



...Excellence in Professional Nursing

March 2009

# What is a CNL<sup>®</sup>?

The Clinical Nurse Leader<sup>SM</sup> (CNL) is a fast emerging nursing role developed by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing.

- The CNL is an advanced generalist nurse prepared at the master's level.
- In practice, the CNL oversees care coordination and actively provides direct patient care in complex situations.
- The CNL puts evidence-based practice into action to ensure patients benefit from the latest innovations in care delivery.
- The CNL evaluates patient outcomes, assesses cohort risk, and has the decision-making authority to change care plans when necessary.
- The CNL is a leader in the healthcare delivery system.

# What is CNL certification?

- CNL certification is a unique credential that recognizes graduates of Clinical Nurse Leader programs who have demonstrated accepted standards of practice.
- The CNL mark of excellence promotes safe, quality practice through ongoing requirements for personal and professional growth.

# What entity oversees CNL certification?

The CNL Certification Program is managed by the Commission on Nurse Certification (CNC), an autonomous arm of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing.



# About CNC

The CNC name was established in October 2007; previously called the CNL Certification Advisory Board – first board members were appointed August 2007.

**Mission:** To oversee certification activities - promote safe, quality practice thereby assuring communities of interest that certificants have met accepted standards of practice.

# CNC Goals

CNC promotes high quality patient care through the certification of qualified individuals by:

- Recognizing formally those individuals who meet the eligibility requirements of the certification program and pass the examination.
- Encouraging continued personal and professional growth in one's practice.
- Providing a national standard of requisite knowledge and experience required for certification, thereby assisting communities of interest in the assessment of certificants.

# CNC Governance

CNC is governed by a Board of Commissioners  
– nine voting members  
(practice, education, and public representation)

# Why Certification?

Certification is voluntary and serves to:

- Demonstrate a commitment to the profession
- Indicate that an individual has acquired knowledge beyond RN licensure
- Recognize that an individual has demonstrated standards and knowledge of the profession
- Assure the public that the CNL is well prepared for safe practice
- Promote life-long learning through recertification requirements

# Program Facts

- CNL Certification Program piloted November 2006
- More than 700 CNLs are certified
- More than 80 schools of nursing offer a CNL program

# Certification Eligibility

- Registered Nurse licensure
- Graduation from a CNL master's or post-master's program
- Waiver for faculty of existing CNL education programs (expires December 31, 2012)
- Successful completion of certification exam

# Exam Site Registration

- Program submits the Institution/School of Nursing CNL Education Program Verification Form.
- Program selects exam date within CNC testing period.
- Program notifies CNC ([cnl@aacn.nche.edu](mailto:cnl@aacn.nche.edu)) and Applied Measurement Professionals ([wta@goamp.com](mailto:wta@goamp.com)) of exam date and proctor contact information.
- Program notifies examinee of exam date/time and location.

# Certification Application Process

- Candidate must meet eligibility requirements.
- Candidate submits application (online or hardcopy) with payment (\$295 initial fee).
- Candidate submits supporting documents – Standards of Conduct, Education Eligibility Form.
- Candidate confirms exam date, time, and location with faculty contact.

# Certification Exam

- Computer-based
- Multiple choice (105 items) and simulation (7 items)
- 2 hour time limit per section
- Administered at the school of nursing

# CNL Recertification Requirements

- Recertify once every five years; submit application with payment (\$295)
- RN licensure (unencumbered)
- Professional practice (4,000 hours- general clinical, research, education, administration, and/or consultant)
- Contact hours/continuing education (75; 25 of the 75 hours must be in quality and safety)
- Documentation (if audited)

# CNL Certification

## Resource Materials

[www.aacn.nche.edu/CNC](http://www.aacn.nche.edu/CNC)

[www.aacn.nche.edu/CNL](http://www.aacn.nche.edu/CNL)

## Contact Information

Tracy Lofty, MSA, CAE

CNC Director

[tlofty@aacn.nche.edu](mailto:tlofty@aacn.nche.edu)

202-463-6930, ext. 242