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NBCRNA Concludes Innovative Research Study on Testing Conditions

High Percentage of Nurse Anesthetists Meet Performance Standard

CHICAGO— (December 12, 2018) – The National Board of Certification and Recertification for Nurse Anesthetists (NBCRNA) has completed an innovative research study on its computer-based Continued Professional Certification (CPC) Assessment by evaluating testing performance in six varied testing conditions. The study provided the data to establish both the testing condition for the assessment requirement of the NBCRNA’s CPC Program for Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs), as well as the performance standard for the study participants. The Modified Angoff and Hofstee methods, both widely used standard-setting approaches in credentialing, were used to determine the performance standard. Although testing conditions varied, the percentage of study participants that met the determined performance standard was 95%, indicating preparedness and mastery of the knowledge considered necessary for practice in nurse anesthesia.

“We would expect this high pass rate since what we are measuring—the core domains of anesthesia practice—are central to every nurse anesthesia practice, no matter the setting,” said 2018-2019 NBCRNA President Mary Wojnakowski, PhD, CRNA.

The NBCRNA is an autonomous certification body with multidisciplinary and public representation responsible for specifying the requirements for earning and maintaining the CRNA credential. Launched in September 2018, the research study included 1,500 randomly selected CRNAs who volunteered to take the 150-question, four-hour exam in one of the six assigned testing conditions, including with and without resources, at a testing center and via live, remote proctoring. The study evaluated the testing environments to determine how each may help achieve the goals of the CPC Program in a way that is fair and reliable for all CRNAs completing the assessment requirement which begins in 2020.

To assure fairness to candidates, statistical equating procedures were used to place scores from different testing conditions on the same scale. Based on the findings from this study, the testing condition to be used for the CPC Program assessment component for CRNAs beginning in 2020 will be determined and reported in early 2019.

Dr. Wojnakowski said, “When entering the profession, all Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists commit to lifelong learning. Through its intentional design, the CPC Program works to encourage and support that commitment among CRNAs, helping to continue to ensure an up-to-date CRNA workforce.”

Launched in 2016 to the CRNA community of nearly 50,000 nationwide, the CPC Program includes a summative assessment component taken every eight years, in addition to other educational and professional development components in the multi-pronged continuing certification program. The

NBCRNA's CPC Program addresses evolving expectations among patients, employers, and certifying bodies, as well as changes in the science and practice of anesthesia. The CPC Program also supports and encourages lifelong learning and recognizes the expanding role of nurse anesthetists in the health care environment. The Program incorporates new evidence, studies, guidelines and recommendations, as well as up-to-date reviews through the Core Module component, for a well-rounded program.

"By recognizing and supporting lifelong learning, the CPC Program is designed to continue the CRNA's ongoing track record of excellence as anesthesia providers and to help ensure we continue to provide the highest standard of care for our patients," said Dr. Wojnakowski.

Additional information on this novel study will be published in 2019.

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The National Board of Certification and Recertification for Nurse Anesthetists (NBCRNA) is a not-for-profit corporation dedicated to promoting patient safety by enhancing provider quality in the field of nurse anesthesia. We accomplish our mission through the development and implementation of credentialing programs that support lifelong learning among nurse anesthetists. The vision of the NBCRNA is to be recognized as the leader in advanced practice nurse credentialing. The NBCRNA's CRNA credential program and its Nonsurgical Pain Management (NSPM-C) credential program are accredited by both the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) and the Accreditation Board for Specialty Nursing Certification (ABSNC).

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