

ABNS 2002 Nursing Managers' Survey Report

Report of a Survey of Nursing Managers Regarding Nursing Certification

The LNCC designation is the only legal nurse consulting certification program endorsed by AALNC and accredited by the American Board of Nursing Specialties.

The American Board of Nursing Specialties (ABNS) was incorporated in 1991 to create uniformity in nursing certification and to increase public awareness of the value of quality certification to healthcare. ABNS is an advocate for consumer protection by establishing and maintaining standards for nursing specialty certification. Member organizations represent 23 nursing organizations that together have certified more than 500,000 registered nurses (RNs) in specialty areas.

The goal of the present data collection was to investigate the perceived value of nursing certification to the individuals who hire and supervise nurses.

Method

In October 2002, a Nursing Management Congress was held in Dallas, Texas. Conference attendees visiting the ABNS booth in the Exhibit Hall were asked to complete a two-page survey developed to collect information about nurse managers' and nurse administrators' perceptions of certified registered nurses and institutional recognition/support for nursing certification. One hundred thirty-nine surveys were completed and the results of those survey responses are summarized in this report.

Surveys were completed by conference attendees from 35 different states and several countries, with the highest percentage of respondents (25 percent) representing the state of Texas, where the conference was held. The typical survey respondent is a nurse manager working in a not-for-profit acute care hospital. Respondents had an average of 20 years of experience in nursing and six years of experience in their current role. The majority of respondents were baccalaureate or master's educated; 41 percent were currently certified.

Results

Approximately three-fourths of respondents indicated that their facilities offered at least one incentive for certification. The average number of incentives offered was 2.3, from a list of 13 possible incentives listed. The most common incentive offered was reimbursement for examination fees (37 percent). Other common incentives were reimbursement for continuing education (29 percent), advancement on the nursing clinical/career ladder (27 percent), and salary increases (25 percent). Larger facilities (as indicated by number

of beds) offer a greater number of incentives than smaller facilities ($r=.19, p<.05$); however, the size of this correlation is modest.

TABLE 1: Reasons for Preference for Hiring Certified Over Non-Certified Nurses (N=120)

Reason	Percentage
Has a proven knowledge base in a given specialty	85.8
Demonstrates a greater professional commitment to life-long learning	77.5
Has documented experience in a given specialty	61.7
Is a role model and mentor for others	59.2
Demonstrates increased confidence	55.0
Serves as an informal and formal leader within the unit	53.5
Positively impacts patient outcomes	49.2
Practices with greater authority	47.5
Contributes better to the overall quality of patient care delivery	44.2
Is a better preceptor	41.7
Is more likely to volunteer to serve on unit and/or hospital wide committees	39.2
Is able to detect and initiate early intervention for patient complications	36.7
Is more accountable for his/her actions	36.7
Is more likely to initiate collaboration with phys./other members of the team	28.3
Collaborates with physicians and other members of the team more effectively	26.7
Is a more satisfied employee	23.3
Has fewer disciplinary actions	22.5
Has greater job retention	18.3
Commits less errors in practice	18.3
Has fewer adverse incidents	14.2
Has fewer work related injuries	11.2

The vast majority of respondents (88 percent) indicated that if all else were equal they would hire a certified nurse over a non-certified nurse. The percentages of respondents selecting each of 21 specifically-delineated reasons are displayed in Table 1. The most frequently identified reasons for this preference were that a

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certified nurse has a proven knowledge base in a given specialty (86 percent) and demonstrates a greater professional commitment to life-long learning (78 percent).

Sixty-six percent of respondents indicated that they see a difference in the performance of certified and non-certified nurses. At the same time, 66 percent do *not* assign more complex cases to nurses who are certified and 65 percent did not indicate that, in their opinion, patients and families are more satisfied with the care provided by certified nurses.

A higher percentage of respondents whose staff included more than five percent certified nurses reported that patients/families were more satisfied with the care provided by certified nurses than respondents with five percent or less certified nurses on staff (see Table 2).

Discussion and Avenues for Future Research

Overall, the survey responses provide some positive support for the value of nursing certification. The varied incentives offered by institutions are encouraging and suggest that institutions are trying to support and reward those who seek certification. While less than half of those responding to the survey were certified, almost all of the respondents said they would hire a certified nurse over a non-certified nurse. Proven knowledge and expertise and a commitment to lifelong learning were the reasons most often given for the hiring preference. The majority of respondents perceived a difference in the performance of certified and non-certified nurses. Further research is warranted in regard to the nature of the perceived difference in performance. For example, what specific differences do the respondents perceive exist between certified and non-certified nurses? In what specific ways do certified nurses positively impact

patient outcomes? Are certified nurses perceived to be more effective care givers in the area of their specialty or more effective in general?

In two areas the results of the survey provide equivocal support for the value of certification. First, the results did not indicate that respondents regularly assigned certified nurses to more complex cases than they did non-certified nurses. However, this may be a function of the fact that the respondents do not have options when

TABLE 2: Perceived Differences between Certified and Non-Certified Nurses by Certification Status of Respondent's Staff

Question	Percent Responding "Yes"		
	Respondents with 5% or less certified staff	Respondents with more than 5% certified staff	Total sample
Do you see a difference in the performance of certified and non-certified nurses?	69.6	63.2	65.8
Do patients/families report greater satisfaction with care received from a certified nurse?	27.1	40.6	34.8
Do you typically assign a certified nurse (if available) to care for patients with complex needs?	27.1	39.4	34.2

making assignments, either because of the low numbers of certified nurses available or other complexities affecting the assignment of cases. Second, the results of the survey did not indicate that patients and families report greater satisfaction with care provided by certified nurses. A more reliable measure of satisfaction awaits the collection of satisfaction data directly from the patients and families.

Report submitted by: ABNS Research Committee

CORRECTION:

In the Summer *Network News*, Joan E. Miller of Phoenix, Ariz. was listed as a new LNCC®. Ms. Miller was actually an original Certification Board Member who elected to renew her LNCC® certification by exam. *Network News* regrets the error.

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The next scheduled exam will be held in Chicago on **Tuesday, March 30, 2004**, one day prior to the start of the National Education Conference. When you become an LNCC®, you will have demonstrated that you possess a defined level of knowledge of the principles and practice of legal nurse consulting for employers, clients, the public and members of other nursing specialties. You will broaden your professional development by achieving and maintaining certification in the specialty and you will promote the recognition of legal nurse consulting as a specialty practice of nursing.

To request an application, contact ALNCCB Headquarters at certification@aalnc.org or 877/402-2562.



Is It Time to Renew Your Certification?

If you passed your LNCC® in...	Your certification will expire on...	The application deadline is...	The extended deadline* is... <i>(\$100 late fee applies)</i>	Your may use contact hours between...
April 1999	April 30, 2004	No Longer Available	March 5, 2004	April 30, 1999 – October 31, 2003
October 1999	October 31, 2004	April 30, 2004	September 5, 2004	October 31, 1999 – April 30, 2004