

# R EFRESHER PROGRAM

*...to foster acquisition  
of the current knowledge,  
attitudes, and skills  
necessary for safe nurse  
anesthesia practice.*

## NBCRNA

National Board on Certification & Recertification of Nurse Anesthetists

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# National Board on Certification and Recertification of Nurse Anesthetists

## REFRESHER PROGRAM

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*The Refresher Program  
For Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists  
Program Guidelines Effective September 1, 2008*

### Purpose

The Refresher Program is designed for certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs) who have not been substantially engaged in the practice of nurse anesthesia for more than three (3) years and must update their skills and knowledge of current clinical practice and theoretical practice in anesthesia in order to meet the prevailing standards of practice and to apply for recertification.

### Objectives

The objectives of the Refresher Program are twofold: (1) to foster acquisition of the current knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary for safe nurse anesthesia practice; and (2) to establish minimum continuing education and clinical anesthesia experience requirements needed to enable the nurse anesthetist who is not currently engaged in the practice of nurse anesthesia to become recertified.

### General Information

The Refresher Program consists of a continuing education (CE) component and a clinical component, both of which must be completed within a 24 month period. There are specific requirements for the CE and clinical components depending on the number of years a nurse anesthetist has not been substantially engaged in the practice of anesthesia. In addition, if the nurse anesthetist has not been substantially engaged in the practice of anesthesia for 5 or more years, he or she must retake and pass the national certification examination (NCE).

For the CE component of the Refresher Program, the nurse anesthetist is not required to earn CE credits through a particular provider, but can earn them through attendance at prior-approved CE programs. These programs must be approved by the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA) or another recognized approval organization. The clinical component of the Refresher Program must be completed by the nurse anesthetist in conjunction with a hospital or other accredited medical facility. The Refresher Program is sequenced so that a minimum of 100 CE credits must be completed prior to approval for entry into the clinical component. The NCE, if required, can be taken only after the nurse anesthetist has completed both the CE and clinical components of the Refresher Program.

### Who Must Complete the Refresher Program

1. Certified registered nurse anesthetists who wish to apply for recertification and have not been substantially engaged in nurse anesthesia practice for more than 3 years are required to complete the Refresher Program.
2. Certified registered nurse anesthetists who wish to apply for recertification and have not been substantially engaged in nurse anesthesia practice for 5 or more years must complete the Refresher Program, **and** must retake and pass the national certification examination (NCE). Individuals will be able to take the NCE up to four (4) times from the date of official notification that the didactic and clinical requirements of the Refresher Program have been completed.

## Approval Process and Application Fee

The Application for Approval of the Continuing Education Refresher Component can be obtained from the Council on Recertification and must be submitted to the Council along with the \$500 non-refundable approval fee before the nurse anesthetist begins to earn the CE credits. Even if the nurse anesthetist enrolls in a Refresher Course that has been prior-approved by the AANA, an application for Approval of the Continuing Education Refresher Component must be submitted to the Council on Recertification.

Once the minimum of 100 CE credits has been earned, the candidate can request the Application for Approval of the Clinical Anesthesia Refresher Component. This application must be submitted to the Council on Recertification before beginning the clinical portion of the program.

Upon approval of the Clinical Anesthesia Refresher Component, the site sponsor will be sent an agreement form to sign and return directly to the Council on Recertification. This form acknowledges the site sponsor's agreement to the terms of sponsorship for a Refresher Program applicant including submission of official evaluation forms and a transcript documenting the completion of the required clinical anesthesia experience requirements.

## Refresher Program Requirements

A certified registered nurse anesthetist must fulfill the following Refresher Program requirements to become eligible for full recertification.

A. **Not substantially engaged in clinical anesthesia practice for more than 3 years but less than 5 years.** Certified registered nurse anesthetists who have not been engaged in nurse anesthesia practice for **3 years but have practiced substantially within the last 5 years** must meet the following criteria:

1. Documentation of **100 CE credits** which have been prior approved by a recognized approval organization:
  - 40 CE credits:** Scientific foundations to include Pathophysiology and Pharmacology.
  - 40 CE credits:** Advanced Principles of Anesthesia Practice to include Specialty Case Management, Pediatrics, Obstetrics, Geriatrics, and Regional anesthesia.
  - 10 CE credits:** Professional Standards and Safety.
  - 10 CE credits:** Anesthesia Equipment, Instrumentation and Technology.
2. Documentation of **250 hours** of clinical anesthesia time on the *Transcript for Completion of the Clinical Anesthesia Refresher Component*.
3. Documentation of completion of the number of required clinical anesthesia experiences which include a broad range of general anesthesia, monitored anesthesia care, and the management or administration of regional

anesthesia. The required cases are listed on the *Transcript for Completion of the Clinical Anesthesia Refresher Component*.

4. Documentation of current ACLS, PALS, and NRP provider certification.

B. **Not substantially engaged in clinical anesthesia practice for more than 5 years but less than 7 years.** Certified registered nurse anesthetists who have not been engaged in nurse anesthesia practice for **5 years but who have practiced substantially within the last 7 years** must meet the following criteria.

1. Documentation of **200 CE credits** which have been prior approved by a recognized approval organization:
  - 80 CE credits:** Scientific foundations to include Pathophysiology and Pharmacology.
  - 80 CE credits:** Advanced Principles of Anesthesia Practice to include Specialty Case Management, Pediatrics, Obstetrics, Geriatrics, and Regional anesthesia.
  - 20 CE credits:** Professional Standards and Safety.
  - 20 CE credits:** Anesthesia Equipment, Instrumentation and Technology.

2. Documentation of **300 hours** of clinical experience on the *Transcript for Completion of the Clinical Anesthesia Refresher Component*.
3. Documentation of completion of the number of the required clinical anesthesia experiences which include a broad range of general anesthesia, monitored anesthesia care, and the management or administration of regional anesthesia. The required cases are listed on the *Transcript for Completion of the Clinical Anesthesia Refresher Component*.

4. Documentation of current ACLS, PALS, and NRP provider certification.
5. Documentation of successful completion of the NCE. The examination may be attempted up to four (4) times within one year from the date of official notification that the didactic and clinical requirements of the Refresher Program have been completed. The nurse anesthetist must successfully pass the exam within that time frame.

C. **Not substantially engaged in clinical anesthesia practice for more than 7 years.** Certified registered nurse anesthetists who have not been substantially engaged in nurse anesthesia practice for **more than 7 years** must meet the following criteria.

1. Documentation of **300 CE credits** or class hours which have been prior approved by a recognized approval organization:
  - 120 CE credits:** Scientific foundations to include Pathophysiology and Pharmacology.

**120 CE credits:** Advanced Principles of Anesthesia Practice to include Specialty Case Management, Pediatrics, Obstetrics, Geriatrics, and Regional anesthesia.

**30 CE credits:** Professional Standards and Safety.

**30 CE credits:** Anesthesia Equipment, Instrumentation and Technology.

2. Documentation of **400 hours** of clinical anesthesia time on the *Transcript for Completion of the Clinical Refresher Component*.
3. Documentation of completion of the number of required clinical anesthesia experiences which include a broad range of general anesthesia, monitored anesthesia care, and the management or administration of regional anesthesia. The required cases are listed on the *Transcript for Completion of the Clinical Anesthesia Refresher Component*.
4. Documentation of current ACLS, PALS, and NRP provider certification.
5. Documentation of successful completion of the NCE. The examination may be attempted up to four (4) times within one year from the date of official notification that the didactic and clinical requirements of the Refresher Program have been completed. The nurse anesthetist must successfully pass the exam within that time frame.

## Continuing Education Refresher Component

Continuing education credits toward fulfillment of the criteria for the Refresher Program must be earned in clinical topics. Continuing education credits cannot be earned in government relations, stress management, administration, research, education, or solely through home-study programs. At least ONE-THIRD of the required CE credits must be completed through attendance at a program in a classroom or similar lecture setting.

The nurse anesthetist has three options with respect to how he or she can earn the required CE credit.

**Option 1.** This option allows nurse anesthetists to earn CE credits through attendance at prior approved CE programs of their choice. These programs must be prior-approved by the AANA or other recognized approval organizations. The nurse anesthetist is responsible for ensuring that the program he or she attends has content that meets the CE credit requirements. If this option is selected, the nurse anesthetist is responsible for maintaining records of his or her CE credits and submitting documentation to the Council on Recertification. This process is described under **Recordkeeping – CE Credits**.

**Option 2.** With this option, the nurse anesthetist completes a CE Refresher Course that has received prior approval from the AANA to offer the entire CE Refresher Component. The CE Refresher Course provider submits an attendance record to document the CE credits earned by the nurse anesthetist.

**Option 3.** This combines options 1 and 2. Under option 3, the nurse anesthetist can earn credits for attendance at approved CE programs (option 1) and earn credits while enrolled in an AANA prior-approved CE Refresher Course (option 2). However, for all credits earned with option 1, the nurse anesthetist is responsible for maintaining a record of his or her CE credits and submitting the documentation as described under **Recordkeeping – CE Credits**.

## Recordkeeping – Continuing Education Credits

In options 1 and 3, the nurse anesthetist is responsible for maintaining a record of all CE credits and submitting it to the Council on Recertification. Documentation of credits must be submitted as earned so that the material can be reviewed and information provided on the eligibility of the CE credits. The candidate cannot obtain an Application for Approval to start the Clinical Anesthesia Refresher Component until 100 required CE credits have been submitted and reviewed.

The following procedure should be used when submitting a record of the CE credits that have been prior approved by the AANA or by another recognized approval organization:

1. Submit a copy of the program, hourly schedule, or lecture outline that clearly shows the lectures attended.
2. Mark each lecture according to the group to which it belongs: scientific foundations, advanced principles, professional standards and safety, or anesthesia equipment, instrumentation, and technology. For example, lectures that apply to professional standards and safety should be marked as such right on the program.
3. Submit a copy of the certificate of attendance issued by the provider.
4. Submit documentation of approval of CE credit; all material must indicate the number of CE credits awarded.

For ACLS, PALS, and NRP programs, submit a copy of the appropriate card, the certificate of attendance, and an hourly schedule or lecture agenda. The textbooks are not required.

## Clinical Anesthesia Refresher Component

The clinical component must be: 1) established in conjunction with a nurse anesthetist or an anesthesiologist; and 2) conducted within a department of anesthesia at an accredited medical facility. The Application for Approval of the Clinical Anesthesia Refresher Component may only be requested following completion of 100 required CE credits from the Continuing Education Refresher Component and must be submitted before starting the Clinical Anesthesia Refresher Component.

The candidate must locate the hospital or other facility that will meet his or her needs and be convenient for participation in the Clinical Anesthesia Refresher Component. It is strongly recommended that the nurse anesthetist find a clinical site prior to enrolling in the Refresher Program as sites may be difficult to secure. Applicants seeking clinical sites that routinely use students on rotation may be competing with students for cases and credentialing regulations may not allow privileging of non-employees.

As part of the application process to obtain Council on Recertification approval for the Clinical Anesthesia Refresher Component, the nurse anesthetist must include a statement about the clinical facility and resources. The typed statement must include this information: (1) the beginning and projected end dates of the clinical program; (2) a description of the accredited medical facility; (3) a brief outline of the kinds of cases that will be available; (4) how the nurse anesthetist expects to meet the clinical requirements; and (5) the faculty involved in the clinical area.

In addition, the clinical site sponsor must review and agree (through signature) to provide the type of educational experiences and document all of the educational experiences identified on the Transcript for Completion of Clinical Anesthesia Refresher Component.

## Recordkeeping – Clinical Anesthesia Experience

A record of all clinical experiences must be maintained by the Clinical Anesthesia Refresher Component sponsor and the nurse anesthetist. The *Transcript of Completed Clinical Anesthesia Refresher Component* must show that a broad range of general anesthesia, monitored anesthesia care, and the management or administration of regional anesthesia have been completed, as well as the required number of cases.

The *Transcript* is prepared by the Clinical Anesthesia Refresher Component sponsor at the conclusion of the clinical refresher portion of the program and submitted directly to the Council on Recertification. It must be notarized and signed by both the nurse anesthetist and sponsor. The *Transcript* must be typewritten. The minimum number for required cases must be met and each space that specifies a minimum or preferred number must be completed.

## Provisional Recertification

Provisional recertification may be granted while the nurse anesthetist is enrolled in the Refresher Program. This means that the nurse anesthetist must have a current RN license, submit a completed application for recertification along with the recertification fee, and present documentation of having earned 40 CE credits within the 24 months prior to application before provisional recertification can be granted.

## Completion of the Refresher Program

Upon completion of the clinical and CE components of the Refresher Program, the Council on Recertification will review the documentation submitted to determine if all the requirements of the Refresher Program have been met within the time frame specified.

The nurse anesthetist refresher participant: 1) will be notified in writing of his or her completion status as well as how to proceed with the recertification process; or 2) will be provided information on applying to take the NCE.

For any questions involving the Refresher Program, contact Barbara Anderson, (847) 692-7050, ext. 1196 or [banderson@aana.com](mailto:banderson@aana.com).

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7/2008