



NATIONAL BOARD FOR CERTIFICATION OF SCHOOL NURSES

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FALL 2014 NEWSLETTER

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President’s Message

by Sue Nokleby, MS, RN, LSN, NCSN, NBCSN President

Autumn is the season to complete projects and plan for the next year. Mary Oliver writes of Autumn as “how everything lives, shifting from one bright vision to another.” At NBCSN, we have succeeded in shifting in significant ways this year. NBCSN’s transition to Competency and Credentialing Institute (CCI) has been completed for management, examination processes and recertification.

Along with shifting services, the Board also participated in strategic planning during our summer meeting. NBCSN adopted a new vision and mission statement to guide our decisions. The purpose of a vision statement is to create a picture of what the organization wants to achieve. It should be brief and memorable. Leaders will change, but the vision should serve as the “North Star,” as a guide to the NBCSN’s future. “A nationally certified school nurse will safeguard the health of every student so as to optimize learning and promote healthy communities.” The focus of NBCSN for nationally certified school nurses is on the student and community.



Sue Nokleby

So how do we achieve that vision? That is the purpose of the mission statement. The mission defines the present state or purpose of the organization by identifying what it does, who it is for, and how it does it. “The Mission of the National Board for Certification of School Nurses, Inc. (NBCSN) is to advance the health and learning of students, and wellness of the school community, through a rigorous national certification process for school nurses” fulfills the definitions of a mission statement.

NBCSN established four goals to achieve this mission.

Goal 1: Establish an effective governance model to promote organizational sustainability and growth. NBCSN is moving towards a strategic board with NCSNs involved in committees such as examination development, outreach/marketing and financial.

Goal 2: Elevate the value of school nurse certification so that it is embraced by stakeholders. NBCSN would like NCSNs to be valued by schools, school nurses, students, families and communities. The Institute of Medicine Report on Nursing calls for nurses to be nationally certified in their specialty.

Goal 3: Ensure the ongoing credibility and validity of NBCSN’s credentialing program. Through our accreditation with the Accreditation Board of Specialty Nursing Certification (ABSNC) and membership in the American Board of Nurse Specialties (ABNS), NBCSN continually improves our organization to meet the standards of ABSNC.

Goal 4: Investigate the feasibility of expanding NBCSN’s portfolio of offerings. Other nursing credentialing organizations offer specialties either for allied and/or advance practice staff. NBCSN explored the possibility of future offerings. One newly approved status is that of an Emeritus for retired NCSNs. The process for this status has yet to be developed.

NBCSN has used financial reserves to achieve shifting from one management/examination company to another and to improve services for our NCSNs, but we are still financially sound. Many NCSNs have already been recertified through our new online system. NCSN liaisons will find new resources to help market national certification in their individual states. New testing sites and customer service changes will be noted as improvements by many. Other changes will be experienced by NCSNs and potential candidates as we shift to our new bright vision.

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Recognition and Awards

2014 President Recognition Award

School Health Corporation (SHC) was the recipient of the President Recognition Award on June 27 at the NBCNS reception, for their support of national school nurse certification through the SHC Advantage Program. Sue and Rob Rogers accepted the award for SHC.

When SHC was approached about using the Advantage points for payment toward the NCSN examination and recertification fees, their response was positive - "Let's do it." Advantage points already were available for use for professional development, such as National Association of School Nurses (NASN) membership and conference fees. Financial arrangements were made with the NBCSN management company to allow for payment using Advantage points and these are currently being accepted by NBCSN toward payment of fees associated with both initial certification and recertification applications.

NCSN of the year 2014



Sue Nokleby presents Donnis Harris, MS, RN, NCSN, with the NCSN of the Year Award

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NCSN Liaison of the Year 2014

Mary Norton, BSN, MEd, RN, NCSN is the 2014 recipient of the NCSN Liaison of the Year Award. Mary has been working as a school nurse for 22 years in Dayton, OH. She has been an NCSN for 14 years and served as NCSN Liaison from OH for the past four years.

She states that the best ways to promote certification are with poster or oral presentations at state-wide conferences. She has created a powerpoint presentation she is willing to share with all state liaisons! The other strategy she has found effective is facilitating informal study groups, inviting school nurses to meet at local restaurants (Panera Bread is a favorite!).

In accepting her award, Mary challenged all NCSNs to talk with one another about the value of national certification. She encourages school nurses to share their stories about why they spent time, money, long hours and overcame other obstacles in preparing for the exam? The NCSN trademark is the GOLD STANDARD of a school nurse's expertise and knowledge, and it should be spoken of proudly!



*Mary Norton
State Liaison of the Year*

New in 2015 – Three NCSN Testing Windows!

NBCSN is expanding their NCSN testing for 2015.

February 22 through March 7

July 12 through August 1

October 18 through October 31st

*Let your friends know now
so that they can be ready to sign up in 2015.*

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What's Happening at NBCSN

Customer Service That Counts

The change in NBCSN's management company has taken customer service to a new level.

The new management company, Competency & Credentialing Institute (CCI), has dedicated customer service personnel to attend to the general certification and recertification needs of NCSNs, and specialized support for volunteers, state liaisons and Board members. No doubt that if you offer volunteer services or support your local and state activities through the state liaison program, you'll meet Renee Birt, CCI volunteer and events manager. Renee offers her professional and personable services to help coordinate any of the activities that you are involved with through NBCSN. Renee's goal is to make your volunteer activity meaningful and satisfying as you help NBCSN elevate the role of school nursing through NCSN certification.

With the implementation of a new online exam and recertification system, you may need to contact CCI's customer service team. This team of experts is available M-F, 8:00 am through 4:00 pm MT. From simple things like "what is my user name and password" to "how to enter CEs for recertification," the customer service team is available to assist you. To contact customer service call toll free 844-808-6276 or email certification@NBCSN.org. Of course you

can always visit the website www.NBCSN.org for more information and to access your account.

The customer service team encourages all NCSNs to login to the new online system to validate contact and account information. This helps us keep in touch with you and to send important reminders about your certification. Check it out today and don't hesitate to contact the customer service team if you have any questions.



Renee Birt



Gary Schmidt

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Marketing the NCSN Standard

by Cynthia Gilcrest BA, MA Public Member, NBCSN

For the first time, NBCSN had a presence in the exhibit hall at the National Association of School Nurses' (NASN's) annual conference held in San Antonio last June. The booth was manned by members of the Board, including the President, Susan Nokleby and Executive Director, Nadine Schwab. NBCSN recognizes and thanks NASN and Sage Publishing for making possible its presence in the Exhibit Hall.

The booth was active throughout the day with visitors who were current members of NCSN and school nurses who were interested in becoming an NCSN. The board fielded questions on both the certification and recertification processes. Many school nurses interested in obtaining the NCSN credential wanted to know how to prepare for the test, if NBCSN recommends any particular materials to use in preparing for the test, and if they were eligible to take the test. Current NCSNs asked about the recertification process and Board members were able to explain the new online system for recertifying. A few NCSNs who had already used the new online recertification program had wonderful things to say about it.

We had 211 nurses visit. 150 of the nurses were not NCSNs, and 61 were already credentialed. We had wonderful conversation with nurses from all over the country and some international nurses as well. It was exciting to be in the hall, meeting new and old friends.

In addition to providing information about the NCSN credentialing process, we raffled a Kindle Fire Tablet. The winner was MiYoung Cho, who works in an elementary school in South Korea and had interesting information to share with us.

We will be reaching out to the 150 nurses who stopped by the booth to ask questions and are not yet NCSNs. Valuing the conversations that Board members had with each of the school nurses who visited the booth this year, the entire board agrees that NBCSN should have a booth at the 2015 National Conference for School Nurses.



Sue Nokleby (l) with MiYoung Cho (r)

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NBCSN – Transitions and Operations

by Nadine Schwab, MPH, BSN, RN, NCSN, FNASN, Executive Director

By now most of you know about NBCSN's new partner, the Competency and Credentialing Institute (CCI) and our new home office in Denver. CCI provides NBCSN with management services as well as access to new testing and technology providers. We decided to partner with CCI in December, 2013 and began our transition in January, 2014. In February, our management services transitioned to CCI, including financial and customer service functions; by May our new online recertification process was running, and the recertification program was fully transferred by June when the last NCSNs recertified by the old paper system.

The final phase of transition entails our examination services, including exam development, administration and evaluation (analysis). The transition is twofold. The first part, administration and analysis of the 2014 exams, was completed through NBCSN's prior testing company in September, fully discharging all obligations of both parties under the old testing contract.

The second part of the exam services transition, planning and implementing test development processes for the 2015 examinations, started in early spring. All functions related to test development, administration and evaluation for the 2015 exams and beyond, are being decided by NBCSN in collaboration with CCI and Prometric, CCI's expert testing partner. A major change in the exam development process for 2015 is the inclusion of many more volunteer NCSNs in each stage of development. See the report of Martha Dewey Bergren, Chair of NBCSN's Exam Development Committee, for more details on this complex and challenging process. And let us know if you are interested in volunteering in 2015 — we'd be happy to speak with you!

What do these systems and operational changes mean for NCSNs, prospective NCSN candidates, and even other stakeholders such as students, families and school administrators? The benefits include:

- Improved customer service.
- An online recertification program allowing NCSNs to go into their account, update their contact information, add continuing education activities as they are earned, and apply for recertification from six months before up to their actual five-year anniversary date.

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- A new, user-friendly online application process for candidates getting ready to take the NCSN exam.
- Implementation of best practices in test development, administration and evaluation.
- New and improved exam administration sites.
- More flexibility in exam scheduling.
- Expanded opportunities for NCSNs to contribute to NBCSN activities and accomplishments, including increased input into the exam development process.
- A website with up-to-date and accurate information, including an option for school administrators to check on the certification status of its school nurses.
- A new strategic communications plan and outreach activities to promote recognition of the NCSN credential and its value for students, schools and communities.
- A new financial accounting system with robust reporting and budget planning capacity.
- Enhanced management services enabling the Board to embrace a strategic leadership model and better position itself to meet the future credentialing needs of school nurses and potentially other health services personnel working in school districts.

It is important to note that NBCSN has significantly dipped into its financial assets to support this transitional year. The good news is that the Board had the reserves available to make the decisions it did, and NBCSN remains financially sound. See the report of Amy Quesinberry, Treasurer, for more information on finances.

NBCSN welcomes you to call us at 844.808.6276 (toll free) to:

- ask a question
- give feedback on our services
- share a concern
- obtain the password for your new NCSN online account to track your CE activities and recertify
- volunteer to work on an NBCSN committee (more information to come on our website)



Sue Nokleby (l) and Nadine Schwab

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Nursing News

New Evidence Shows Impact of BSNs on Patient Outcomes and Healthcare Costs

New research published in the October 2014 issue of the *Journal Medical Care* illustrates the positive impact a higher proportion of baccalaureate-prepared nurses (BSNs) would have on patient outcomes and lowering healthcare costs. In the study titled “Economic Evaluation of the 80% Baccalaureate Nurse Workforce Recommendation,” researcher Olga Yakusheva from the University of Michigan and her colleagues from the University of Colorado and Marquette University found:

- A 10% increase in the proportion of BSNs on hospital units was associated with lowering the odds of mortality by 10.9%.
- Increasing the amount of care provided by BSNs to 80% would result in significantly lower readmission rates and shorter lengths of stay. This would translate into cost savings that would more than off-set expenses for increasing the number of BSNs in hospital settings.

The current issue of *Medical Care* also features an editorial by Dr. Linda Aiken, whose groundbreaking research has focused on uncovering the connection between nursing education and outcomes, in which she responds to the new article by saying: “The study’s findings of a business case supporting an 80% BSN nurse workforce should serve as a catalyst to hasten a transition that has been a long time in the making and remains in the public’s interest.” To access this new research, see www.nbcsn.org/medicalcare.

For more details on the growing body of evidence linking nurse education and outcomes – including the latest research from *International Journal of Nursing Studies* which shows that 10% increase in BSN nurses is associated with a 9% decrease in patient deaths in South Korean hospitals – see AACN’s fact sheet on *Creating a More Highly Qualified Nursing Workforce*: www.nbcsn.org/aacn.

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Institute of Medicine's Future Directions of Credentialing Research in Nursing: A Workshop

by Martha Dewey Bergren, DNS, RN, NCSN, APHN-BC, FNASN, FASHA, CFAAN, NBCSN

NBCSN was a sponsor for the Institute of Medicine's Future Directions of Credentialing Research in Nursing: A Workshop on September 3- 4, 2014. Martha Bergren represented NBCSN at the workshop. The workshop purpose was to bring together participants with multiple perspectives in order to explore a framework and research agenda to evaluate the impacts of nurse credentialing, with an emphasis on nurse and patient outcomes.

Some of the key points shared at the workshop:

- Workplaces with a critical mass of certified nurses increases the quality of care delivered by all.
- Initial research must describe: who gets certified, where, what settings they work in, why did they certify, where are the certified dense environments?
- One advantage in researching credentialing in school nursing is the school nurse is often a constant provider with a set of clients, not confounded by many providers across shifts.
- All organizations must use core data elements across specialties and settings and all systems should be interoperable.
- Process data is as important as outcome data. However, nurses must do better at documenting everything they do.
- Dr. Kathleen Gallo, Chief Learning Officer at Long Island Jewish, tells nurses who complain that their workplace does not reward certification, "Don't let your employer be in charge of your professionalism." Overwhelmingly nurses become certified for the intrinsic value, not because of incentives.
- Partnerships between academic colleges of nursing, the medical centers (in the case of school nursing, data from schools), and certification organizations and certification organizations should be promoting the use of their data sets for research.

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- Several goals were set:
 - Funding
 - Increase the level of analysis using superior analytic statistical modeling
 - Establish Endowed chairs of nursing to study credentialing
 - Increase accessibility of the data
 - Improve the structure of the data (common elements)
 - Decrease the cost of the data and analysis through the agreement to collect common data points

The final report of the workshop will come out soon. A link to the report will be shared in the next newsletter.

Were you due to recertify your NCSN in August this year and missed the deadline?

Did you know that you can still complete your online recertification application before the end of the year?

You can recertify your NCSN credential up to 90 days past your recertification date with a \$100 late fee. Login in your account now and complete your application.

Don't let 2014 be the year you didn't renew!

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NCSN Leadership

New Board Member

by Beth Matthey, MSN, RN, NCSN, President-elect, National Association of School Nurses

As President-elect of the National Association of School Nurses, I am pleased to join the NBCSN board as the liaison member. NASN has a strong history of encouraging school nurses to earn the NCSN designation as a standard of excellence in school nursing practice.

I took the NCSN exam in 1990 when I was a new school nurse in an elementary school, at the encouragement of a fellow school nurse. We studied together and were happy when we both became nationally certified school nurses. I am now in my 28th year of school nursing, and for the past 14 years I have been the school nurse at Mt. Pleasant High School in the Brandywine School District in Wilmington, Delaware. I am a past board member of NASN and past president of the Delaware School Nurse Association.

I consider myself a life-long learner and studying for the NCSN exam at the beginning of my school nursing career set the stage for future personal and professional growth. Achieving the NCSN designation shows a commitment to professional learning and I hope you will encourage your peers, just as my friend encouraged me 24 years ago, to earn the NCSN designation. Students, parents and administrators appreciate the validation of competency that the NCSN credential conveys.

I look forward to my term with NBCSN and am excited to be the NASN liaison, working with a remarkable team of professionals committed to advancing the practice of school nursing.



Beth Matthey

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Exam Committee Update

by Martha Dewey Bergren

One of the main purposes of NBCSN is to create a reliable and valid examination to measure the knowledge needed to practice competently. NBCSN is enhancing the robustness of the examination development process by recruiting volunteers to work on the NBCSN Examination Committee and the National Expert Panels. NBCSN and its management company, CCI, work diligently to make the committees representative of the broad practice of school nurses. A wide range of characteristics are sought for the pool of NCSN volunteers. The various examination construction stages require a range of expertise and experiences from NCSNs who have recently earned certification with few years in school nursing to those who are experts in the specialty practice.

The National Content Experts assist NBCSN, CCI (a certification management company), and Prometric (the exam construction company), in constructing the examination. The National Content Expert Panelists may be asked to assist in one or more phases of the text construction: item writing, item review, form review and cut score determination. Prometrics' psychometricians and test construction experts lead all of the test construction and review activities. Although the names of the National Expert Content Panelists are not a secret, NBCSN refrains from publishing the names as a security measure.

Fourteen National Content Experts met on June 27th in San Antonio Texas for an all-day session to construct examination questions. The Prometrics instructor held a webinar a week prior to the meeting. On the item writing day, she reviewed the tenets of item construction. The NBCSN exam covers 5 domains: Health Appraisal; Health Problems and Nursing Management; Health Promotion/Disease Prevention; Special Health Issues' and Professional Issues. The panelists were each assigned one or more domains for the items they were to construct. Each panelist produces 15 exam items using an online web interface. If 15 items were not completed during the session, the panelists uploaded the remaining items remotely over the following 6 weeks. In all, the Panel authored 210 items. We thank them for their hard work.

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Other National Content Expert Panels will convene to review the quality of the items and review the test forms, and to provide data that assists the psychometricians to determine the cut score or passing score.

Please consider becoming a volunteer. No background in testing or test construction is desired or necessary. NBCSN needs school nurses from a wide range of care delivery models, settings, ratios who serve any of the student age ranges from all over the United States.

Please direct any questions about the National Expert Panels to Martha Bergren, Chair of the NBCSN Examination Committee. To volunteer to serve your subspeciality on a National Expert Content Panel, please go to the NBCSN website, www.nbcfn.org/volunteer and fill out of volunteer form.



The Item Review Committee

The Treasurer's Report

Moving into a new partnership with the Competency and Credentialing Institute (CCI), of Denver, Colorado, this year has been positive and effective with changes to our management, examination and certification services. In moving toward improving services, the Board anticipated an increase to the operating expenses during this transition.

We are very pleased with CCI's financial analysis, record keeping and reports they share with the Board each month. One change to our accounting processes is going from a cash based accounting system to an accrual accounting system. This will provide financial assessment in

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real time. We have also appointed a finance committee to help oversee the budget. This has been very helpful to the Board.

NBCSNs revenue is from fees collected for the Certification Exam, Re-Certification by Continuing Education, and the Online Practice Test. As the last examination fee and recertification fee increase was seven years ago, a decision was made to increase the rate for the certification exam and recertification to help with the increase of expenses. Effective July 1, 2014, the fee for recertification increased from \$225 to \$240. At the same time, the fee for certification exam increased from \$325 to \$350. The increased fee goes into effect for the 2015 exams.

Most of the Board's expenses are due to the development and administration of tests and the processing of applications for certification and recertification. This includes an increase in volunteer participation in the exam development process. The Board has and continues to increase our revenue by promotion of national certification while being mindful of expenses by continuing to look for ways to both improve services for NCSNs and decrease expenses.

2014 June NBCSN Meeting Report

by Sue Nokleby

Amy Quesinberry, Sandi Delack, Katie Johnson and Cyndy Gilchrist were officially welcomed to the board. Amy, Sandi and Katie filled NCSN positions. Cyndy, who has worked in schools in special education and as an administrator, has joined the board as our public member.

Gary Schmidt from CCI reported to NBCSN with the transition updates including the financial reports, examination development, and recertification process.

During the unfinished business, the board discussed the need to review and revise the bylaws and the policy and procedures. Details of the financial and examination committees and potential members were shared. Plans for the NBCSN vendor booth at the NASN conference and how to support the liaisons at their state conferences were discussed. The new table display was shown and the board voted to have two of them available for liaisons to promote national certification.

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Based upon our strategic plan, NBCSN revised the mission and vision statements. The new mission is: The Mission of the National Board for Certification of School Nurses, Inc. (NBCSN) is to advance the health and learning of students, and wellness of the school community, through a rigorous national certification process for school nurses. The Vision is: A nationally certified school nurse will safeguard the health of every student so as to optimize learning and promote healthy communities.

Requirements for sitting for the NCSN examination generated an interesting discussion. Based upon the recommendations of the Institute of Medicine (IOM) report that nursing education should be at the baccalaureate level and above with a strong recommendation for certification, the board determined that by 2020 the minimum requirement for the examination would be a baccalaureate or masters degree in nursing. Until 2020, in order to be eligible for the examination, RNs with a health related degree would need six extra credits from the following areas:

- Management of primary health care problems of children and/or adolescents
- Health assessment of children and/ or adolescents
- Public health/community health/epidemiology

A leadership succession committee was formed to examine different models of board leadership and make recommendations on the structure of the officer positions along with suggestions of candidates for upcoming opening positions.

Gary Schmidt (CCI) shared a model for recertification, which included an Emeritus status for NCSNs who have retired yet valued their NCSN status. This motion passed, but the details of the Emeritus status still need to be developed.

Motions passed include:

- As of 2020, eligibility to take NCSN exam requirement to a BSN or masters in nursing.
- Remove the requirement of NASN membership from eligibility requirements for NBCSN Board of Directors.
- Change the practice of a \$500 stipend to reimbursing expenses for exam related volunteer committees for travel and lodging.

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- Adopt revised proposed recertification payment options.
- Adopt new Vision and Mission statements.
- Purchase an additional display board for the Liaisons to use at local events.
- Fund attendance at the IOM Future of Nursing Certification Research meeting.
- The following recommendations to be sent to CCI for a change in the exam period to include three two week exam windows in February/ March, July/ August and October — pending Prometric’s (the testing company) ability to change for the next year.

Save the date

Join NBCSN and NASN in Philadelphia!

2015 NASN Conference

Philadelphia, PA

June 24-27, 2015



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