REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
Competency Modules

November 12, 2013

NBCRNA
National Board of Certification & Recertification for Nurse Anesthetists
Promoting patient safety by enhancing provider quality.
Invitation to Bid

The National Board of Certification and Recertification for Nurse Anesthetists (NBCRNA) is soliciting proposals for the development and offering of competency modules that will be used by nurse anesthetists towards meeting one component of the Continued Professional Certification (CPC) program. The CPC Program will be implemented January 1, 2016.

NBCRNA seeks proposals that will provide:

- a written response to CPC module requirements defined in the RFP, which include:
  - Module Development
  - Module Delivery
  - Module Assessment
  - Transfer of Participant Data
  - Module Updates and Maintenance
  - Module Evaluation and Security
- a written response to all strategic criteria defined in the RFP, which include:
  - Future Vision and Goals
  - Organization Size, Structure and Financial Viability
  - Experience and References

Proposal Conditions

NBCRNA will accept proposals under the following conditions:

1. One (1) emailed electronic copy (in PDF format) of the proposal must be received by Leah Cannon at the address listed below by 12:00 p.m. (noon) CDT, December 1, 2014.

2. The proposal and all other inquiries and correspondence regarding the project must be directed to:

   Leah Cannon
   Chief Operating Officer
   NBCRNA
   8725 W. Higgins Rd, Suite 525
   Chicago, IL 60631
   Phone: 708-667-0114, Fax: 708-669-7522
   E-mail: lcannon@nbcrna.com

3. NBCRNA reserves the sole right to accept or reject any proposal without the assignment of reasons for so doing.

4. NBCRNA will not reimburse costs incurred by the potential provider in responding to this solicitation.

5. The potential provider must acknowledge that if recognized to offer modules, they will:
   a. Function as an independent contractor in the conduct of these services, and assume full responsibility for all actions, damages, injuries, etc.
   b. At all times comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws, rules, and regulations.

6. The proposal must be prepared in conformance with the guidelines listed in “Section 5: Proposal Guidelines, Instructions, and Selection Events” (page 7 of this document).

7. Upon the recognition of a module, the provider will enter into a contractual obligation with the NBCRNA.
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1. **Purpose**

The National Board of Certification and Recertification for Nurse Anesthetists (NBCRNA) is soliciting proposals for the development and offering of competency modules that will be used by nurse anesthetists towards meeting one component of the CPC program. Beginning in 2016 with the start of the CPC program, nurse anesthetists will be required to complete four core competency modules every four years.

2. **Background Information**

   The mission of the NBCRNA is to promote patient safety through credentialing programs that support lifelong learning. Toward that end, the NBCRNA certifies registered nurse anesthetists who meet all the criteria for entry into practice as a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA). In order to become certified, a candidate must pass an initial certification examination after successful graduation from an accredited nurse anesthesia education program and be licensed to practice in at least one state.

   Currently, CRNA’s must recertify every two years by verifying completion of continuing education and practice hours. Beginning in 2016, the NBCRNA will begin providing a Continued Professional Certification (CPC) program. One of the requirements for the program is the completion of competency modules based on established instructional goals, instructional objectives and performance objectives. The competency modules must include learning activities and an assessment.

**Description of the Competency Modules**

The CPC program incorporates multiple elements that, when combined, enhance or assess a nurse anesthetist’s competence. Every four years, a nurse anesthetist will be required to complete four core competency modules in the areas of airway management techniques, applied clinical pharmacology, human physiology and pathophysiology, and anesthesia technology. The competency modules will deliver educational content in a web-based format followed by an immediate assessment of material mastery. These modules must qualify for assessed continuing education (CE) units, and are to be considered to be medium stakes assessments. The NBCRNA will review provider submissions for recognition using the parameters of a minimum of 10 questions and a maximum of 50 questions per module. Please recognize that vendors must go through a prior approval process with an accredited approval agency to award assessed CE before final module delivery.
3. Submission Parameters

A. To submit a proposal, providers must:

1. Submit the electronic module(s) content based on NBCRNA’s content map that includes instructional goals, instructional objectives and performance objectives. The submission must include the assessment(s) and all other requested materials for review by the deadline. Providers may submit an application for one to four of the required competency modules.
   a. For the initial roll out of these guidelines, a deadline for submission of the completed module will be 12/1/2014 for all modules with planned begin dates of 1/1/2016 to allow for adequate review, revisions and final edits.

2. Submit documentation for initial review by the NBCRNA. The NBCRNA recognition process must be completed prior to the submission for CE approval.

3. Upon notification by the NBCRNA that the module(s) are recognized as meeting the requirements, the provider must initiate the CE prior approval process.

4. Providers must provide subsequent documentation of CE approval from an accredited approval agency.

5. Describe the provider’s experience in delivering continuing education, the expertise of module developers, and a description of current infrastructure to support ongoing module-related activity.

6. Confirm that module content development or module support has not been, nor will be, funded by an unrestricted educational grant.

7. Address intent to develop one to four core competency modules and provide a proposed timeline for completion, if applicable. Providers are not required to develop all four modules to obtain NBCRNA recognition.

8. The provider will be assessed the following fees in an effort to recover the projected module review and recognition costs:
   a. An initial recognition fee of $3,000 for first time review of each module. If a provider submits more than one module at the same time for review prior to 12/1/14, the fee structure will be adjusted as follows:
      - Two Modules $ 5,500
      - Three Modules $ 8,000
      - Four Modules $10,000

   b. A fee of $1,500 for providers requesting subsequent review (due to a scheduled revision) of a module that currently holds the NBCRNA recognition, provided the volume of change to the module has not exceeded 50% of the original content, as determined by the NBCRNA. If the volume of change exceeds 50%, a module will be considered new and must be re-submitted for review and approval.

   c. A data transfer fee, based on volume of data transfer for a 12 month period from 1/1 to 12/31 of a given year; or partial year as appropriate, at a rate of $75/hour of staff workload to verify data.

   d. A technology fee to establish and problem solve data transfer, at a rate of $125/hour.

   e. An annual module review fee of $500 per module per year.

   f. All fees must be paid electronically and are nonrefundable.
g. All fees are subject to change based on actual costs at time of implementation.

9. Letter of Intent
   a. In order to facilitate a timely review process, the NBCRNA requests that providers interested in submitting modules for recognition send a letter of intent listing which modules they will develop. This letter must be submitted to the NBCRNA by May 1st, 2014.

B. **Vendor submitted materials must address the following areas:**

1. **Module Development:**
   For each module the provider is seeking recognition for, the provider must:
   a. Document the process (e.g., evidence-based approach, included/excluded content, use of subject matter experts (SME)/peer-reviewed) used in developing the module content. The content must be consistent with the NBCRNA established instructional goals, instructional objectives (Attachment A) and performance objectives. **The performance objectives will be sent to the provider upon request following the receipt of a letter of intent to produce competency modules.**
   b. Submit a reference list for the resources used in module development according to AMA guidelines. Resources cited must be current and relevant to the module topic.
   c. Describe the process for providing evidence of content validity based upon NBCRNA’s established instructional goals, instructional objectives and performance objectives.
   d. Avoid the introduction of commercial bias.
   e. Disclose any conflict of interests to NBCRNA for module developers, SMEs, or beta testers.

2. **Module Delivery:**
   The provider must:
   a. Describe the plans to continuously offer the module during the approved cycle.
   b. Describe methods to be used for verifying identity of the individual completing the module and assessment.
   c. Describe a planned method for web delivery of modules to ensure access for all certificants.
   d. Publish the reference list in AMA format citing resources used in developing the module for module users.
   e. Describe plans to address and resolve technology-related issues (e.g., technical support, issues, questions, guidance).
   f. Describe plans for providing any additional support for module users.
   g. Describe methods to ensure ADA-compliance for module delivery.
3. **Module Assessment:**

NBCRNA will only accept an individual module performance score that is equal to or greater than 80% of items answered correctly.

For each module the provider is seeking recognition for, the provider must:

a. Adhere to best practices for item writing.

b. Provide evidence of coding the NBCRNA instructional goals, instructional objectives, and performance objectives to the assessment.

c. Provide evidence of the reliability of the assessment.

d. Describe the process used during pilot testing of the assessment for the module and provide results to the NBCRNA.

e. Provide evidence of any changes made to module assessment based on pilot results or at the request of NBCRNA.

f. Document decision making process used to establish assessment (e.g., number of items, versions of assessment, management of item bank, frequency of question rotation, etc.)
   a. Minimum requirements are to provide 10 questions with a maximum of 50 questions.
   b. Allow for three testing attempts maximal per module, with no more than 40% of identical questions across attempts.

g. Describe parameters for length of time users will have access to modules once started, number of attempts allowed to access the module, number of assessed CEs earned, pass rate for success.
   a. Once started, the user must complete the module within at least four months or the maximum number of attempts, and may not extend past the individual’s certification end date.
   b. The module must start and end during the individual’s CPC cycle.

h. Describe semi-annual process that will be used to review item statistics for the assessment and implement changes supported by item statistics.

i. Provide semi-annual reports electronically detailing assessment statistics and module usage to the NBCRNA.

j. Describe mechanism for allowing the NBCRNA to review the module(s) and assessment(s) as determined necessary by the NBCRNA (NBCRNA must have access to module at all times).
4. **Transfer of Participant Data:**

   The provider must:
   
   a. Describe the planned process for electronically transferring individual completion records to the NBCRNA within 5 business days of individual completion.
   
   b. Include, at a minimum: participant name, participant identification number, module topic area, module start date, module completion date, number of assessed CEs earned and results of module assessment scores.
   
   c. Describe planned methods for ensuring accuracy of module completion record tracking and transfer of data.
   
   d. Describe methods to encrypt or secure transfer of data.

5. **Module Maintenance:**

   The provider must:
   
   a. Provide documentation regarding the planned process and frequency for updating the module to ensure continued availability of the current version of the same module.
   
   b. Update modules at least every four years and the revised module replaces the previous corresponding module.
   
   c. Ensure that all users actively engaged in the module have adequate time to complete prior to removing or inactivating the module.
   
   d. Notify NBCRNA one year in advance of the provider’s intent to remove the module from the marketplace.
   
   e. If substantive practice changes occur in the environment such that the NBCRNA deems edits to the current module are warranted, the vendor must be able to demonstrate a mechanism to update the module prior to the four year time frame described above.

6. **Module Evaluation and Security:**

   The provider must:
   
   a. Provide examples of a program evaluation that will be used upon completion of the module.
   
   b. Describe annual plans to review and implement changes supported by program evaluation results.
   
   c. Provide semi-annual summary program evaluation results electronically to the NBCRNA.
   
   d. Describe planned methods for ensuring security of module content and module assessment(s).
   
   e. Describe mechanism for identity validation of the module user.
4. Strategic Criteria

A. Future Vision and Goals

NBCRNA is seeking providers that understand NBCRNA’s vision for the future and shares its commitment to the continued professional certification program. Please discuss your ability to meet the NBCRNA’s future needs. Specifically: How many modules would you consider developing? What is your organization’s plan for future enhancements and innovation related to continued professional certification?

B. Organization Size, Structure, and Financial Viability

Provide a description of the current size and structure of your organization, including reporting mechanisms. Please disclose any third party vendors that may affect service to the NBCRNA.

Provide documentation that supports the financial strength of the module provider (e.g., audited financial statements for the prior two years).

C. Experience and References

Provide relevant experience and staff qualifications to perform the work defined. Please provide at least three references that show prior positive, relevant continued professional education development experience. Please provide resumes for the leadership and any potential staff that may work directly with the NBCRNA.
5 Proposal Guidelines, Instructions and Selection Events

Proposals should be organized, formatted and submitted in the manner described below in the chart.

A. Format and General Requirements

Final proposals must be submitted in the format specified in the table below. Proposals not received in this format and/or by the December 1, 2014 deadline may not be considered for 2016. Proposals for following years will be accepted on future scheduled dates as determined by the NBCRNA. Proposals must adhere to the format and section numbering shown in the following table. *(Note: The table below also can be used as a checklist regarding all components of the RFP that need to be completed.)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECTION</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>MANDATORY</th>
<th>OPTIONAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Transmittal Letter</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Executive Summary</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Written Response to Module Provider Requirements</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Module Development*</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Airway Management Techniques</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Applied Clinical Pharmacology</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Human Physiology and Pathophysiology</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Anesthesia Technology</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>Module Delivery</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Module Assessment*</td>
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<td>Module Evaluation and Security</td>
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<td>Module Fees</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Written Response to Strategic Criteria</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Future Vision and Goals</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Organization Size, Structure, and Financial Viability</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experience and References</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Additional Products and Services Offered</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Supporting information, Product Brochures, etc.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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</table>

*Mandatory for all modules for which provider is seeking recognition

All proposals shall include a transmittal letter that lists the following:

- Contact person for submittal
- Mailing address of contact person
- Telephone number of contact person
- Fax number of contact person
- Email address of contact person
B. **Proposal Questions**
   All questions pertaining to this RFP should be directed to:

   lcannon@nbcrna.com

   The NBCRNA will offer a webinar in February, 2014 to address all questions previously submitted as well as address any questions at the time of the webinar. The webinar will be recorded and posted for future review.

C. **Submission Instructions**
   The potential module provider should email one electronic copy (in PDF format) of their proposal by December 1, 2014 to the address below. Information received after this date may result in the proposal not being accepted for the 2016 year. All fees must be paid before a module will be considered for review.

   LEAH CANNON
   CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER
   NBCRNA
   Phone: 708-667-0114, Fax: 708-669-7522
   Email: lcannon@nbcrna.com

D. **Project Timeline**
   The NBCRNA has established the following tentative timeline for the selection of module providers for calendar year 2016. These dates are subject to adjustment at the NBCRNA’s discretion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>November 12, 2013</td>
<td>RFP available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1, 2014</td>
<td>Submit letter of intent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1, 2014</td>
<td>Proposal due date</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 1 thru June 30, 2015</td>
<td>Vendors selected and notified</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 1 thru December 1, 2015</td>
<td>Vendor obtains prior approval for assessed CE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1 thru December 31, 2015</td>
<td>Vendor submits evidence of CE approval to NBCRNA</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 1, 2016</td>
<td>Begin offering modules</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

   The project timeline for 2017 will be made available in 2014.
ATTACHMENT A
COMPETENCY MODULES INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGN

Excerpted Content

AIRWAY MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES:

- **Course Goal:**
  - To enhance professional competence through an ongoing, multimodal, and progressive process that maintains and enhances proficiency in nurse anesthesia practice and is a concept that ranges on a continuum from entry-level proficiency to complete mastery. The determination of what knowledge and skill equate to proficiency at the level required for continued professional certification requires judgment about the needs of patients and the range of services that experienced nurse anesthetists provide. The knowledge base and skill set for nurse anesthetists include (but are not limited to) patient-centered care, work in interprofessional teams, evidence-based practice, quality improvement, and informatics. The goals of the CPC program for nurse anesthetists are (1) to maintain core competence and (2) to enhance competence beyond the expectations of the initially certified nurse anesthetist.

- **Instructional Goals:**
  - To enhance knowledge and skills in basic and advanced airway management instrumentation and techniques.
  - To enhance in-depth understanding of and provide learning experiences in the difficult airway algorithm as a standard of care.
  - To enhance in-depth understanding of and provide learning experiences in airway management complications.

- **Instructional Objectives:**
  - The Learner will be able to recognize and respond with the appropriate instrumentation and technique with regard to airway management in accordance with evidence-based practices.
  - The Learner will be able to anticipate, identify, and manage patients with a potentially difficult airway in accordance with the difficult airway algorithm.
  - The Learner will be able to recognize and respond to airway management complications in accordance with evidence-based practices.

APPLIED CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY:

- **Course Goal:**
  - To enhance professional competence through an ongoing, multimodal, and progressive process that maintains and enhances proficiency in nurse anesthesia practice and is a concept that ranges on a continuum from entry-level proficiency to complete mastery. The determination of what knowledge and skill equate to proficiency at the level required for continued professional certification requires judgment about the needs of patients and the range of services that experienced nurse anesthetists provide. The knowledge base and skill set for nurse anesthetists include (but are not limited to) patient-centered care, work in interprofessional teams, evidence-based practice, quality improvement, and informatics. The goals of the CPC program for nurse anesthetists are (1) to maintain core competence and (2) to enhance competence beyond the expectations of the initially certified nurse anesthetist.

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- **Instructional Goals:**
  - To enhance in-depth understanding of and provide learning experiences in the utilization, actions, interactions, and adverse effects of anesthetics and adjuvant medications.

- **Instructional Objectives:**
  - The Learner will be able to recognize and respond to normal and abnormal pharmacological actions, interactions, and adverse effects of medications.
  - Sample drug classifications that are addressed within the performance objectives include, but are not limited to the following:
    - Muscle relaxants
    - Anxiolytics
    - Inhaled anesthetics
    - Opioids
    - Fluid, electrolyte and blood component therapy
    - Induction agents
    - Self-administered medications (e.g., OTC, herbal agents, illicit drugs)
    - Local anesthetics

**HUMAN PHYSIOLOGY and PATHOPHYSIOLOGY:**

- **Course Goal:**
  - To enhance professional competence through an ongoing, multimodal, and progressive process that maintains and enhances proficiency in nurse anesthesia practice and is a concept that ranges on a continuum from entry-level proficiency to complete mastery. The determination of what knowledge and skill equate to proficiency at the level required for continued professional certification requires judgment about the needs of patients and the range of services that experienced nurse anesthetists provide. The knowledge base and skill set for nurse anesthetists include (but are not limited to) patient-centered care, work in interprofessional teams, evidence-based practice, quality improvement, and informatics. The goals of the CPC program for nurse anesthetists are (1) to maintain core competence and (2) to enhance competence beyond the expectations of the initially certified nurse anesthetist.
• **Instructional Goal:**
  o To enhance in-depth understanding of the physiological differences across the lifespan as well as the function of and interaction between organ systems and their associated disorders to ensure the safe and effective administration of anesthesia.

• **Instructional Objectives:**
  o The Learner will be able to recognize physiological and pathophysiological cardiovascular events and manage the anesthetic in accordance with evidence-based practices.
  o The Learner will be able to recognize physiological and pathophysiological respiratory events and manage the anesthetic in accordance with evidence-based practices.
  o The Learner will be able to recognize physiological and pathophysiological neurologic events and manage the anesthetic in accordance with evidence-based practices.
  o The Learner will be able to recognize physiological and pathophysiological renal events and manage the anesthetic in accordance with evidence-based practices.
  o The Learner will be able to recognize physiological and pathophysiological gastrointestinal events and manage the anesthetic in accordance with evidence-based practices.
  o The Learner will be able to recognize physiological and pathophysiological hematological events and manage the anesthetic in accordance with evidence-based practices.
  o The Learner will be able to recognize physiological and pathophysiological endocrine events and manage the anesthetic in accordance with evidence-based practices.
  o The Learner will be able to recognize physiological and pathophysiological musculoskeletal events and manage the anesthetic in accordance with evidence-based practices.

**ANESTHESIA TECHNOLOGY:**

• **Course Goal:**
  o To enhance professional competence through an ongoing, multimodal, and progressive process that maintains and enhances proficiency in nurse anesthesia practice and is a concept that ranges on a continuum from entry-level proficiency to complete mastery. The determination of what knowledge and skill equate to proficiency at the level required for continued professional certification requires judgment about the needs of patients and the range of services that experienced nurse anesthetists provide. The knowledge base and skill set for nurse anesthetists include (but are not limited to) patient-centered care, work in interprofessional teams, evidence-based practice, quality improvement, and informatics. The goals of the CPC program for nurse anesthetists are (1) to maintain core competence and (2) to enhance competence beyond the expectations of the initially certified nurse anesthetist.
- **Instructional Goal:**
  - To provide information on current anesthesia equipment, technology, and informatics.
- **Instructional objectives:**
  - The Learner will select and utilize appropriate anesthesia equipment to facilitate the safe and effective care of the patient.
  - The Learner will demonstrate current principles of patient care documentation.
  - The Learner will demonstrate understanding of quality assurance and informatics.