

Why You Should Hire an LNCC as an Expert Witness

By Karen J. Huff, BSN RN LNCC

As an in-house LNC for a large defense firm, one of my primary roles is to find medical experts. When looking for physician experts, the preferred expert is often a specialist from a respected medical facility who is clinically active, in a teaching role at a university, or the author of a journal article or book chapter with findings relevant to the facts of the case. One of the core qualities I always look for is whether the expert is board certified. Board certified experts have more credibility as an "expert" in their field, and their testimony will likely carry more weight with the jury.

When retaining nursing experts, I also search for experts with case specific credentials and experience. Nursing specialty certification has been compared to physician board certification as the mark of excellence for clinical competence. Legal nurse consulting is still a relatively new field, and locating experts who are clinically active and have an understanding of the legal process can be difficult. For this reason, I have found it helpful to look for both clinical certification and certification as a legal nurse consultant.

By hiring a Legal Nurse Consultant Certified (LNCC), the attorney can expect to work with an expert witness whose opinion will be based upon both his/her training as a nurse and knowledge of the legal process. The preferred nursing expert is one who can accurately identify standard of care issues and also has an understanding of how causation and damages are determined in a malpractice action. This knowledge is clearly advantageous to the case, and the net result of

retaining an LNCC will be less time spent getting the expert "up to speed" about their role. Experts without such training or experience may focus on details that are not pertinent to the overall case. An informed expert will likely make a better appearance as a witness during deposition or trial and have a better impact on the jury.

For legal nurse consultants, the LNCC credential is the only certification approved by the American Board of Nursing Specialties (ABNS) and recognized by AALNC. The prestige associated with achievement of the LNCC credential can be compared to other nationally recognized certifications, such as the certified critical care nurse (CCRN) and the certified emergency room nurse (CEN). The LNCC credential, like the CCRN or CEN credential, is not achieved at entry into the profession. Certification is intended to recognize professionals who pass a nationwide exam after meeting education and work experience requirements, thereby identifying them an "expert" in their field. Nurses who seek certification are committed to their practice and are dedicated professionals.

When searching for your next nurse expert witness, consider adding the LNCC credential to your list of preferred qualifications for nursing experts. The LNCC has both the experience and knowledge necessary to effectively perform their role. By selecting an LNCC, you will be supporting your organization's certification program and will help educate attorneys about the value of this important credential. The LNCC credential may be the key element that sets your expert apart and helps you win your case.

Register for the October LNCC Exam Today!

Do you want to earn the designation Legal Nurse Consultant Certified (LNCC)?

Act Now! The deadline to register is rapidly approaching!

Once you pass and become an LNCC, you will have:

- ▲ Demonstrated 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
- ▲ Furthered your professional development by achieving and maintaining certification in the specialty and
- ▲ Helped promote the recognition of legal nurse consulting as a specialty practice of nursing.

To request an application for the October 11 exam,
contact AALNC Headquarters at 877/402-2562 by **Friday, August 29.**

Congratulations to the New LNCCs!

(passed May 3, 2003 at multiple sites)

Ruth A. Atherholt (nee Gross) W. Pittston, Pa.	Mary E. Larkin South Boston, Mass.	Sunny J. Sawyer Gulf Shores, Ala.
Anne M. Baker (nee Hehl) Lansing, Mich.	Donna J. Marquardo Peabody, Mass.	Michael D. Smith Lake Oswego, Ore.
Debra J. Bloom (nee De Cato) Francesstown, N.H.	Joan E. Miller Phoenix, Ariz.	Phyllis J. Staton (nee Reed) Carrollton, Texas
Marty J. Broussard (nee Cook) Altamonte Springs, Fla.	Janice M. Moras (nee Ash) Navarre, FL	Debra A. Summers Longwood, Fla.
Vicki J. Caswell Carrollton, Texas	Shirley E. Nichols (nee Claude) Streetman, Texas	Rosemarie A. Sweet (nee Schmid) Fairport, N.Y.
Cathy A. Doll Palm Beach Gardens, Fla.	Patrick T. O'Neal Oviedo, Fla.	Ronda K. Toy (nee Powers) Highlands Ranch, CO
Patricia J. Fowler De Witt, Mich.	Carol D. Palay (nee Calof) Phoenix, Ariz.	Vicki E. Weidemoyer (nee Yeakel) Punta Gorda, Fla.
Irene H. Kniss (Hershberger) Harrisonburg, Va.	Peta-Gay Rhinehart Houston, Texas	Joy A. Wheeler Winter Park, Fla.
Nancy M. Kuntz Duluth, Minn.	Barbara C. Rodts Leawood, Kansas	Nanette G. Zunkel Portland, Ore.

Is it Time to Renew Your Certification?

If you passed the LNCC® exam in...	Your certification will expire on...	The application deadline is...	The extended deadline* is... <i>(\$100 late fee applies)</i>	You may use contact hours earned
October 1998	October 31, 2003	No longer available	September 5, 2003	October 31, 1998 – April 30, 2003
April 1999	April 30, 2004	October 31, 2003	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