REFRESHER PROGRAM
# REFRESHER PROGRAM

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Refresher Program guidelines effective May 15, 2013

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This publication contains information about the NBCRNA’s Refresher Program. **Nurse anesthetists are responsible for knowing the contents of this brochure.** All correspondence and requests for information concerning the Refresher Program should be sent by email to the NBCRNA at recertification@nbcrna.com.

The NBCRNA does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, marital status, age, gender, ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition or sexual orientation. NBCRNA credentialing programs are accredited by the following organizations:

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NBCRNA | 8725 W. Higgins Rd, Suite 525 | Chicago, IL 60631 | Phone (855) 285-4658 | www.NBCRNA.com | Page 2
Introduction

The National Board of Certification and Recertification for Nurse Anesthetists (NBCRNA) is a not-for-profit corporation organized under the laws of the state of Illinois. It consists of two councils — the Council on Certification of Nurse Anesthetists (CCNA) and the Council on Recertification of Nurse Anesthetists (COR). NBCRNA credentialing provides assurances to the public that certified individuals have met objective, predetermined qualifications for providing nurse anesthesia services. While state licensure provides the legal credential for the practice of professional nursing, private voluntary certification indicates compliance with the professional standards for practice in this clinical nursing specialty. The certification credential for nurse anesthetists has been institutionalized in many position descriptions as a practice requirement or as the standard for demonstrating equivalency. It has been recognized through malpractice litigation, state nurse practice acts, and state rules and regulations.

Through the recertification process, the NBCRNA seeks to advance the quality of nurse anesthesia care provided to patients. Specifically, it endeavors to make sure that nurse anesthetists are maintaining their skills and keeping current with scientific and technological developments. It also strives to assure that appropriate limitations are placed on those who are known to have developed conditions that might adversely affect their ability to practice nurse anesthesia.

To be sure, no national organization can hope to determine the specific procedures which any individual nurse anesthetist is qualified to perform. Nor can any national organization determine whether a particular nurse anesthetist may have developed an impairment that could interfere with the proper administration of anesthesia. Ultimately, these judgments must be entrusted to the individual nurse anesthetist and to those with whom he or she works. The NBCRNA has, however, set forth objective criteria designed to determine whether an individual certified registered nurse anesthetist is properly licensed, has engaged in the practice required to maintain an adequate level of skill, has obtained continuing education credit sufficient to indicate an effort to keep current with advances, and has avoided mental, physical and other problems which could interfere with the practice of nurse anesthesia.

A nurse anesthetist who has satisfied the NBCRNA's objective criteria receives recertification for a period of two years. Recertification is not and cannot be a guarantee of competence to perform all nurse anesthesia procedures. Full recertification is, however, an indication that the recertified nurse anesthetist has maintained a current license to practice, has exercised his or her skills, has participated in approved continuing education activities and is not known to have developed any impairment that could interfere with the practice of nurse anesthesia.

The NBCRNA also recognizes that some individuals who have not met the criteria for Full Recertification may nonetheless be qualified to practice, although sometimes subject to certain limitations. For this reason, the NBCRNA has created two categories of interim recertification. These categories are designed to reflect the particular situations of individual nurse anesthetists and to make potential employers or colleagues aware of these situations.

Finally, the NBCRNA seeks to conduct the recertification process in a fair manner. Accordingly, it gives nurse anesthetists an opportunity to seek review and appeal of an adverse decision. Throughout the recertification process, the NBCRNA attempts to keep an individual’s file confidential unless disclosure is authorized by the individual or required by law.

Vision

The vision of the NBCRNA is to be recognized as the leader in advance practice nurse credentialing.

Mission

The mission of the NBCRNA is to promote patient safety through credentialing programs that support lifelong learning.

History

The Board of Directors of the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA) realized that evidence of continued professional excellence was becoming increasingly important in our society and in 1968 directed the AANA Education Committee to study the issue of recertification. At the AANA Annual Meeting in 1969, a bylaw was adopted to establish an optional program to provide certificates to members who had demonstrated they had completed clinical and didactic experiences reflective of
the changes in nurse anesthesia practice within a five-year period. Recognizing that continuing education provides one means to assess current educational and knowledge levels of practitioners, a mandatory continuing education program was adopted by the AANA membership at the 1976 Annual Meeting, with full implementation effective August 1, 1978. In September 1978, the membership adopted the bylaw revisions providing for an organizational restructuring of the Association and establishing a Council on Recertification of Nurse Anesthetists (COR). Bylaw provisions granting the COR autonomy were adopted in 1983. In 2007, the CCNA and the COR became independent of the AANA, and together they incorporated as the National Board of Certification and Recertification for Nurse Anesthetists (NBCRNA).

Purpose

The NBCRNA is the organization charged with protecting and serving the public by assuring that individuals who are recertified have maintained predetermined requirements for providing nurse anesthesia services. As such, it is responsible for the following:

1. Formulating and adopting criteria for eligibility for recertification of individuals based upon current licensure; maintenance of practice skills; participation in approved continuing education activities and other recognized activities conducive to professional proficiency; and freedom from known mental or physical impairments which may prevent the professional practice of nurse anesthesia; and

2. Recertifying qualified individuals on a biennial basis.

Structure

The NBCRNA Board of Directors is composed of certified registered nurse anesthetists who are actively engaged in clinical practice or in teaching or administration of a nurse anesthesia educational program, a board-certified surgeon and an anesthesiologist who have a current working relationship with nurse anesthetists, and a representative of the public at large.

NCCA Accreditation

The credentialing programs of the NBCRNA are accredited through April 2017 by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA), a private not-for-profit organization. The NCCA is the accrediting branch of the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE), which is the national standard-setting organization for credentialing groups including certification boards, licensing boards and associations. The NBCRNA (and before it, the CCNA and COR) has been continuously accredited by the NCCA since 1980. NCCA accreditation means that the NBCRNA credentialing programs meet the highest national voluntary standards for private certification. It indicates that the programs have been reviewed by an impartial commission and deemed to have met the nationally accepted criteria and guidelines of the NCCA.

ABSNC Accreditation

The credentialing programs of the NBCRNA are accredited through July 2017 by the Accreditation Board for Specialty Nursing Certification (ABSNC) of the American Board of Nursing Specialties (ABNS). The NBCRNA (and before it, the CCNA and COR) was one of the first national credentialing organizations to be recognized and accredited by the ABSNC.

The ABNS, established in 1991, is the national peer review program for specialty nursing credentialing organizations. ABNS serves as the national umbrella organization for nursing specialty certification boards authorized and recognized to certify nurse specialists in the United States. It promotes the highest quality of specialty nursing practice through the establishment of standards of professional specialty nursing certification.
General Information

Purpose
The Refresher Program is offered to certified registered nurse anesthetists who have not been substantially engaged in the practice of nurse anesthesia for more than 3 years and must update their skills and knowledge of current clinical 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 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.

Overview
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 one particular provider; credits may be earned through completion of CE programs that have been prior-approved by a recognized approval organization.

The clinical component of the Refresher Program must be completed by the nurse anesthetist in an accredited medical facility. The Refresher Program participant is responsible for locating a clinical site and selecting a nurse anesthetist or anesthesiologist to act as a clinical site sponsor.

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 component and the clinical component of the Refresher Program.

Who Must Complete the Refresher Program
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.

Certified registered nurse anesthetists who have not been substantially engaged in nurse anesthesia practice for 5 or more years must retake and pass the NCE in addition to completing the CE and clinical refresher components.

Approval Process and Application Fee
The Continuing Education Refresher Component Application for Approval and a $500 non-refundable fee must be submitted to the NBCRNA. The application must be approved before the nurse anesthetist begins the CE component of the Refresher Program.

Once the minimum of 100 CE credits has been earned, the Refresher Program participant may submit the Clinical Anesthesia Refresher Component Application for Approval. The application must be approved by the NBCRNA before the participant begins the clinical component of the Refresher Program.

Both the CE and Clinical Anesthesia Refresher Component applications may be accessed on the Refresher page of the NBCRNA website, www.NBCRNA.com or requested directly from the NBCRNA.
Program Specifics

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

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 substantially 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** that 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.

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 substantially 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** that 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 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.

**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 that have been prior-approved by a recognized approval organization:
   - **120 CE credits**: Scientific Foundations to include Patho-physiology 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 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**

The Continuing Education Refresher Component Application for Approval must be approved by the NBCRNA before the nurse anesthetist begins the Continuing Education component of the Refresher Program.

Continuing education (CE) credits toward fulfillment of the criteria for the Refresher Program must be earned in clinical topics; CE 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 for earning 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 a recognized approval organization. The nurse anesthetist is responsible for (1) ensuring that the program he or she attends has content that meets the CE credit requirements; and (2) maintaining a record of CE credits and submitting documentation of completed credits to the NBCRNA. 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 quantity of CEs required for this refresher component. The Refresher Course provider submits an attendance record directly to the NBCRNA to document the CE credits earned by the nurse anesthetist.
Option 3. This is a combination of 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 under option 1, the nurse anesthetist is responsible for maintaining a record of his or her CE credits and submitting the documentation to the NBCRNA as described under Recordkeeping – CE Credits.

Recordkeeping – CE Credits

In options 1 and 3, the nurse anesthetist is responsible for maintaining a record of all CE credits and submitting it to the NBCRNA. Documentation of credits must be submitted as earned so that the material can be reviewed and evaluated. The following procedure should be used when submitting a record of CE credits:

Classroom or Lecture Programs

» Submit a copy of the certificate of attendance issued by the provider. The certificate must include your name, the provider name, the program title, the program date(s), documentation that the program was approved for CE credit by a recognized approval organization, and the number of CE credits awarded.

» Submit a copy of the program, hourly schedule or lecture outline that clearly shows the lectures attended. One CE credit is awarded for every 60 minutes of participation.

» 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.

» 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.

Note: In accordance with ANCC guidelines, effective June 1, 2011, CE credit will not be awarded for renewal or refresher advanced cardiac life support (ACLS), pediatric advanced life support (PALS) or other advanced life support courses.

Provider-Directed or Independent Study Programs

1. If the program was prior-approved by the AANA, submit the following:

   » Copy of the certificate of completion. The certificate must include your name, the provider name, the program title, the program date(s), the AANA program code number and the number of CE credits awarded. Note: If the title of the program is not printed on the certificate of completion, submit printed material that describes the program content and includes the program title.

   » Mark the certificate according to the group to which it belongs: Scientific Foundations, Advanced Principles, Professional Standards and Safety, or Anesthesia Equipment, Instrumentation and Technology.

2. If the program was approved by a recognized approval organization other than the AANA, submit the following:

   » Copy of the certificate of completion. The certificate must include your name, the provider name, the program title, the program date(s), documentation that the program was approved for CE credit by a recognized approval organization, and the number of CE credits awarded.

   » Printed material that describes the program content and includes the course objectives and test questions. One course objective and 10 test questions are required for every credit requested.

   » Mark the certificate according to the group to which it belongs: Scientific Foundations, Advanced Principles, Professional Standards and Safety, or Anesthesia Equipment, Instrumentation and Technology.
Clinical Anesthesia Refresher Component

The Clinical Anesthesia Refresher Component Application for Approval must be approved by the NBCRNA before the nurse anesthetist begins the clinical anesthesia component, and may be submitted only following completion of 100 required credits from the CE Refresher Component.

The clinical component must be: (1) established in conjunction with a clinical site sponsor (i.e., a nurse anesthetist or an anesthesiologist); and (2) conducted within a department of anesthesia at an accredited medical facility located within the United States or its territories. An accredited medical facility is defined as currently holding accreditation as granted by a national facility accreditor such as The Joint Commission.

The individual 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 facility credentialing policies may not allow privileging of non-employees.

As part of the application process to obtain NBCRNA approval for the Clinical Anesthesia Refresher Component, the clinical site sponsor must submit a typed statement that includes the following 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 on the application) 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 documented by using the Transcript for Completion of Clinical Anesthesia Refresher Component. This record 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. Prior to submission, the minimum number of required cases must be met, and each space that specifies a minimum or preferred number must be completed.

The Transcript is to be prepared by the clinical site sponsor at the conclusion of the clinical refresher portion of the program and submitted directly to the NBCRNA. The transcript must be notarized and signed by both the nurse anesthetist and the sponsor.

Provisional Recertification

Provisional recertification may be granted while the nurse anesthetist is enrolled in the Refresher Program. Before provisional recertification can be granted, the nurse anesthetist must submit a completed application for recertification along with all recertification fees; documentation of a current RN license and authorization to practice nurse anesthesia, if such authority is granted, in at least one state; and documentation of having earned 40 CE credits within the 24 months prior to application.

Completion of the Refresher Program

Upon completion of the clinical and CE components of the Refresher Program, the NBCRNA 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.
Confidentiality

Any information or material that is received or generated by the NBCRNA in connection with testing, certification of a candidate, recertification of a nurse anesthetist, or any NBCRNA review, disciplinary or appeal proceeding, will be kept confidential and will not be released except where release is authorized by the individual or required by law. However, the following information may be disclosed: the name of the nurse anesthesia educational program attended, dates of attendance, completion date, certification eligible status, certification status, dates of recertification, current recertification status, and reportable disciplinary actions. Finally, the NBCRNA may use de-identified information from an application and any subsequent examination(s) for the purpose of statistical analysis.

The NBCRNA shares the following certificant/recertificant information with the AANA: name, address, phone number, nurse anesthesia education program information, certification/recertification status, CE earning period.

For any questions involving the Refresher Program, send an email to recertification@nbcrna.com or contact the NBCRNA at (855) 285-4658.