of registered nurses in critical care ground transport programs, the BCEN and ASTNA collaborated on the development of the Certified Transport Registered Nurse (CTRN) credentialing exam.



ASSOCIATION POSITION

- The Air & Surface Transport Nurses Association (ASTNA) believes that specialty certification as a transport nurse is the mechanism by which the attainment of a defined body of transport nursing knowledge is validated.
- ASTNA believes that transport specialty certification should be a part of individual professional development models and program accreditation standards.
- ASTNA recognizes that specialty transport certification is not a reasonable expectation for entry-level transport providers, but endorses the requirement for some nursing specialty certification for entry-level transport nurses with progression to a transport-specific credential after a time period suggested by the certification agency.

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