

NBCR NA

National Board of Certification & Recertification for Nurse Anesthetists



2015 Annual Report

FY 2015: September 1, 2014-August 31, 2015



The **National Board of Certification and Recertification for Nurse Anesthetists (NBCRNA)** promotes patient safety through credentialing programs that support lifelong learning. We help ensure that the CRNA credential continues to be seen as the mark of excellence in health care.

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ABOUT THE NBCRNA

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.

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 primary goal of the NBCRNA is to protect the well-being of the public by seeking to ensure that nurse anesthetists have the necessary knowledge and skills to practice safely and effectively. In so doing, we also protect the value of the CRNA credential.

The National Board of Certification and Recertification for Nurse Anesthetists (NBCRNA) is responsible for the credentialing functions for nurse anesthetists.

The NBCRNA is focused on excellence in credentialing.

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.

Responsibility

The NBCRNA is responsible for ensuring that the credentialing standards of nurse anesthetists meet nursing specialty accreditation standards and support competency among nurse anesthesia providers.



Accreditation

NCCA Accreditation

The primary certification and recertification 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 has been continuously accredited by the NCCA since 1980.



ABSNC Accreditation

The primary certification and recertification 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 ABNS 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.



Enhancing the Value of the Credential through Nationally Accepted Standards

ABSNC accreditation means that the NBCRNA credentialing programs meet the standards of the *only accreditation program for nursing specialties*. The NBCRNA was one of the first national credentialing organizations to be recognized and accredited by the ABSNC. It promotes the highest quality of specialty nursing practice through the establishment of standards of professional specialty nursing certification.

NCCA accreditation means that the NBCRNA credentialing programs meet the *highest national voluntary* standards for private certification. NCCA accreditation validates the credential against the *accepted standards across all credentialed professions*.

Together, NCCA and ABSNC accreditation provides a strong and widely accepted standard for the nurse anesthetist credential that has been institutionalized in many position descriptions as a practice requirement or as the standard for demonstrating equivalency. It has been recognized in state nurse practice acts and state rules and regulations.

Letter from the President



Letter from Edward Waters, DNP, CRNA
2014-2015 NBCRNA President

The NBCRNA's 2014-2015 fiscal year (September 1, 2014-August 31, 2015) was remarkable in many respects. We **worked closely** with the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA) to refine elements of the Continued Professional Certification (CPC) Program, and **adjusted the start date** to August 1, 2016. We **established liaisons** with the AANA Board to further coordination and communication, and for the first time in our history, held an election that enabled currently certified nurse anesthetists to **elect a member** to the NBCRNA Board. To support health services research that is critical to addressing key challenges facing our profession, the NBCRNA is backing the work of the AANA foundation with a **substantial grant** and working in collaboration to **implement** the research program.

On behalf of the NBCRNA, I would also like to express gratitude to our partner organizations, particularly the AANA. The NBCRNA and AANA developed strong working relationships at the staff level this year, mirroring the exchanges at the board level. This collaboration has strengthened both organizations, and I anticipate building on this great progress in the coming year.

I want to express my appreciation to all of the board members of NBCRNA, who continue to volunteer enormous time and effort to the betterment of our profession. I must single out our outgoing board members, Dr. Paul Jones, our surgeon member, and Dr. Joseph Fink, our public member. Their insight and advice were extremely valuable and they will be missed. I must also acknowledge the continuing contributions of NBCRNA's CEO, Dr. Karen Plaus, and her committed and highly professional staff. Their dedication to their responsibilities is what enables us to effectively serve the profession.

As we reflect on a successful 2015, we look forward to continuing our commitment to supporting lifelong learning and the profession of nurse anesthesia.

Contributions

In FY 2015, the NBCRNA was pleased to have committed to the following contributions in support of the nurse anesthesia profession:

•	AANA Foundation – HSR Research	\$1,000,000
•	Anesthesia Patient Safety Foundation	\$ 100,000
•	AANA Annual Meeting (Aug. 2015)	\$ 82,500
•	AANA Annual Meeting Sponsorships (Sept. 2014)	\$ 68,000
•	Military personnel attendance at the ASF	\$ 23,000
•	American Board of Nursing Specialties (ABNS)	\$ 15,000
•	Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE)	\$ 10,000
•	COA (ASF Reception and Program Administrator's Workshop)	\$ 7,100

NBCRNA Board of Directors

CRNA directors are highlighted in red.



President

Edward Waters, DNP, CRNA

Ed practices clinical anesthesia at the Kaiser Foundation Hospital in Woodland Hills, CA and has 16 years of experience in the nurse anesthesia profession. He is also an academic and clinical educator at the Kaiser Permanente School of Anesthesia in Pasadena.



Vice President

Steve Wooden, DNP, CRNA, NSPM-C

Steve is a managing partner of Boone County Anesthesia Services, LLC, a private practice anesthesia group in East Central Nebraska. He has 30 years of experience in the nurse anesthesia profession.



Secretary - Treasurer

Mary Golinski, PhD, CRNA

Mary is Assistant Professor at Oakland University in Rochester Hills, MI and the Assistant Program Director for the Oakland University Beaumont Graduate Program of Nurse Anesthesia. She is an active practicing CRNA for two level one trauma hospitals in the Detroit metropolitan area.



Director

Joseph L. Fink, III, JD

Joseph is the Public Member of the NBCRNA Board. He holds membership in the American Health Lawyers Association as well as the Health Law Section of the American Bar Association. He previously served as the Public Member of the Council on Recertification from 1993-1999.



Director

Robert Hawkins, PhD, DNP, MS, MBA, CRNA

Robert is a nurse anesthesia educator and has served in various roles including clinical instructor, assistant program director and program director. He is a graduate of the Medical University of South Carolina (BSN), Webster University (MBA), Georgetown University (MS), and Rush University (DNP and PhD).



Director

Paul Jones, MD

Paul is the surgeon member of the NBCRNA Board. He currently serves as the Section Head of Pediatric Otolaryngology. Previously, he was Acting Chair, Assistant Dean of Rush Medical College. Dr. Jones is a recipient of the Leonard Tow Humanism in Medicine Award from Arnold P. Gold Foundation.



Director

Susan Rawson, MA, LNC, CRNA

Sue has 33 years of experience in the nurse anesthesia profession, including clinical practice in locations of high intensity patient care, delivering safe anesthesia care in level one trauma centers, community operating rooms, outpatient surgical facilities, endoscopy centers, interventional radiology departments and obstetrical suites.



Director

Charles Vacchiano, PhD, CRNA

Chuck has 28 years of experience in the nurse anesthesia profession. He is currently a member of the Duke University School of Nursing, Nurse Anesthesia Program faculty. Previously, he served 26 years in the U.S. Navy, and has worked as a practicing nurse anesthetist, educator, and researcher.



Director

Patricia Wirth, DNP, CRNA

Patty has 20 years of experience in the nurse anesthesia profession and is currently working as a practitioner at Sentara Princess Anne Hospital in Virginia Beach, VA. Previously, she served for 23 years in the U.S. Navy practicing as a nurse anesthetist, educator and administrator.



Director

Mary Wojnakowski, PhD, CRNA

Mary is an actively practicing anesthesia provider, educator, and researcher. She provides anesthesia services at Maricopa Medical Center, a level 1 trauma hospital and regional burn center, and Mayo Clinic Hospital. Mary is also on faculty at Midwestern University Arizona College of Osteopathic Medicine in Glendale, Arizona.



Director

Mark Zahniser, MD

Mark serves as the anesthesiologist representative on the NBCRNA board. He has been involved in OR anesthesia and critical care for his entire career. He currently works in the Department of Cardiac Anesthesia at Cleveland Clinic and is an Assistant Professor of Anesthesiology at the Cleveland Clinic Lerner College of Medicine.

Elections



In July 2015, NBCRNA President Ed Waters, NBCRNA Vice President Steve Wooden, and guest, AANA President-Elect Juan Quintana, greeted incoming/FY 2016 NBCRNA Board members at the new Board orientation. Pictured here from left: Ed Waters; Public Member Ed Susank; Juan Quintana; NBCRNA Certificant-Elected Director Pamela Chambers; Emerging Leader Maureen McCartney; Surgeon Member David Coffman; and Steve Wooden.

The NBCRNA Board of Directors is composed of: **nurse anesthetists** who hold the NBCRNA-issued CRNA credential and who are actively engaged in clinical practice or in research, teaching, or administration at a nurse anesthesia educational program; a **board-certified surgeon** and a **board-certified anesthesiologist**, both of whom have a current working relationship with nurse anesthetists; and a **representative of the public at large**.

Certificant-Elected Director

The NBCRNA held the first open election for a certificant elected Director. The process began in February 2015, when candidates submitted their applications to the NBCRNA. Based on the input of the NBCRNA and the AANA Boards of Directors, candidate interviews, and a review of the applications, three candidates were selected for the final ballot, which was presented for vote in June to currently certified and recertified nurse anesthetists.

As a result of the election process, **Pamela Chambers**, MSN, EJD, CRNA was elected as a Director to the NBCRNA Board. Her term began September 2015.

95% of those responding indicated that *they were satisfied with the election process.*

99% of those responding indicated that *the election process was easy.*

Board-Elected Directors

In addition to the certificant elected Director, three other Board positions were open:

David Coffman, DO, PhD, was elected as the new surgeon member Director.

Ed Susank was elected as the Public Member Director.

Maureen McCartney, DNP, CRNA was elected as the 2015-2016 Emerging Leader Fellow.

Preparing for a Second Election in 2016

Preparations are underway to hold another election in 2016 for a second Certificant-Elected Director to join the Board. By the end of FY 2015, the NBCRNA Board will include two Certificant-Elected Directors.

A Message from the CEO



Letter from Karen Plaus, PhD, CRNA, FAAN, CAE
NBCRNA Chief Executive Officer

Each year, the NBCRNA's Annual Report offers an opportunity to look back on the last 12 months and reflect on our accomplishments. Once again, I am inspired by the remarkable achievements attained as an organization.

Dr. Ed Waters and our 2014-2015 Board of Directors provided masterful leadership during a period of tremendous change and progress. I want to personally thank each of these individuals and the over sixty committee members for their countless hours of volunteer time. As a result of their expertise and dedication we are poised to have our strongest credential since the founding of the profession. In no small part, the work they championed enables us to launch the Continued Professional Certification (CPC) Program next year (2016), ensuring our certification credential remains abreast of changes in the technology, care management and the expectations of the patients our profession serves.

During this year the NBCRNA staff ensured the highest quality of service for nurse anesthetists. We recertified 21,106 nurse anesthetists for the 2015-2017 period, and initially certified more than 2,200 individuals. Our online surveys consistently document greater than 90% satisfaction with our service.

The NBCRNA staff has done a magnificent job supporting the emerging priorities of our Board. A new, voluntary subspecialty certification for nurse anesthetists in Nonsurgical Pain Management (NSPM-C) was introduced nine months ahead of schedule. NSPM-NBCRNA convened a panel of CRNAs and conducted a professional practice analysis to further prepare for the CPC examination. We established the first recognition process for the core modules — an important feature of the CPC Program.

Looking ahead, we will continue to pioneer new frontiers, establish lasting relationships and build new horizons for the future of the nurse anesthesia profession.

Advancing the Profession

Working with the AANA

Over this past year, new opportunities developed for coordination, collaboration, and communication between the AANA and the NBCRNA:

- Board members and staff from AANA are permanent liaisons to the NBCRNA Board of Directors and participate in those Board meetings.
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- AANA and NBCRNA staff are currently coordinating on topics related to operationalizing the CPC Program.
- The NBCRNA's CPC Chair acts as a liaison on behalf of the NBCRNA to the AANA CE Committee.
- The AANA Senior Director of Education and Professional Development and NBCRNA Chief Credentialing Officer are the points of contact for CE- and CPC-related issues.
- AANA and NBCRNA staff are collaborating on a communication plan to establish frequent and timely communication with nurse anesthetists about the CPC Program.

Also, during this year, the leadership from the AANA, NBCRNA, AANA Foundation, and COA, participated in a joint strategic planning session.

Item Writing Courses

The NBCRNA launched two online Item-Writing courses in June 2015 for program administrators and faculty. The courses, *Item Writing Theory and Practice Foundation*, and *Item Alternative Question Formats*, were granted AANA prior approval for CE credits. Upon completion of the Foundation course, 2.75 credits are awarded, and 1.0 credit is awarded for the Alternative Question Formats course. Nurse anesthesia program faculty are encouraged to take these free courses.

Major Grant for Health Services Research Announced

In August 2015, the AANA, AANA Foundation, and NBCRNA, announced that the NBCRNA provided a grant of \$1 million in support of health services research. The grant was provided to support the AANA Foundation's \$3 million research funding drive, announced during the 2015 Annual Congress.

Health services research examines the quality, cost, and access to healthcare related to anesthesia delivery. This research explores the relationship of social factors (i.e., location, ethnicity, gender), financing systems (i.e., Medicare, private Insurance), and organizational structures (i.e., anesthesia models) that impact the quality, cost, and access of anesthesia care. This is a significant opportunity to generate knowledge regarding the added value of CRNA practice within organized medicine, especially with the ongoing and increasing challenges to our profession while advancing the NBCRNA's mission related to patient safety and quality.



Certification

For FY 2015, a total of 2,983 candidates took the National Certification Examination (NCE) with an overall pass rate of 81%. This total includes both first-time and repeat NCE takers.

The total number of candidates who took the NCE and were certified during FY 2015 was 2,428.

A total of 3,277 Self-Evaluation Examinations (SEE) were administered in FY 2015.

A list of the newly certified CRNAs by state of residence is published monthly on the NBCRNA website.

Since the NBCRNA changed the passing standard January 1, 2014, there have been 3,502 first-time examinees, with an overall passing rate of 85.8%. More information on NCE and SEE performance and transcript data for FY 2015 is also available on the NBCRNA website.

Customer Service...

98% of NCE candidates agreed or strongly agreed that *NBCRNA staff answered their questions.*

National Certification Exam...

99% of NCE candidates reported being *satisfied with their testing experience.*



Recertification

For the 2015-2017 recertification period, the NBCRNA recertified 21,106 CRNAs. Nearly all certificants preferred recertifying online, since the process is both faster and more secure. For those certificants new to electronic recertification, the NBCRNA answered questions through a customer service email address and phone number, and produced video tutorials that walked certificants through the process at their own pace.

Innovations

On-Demand Printing of Recertification Cards

In 2015, the NBCRNA added the option for on-demand printing of recertification cards. The availability of on-demand printing of an electronic recertification card was introduced during the 2015-2017 recertification period with the goal of enhancing customer satisfaction, increasing efficiency in card delivery, and reducing costs. Individuals were given the option to log in to the NBCRNA website and print an electronic recertification card following notification of application approval, or to instead request that a card be printed and mailed to them. Approximately 77% of approved applicants chose the electronic option. However, to ensure customer satisfaction, the NBCRNA waived the duplicate card fee for individuals who initially had printed an electronic card, but subsequently wished to have a physical card mailed to them; 427 individuals requested the duplicate card.

Online Verification for State Boards of Nursing

Beginning in February 2015, the NBCRNA offered a new online verification system that significantly decreased the length of time for a state board of nursing to receive verification of a CNRA's credential, from days to a few hours. Since that time, the NBCRNA has provided 10,543 verifications to State Boards of Nursing.



97%* of respondents that contacted the NBCRNA indicated they received a ***timely response***.

95%* of respondents found the ***recertification process easy***.

97%* of respondents that accessed the NBCRNA website said the information was ***easy to locate***.

**respondents to the application survey*

Continued Professional Certification (CPC)

The CPC Program is a comprehensive continued certification program that has gone through a series of revisions over a four-year period as a direct result of interactions with the AANA, certificants, and other stakeholders. The CPC Program went through a third major revision during the fourth quarter of 2014. In addition to changes in terminology, the CPC Program start date was moved back to August 1, 2016 and the CPC Core Modules will be voluntary for the first four-year cycle.

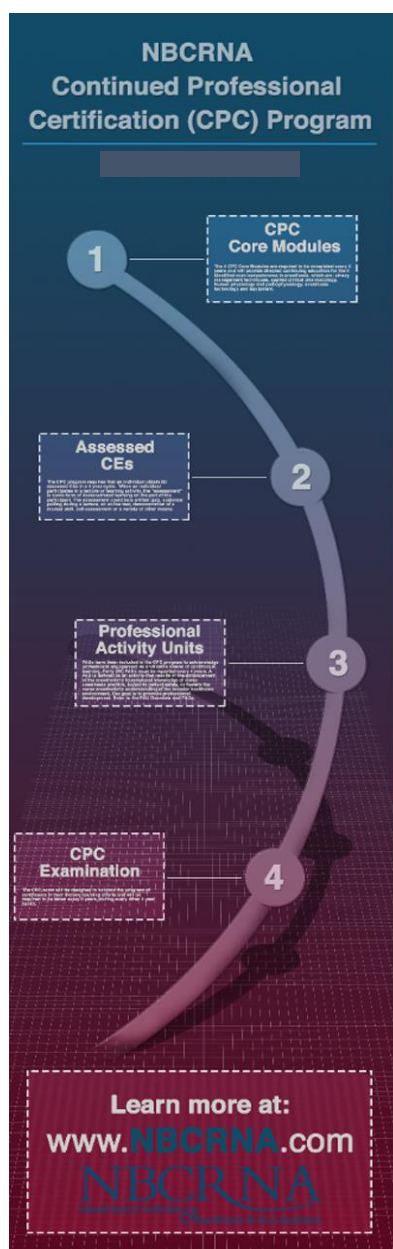
The rigor of the CPC Program does not solely lie in the Class A component or in the number of Class A credits earned. The multiple components of the CPC Program together establish a comprehensive and rigorous program that promotes professional development and lifelong learning, while providing some flexibility for individuals.

A total number of 100 credits are required over a four-year CPC cycle. During a four-year cycle, nurse anesthetists have the option to take *either* all Class A requirements *or* a combination of Class A and Class B requirements, as long as the minimum number of 60 Class A credits is earned. In addition, a broad range of professional development activities will satisfy the Class B requirements.

By including professional development activities (Class B requirements), the CPC Program supports the expanding role of advanced practice registered nurses in the future of healthcare delivery and leadership. The Class B requirement acknowledges the diversity of professional activities and experiences of nurse anesthetists, who are increasingly called upon to attain competencies beyond clinical knowledge and practice.

The Core Modules are optional for the first CPC cycle. Any modification of the Core Module requirement for the second cycle will be based on data gathered and evaluated by the NBCRNA and AANA during the first cycle. The Core Modules provide the nurse anesthetist with a way to become familiar with new evidence that informs their immediate practice and provides them with exposure to content that will likely move into standard texts within five years, and likely present on the CPC Examination.

The CPC Examination is not only a tool to measure knowledge, but it is an evaluative, needs assessment tool that provides insights into needed areas of study. Following the first administration of the CPC Examination, the NBCRNA will review testing methods and procedures, with input from the AANA and other stakeholders. This will help determine the testing regime for the second administration of the CPC Examination.





The Professional Practice Analysis Panel, May 2015

CPC Program Highlights

Second Professional Practice Analysis for the CPC Examination Conducted in May 2015

One of the initial steps in planning for a new credentialing examination is to conduct a professional practice analysis (PPA). The PPA is vital to maintaining an examination program that is relevant to the practice of nurse anesthesia and fair to examinees.

The first PPA for the CPC examination was conducted in 2008, and the results were used to help establish the content outline for the CPC examination. This outline reflects the knowledge that would be expected of all certified and recertified nurse anesthetists in clinical practice, regardless of practice focus.

In May 2015, the NBCRNA convened a new PPA panel of CRNAs to advise and oversee a follow-up PPA. The goal of this second PPA was to update and validate the existing examination content outline.

Work on the second PPA for the CPC examination was completed in August 2015.

Recognition Panels Begin Their Work on CPC Core Module Review

The NBCRNA conducted the first recognition process for submitted Core Modules. The NBCRNA recognition process included four separate panels of content experts, one for each module content areas.

The NBCRNA recognition process recognizes that the modules represent a product that has demonstrated an effort to evaluate and incorporate new evidence that informs practice and contains assessments that are cross-walked with the content and the vendor-selected objectives.

The accredited CE-approving organization (e.g. AANA) will approve the modules for use as continuing education using their established prior approval criteria.

NBCRNA on the Road; Communications on CPC Program Set to Expand

NBCRNA Board members and representatives attended 27 state association meetings in 2015, providing information and updates on the CPC Program. The participants provided feedback and questions, which were brought back to the NBCRNA Board. An expansive program of communication and outreach was announced at the 2015 AANA Annual Congress, and began following the meeting.

Liaisons Established Between AANA and NBCRNA

The AANA and NBCRNA have established liaisons through Board, Committee, and staff to provide ongoing dialogue and coordination on the CPC Program. As a result of these new liaison roles, there is greater communication and coordination, leading up to the August 2016 implementation of the CPC Program.

Subspecialty Certification: The Nonsurgical Pain Management Certification (NSPM-C)

The NBCRNA developed a new, voluntary subspecialty certification for nurse anesthetists in Nonsurgical Pain Management (NSPM-C). The NSPM credential program measures the knowledge, skills, and abilities of NBCRNA-certified registered nurse anesthetists for practice in the field of nonsurgical pain management.

Nonsurgical pain management is the management of acute and chronic pain outside the obstetrical and operating room. This would include the administration of neural or neuraxial blockade, physiological techniques, pharmacological modalities, and psychological techniques. This may include the assessment, planning, implementation, and evaluation of approaches to patient care.

Nurse anesthetists who are currently certified by the NBCRNA and meet other specified criteria are eligible to apply for NSPM certification. NSPM certification is time-limited and must be renewed.

Work on the NSPM certification began in early 2013 when a voluntary task force of CRNA experts was convened to provide input on the proposed eligibility criteria, test development process, and implementation timeline. Input on the draft requirements and eligibility criteria was solicited from the CRNA community, the COA, and the AANA, through formalized surveys, webinars, and during an open session of the 2013 AANA Annual Meeting. A professional practice analysis survey conducted in 2014 identified the most current information specific to CRNAs involved in the practice of nonsurgical pain management.

The start date for the NSPM program was moved up by nine months at the request of nurse anesthetists engaged in nonsurgical pain management. Three NSPM examinations were offered in 2015, with two planned annually going forward.



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Promoting patient safety by enhancing provider quality.



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