



Certification Toolkit

Support Nurses through Board Certification

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Dear Colleague:

Welcome to the American Board of Neuroscience Nursing (ABNN) Certification Toolkit!

The purpose of this toolkit is to provide the information necessary to make the case for certification to executive leadership, such as Chief Nurse Officers or chief administrative officers. The information provided includes education about the benefits of certification and justification for investment of budget dollars to support the development of nurses through certification. Planning for increasing certification in your organization may be based on long term goals as part of a Magnet framework, increased professionalism, nurse retention and satisfaction.

Certification in any field is a mark of professionalism. Over the last few decades, it has become increasingly clear that nursing certification advances the profession of nursing by encouraging and recognizing professional achievement. There are now well over 800,000 nurses certified by the American Board of Nursing Specialties, and this number increases significantly each year. ([*Impact of Nursing Certification on nurses, healthcare employers, and patients. Relias White Paper*](#))

Certification will distinguish you among your colleagues, facilitates a sense of professional accomplishment, and is Magnet-recognized. The purpose of certification in neuroscience and stroke nursing is to promote excellence and professionalism as well as provide assurance to healthcare employers and the public that individuals possess the necessary skills, knowledge, and experience in neuroscience and stroke care to perform competently.

About ABNN

Our Goal

To recognize Neuroscience Specialty Certifications as the Standard of Care based on work by ABNN.

Who We Are

The American Board of Neuroscience Nursing (ABNN) is the independent, not-for-profit corporation established to design, implement, and evaluate a certification program for professional nurses involved in the specialty practice of neuroscience nursing and its subspecialties.

Our Role in Certification

ABNN is solely responsible for the development, administration, and evaluation of the [Certified Neuroscience Registered Nurse \(CNRN[®]\)](#) and [Stroke Certified Registered Nurse \(SCRN[®]\)](#) certification and recertification programs.

Certification provides a path for nurses to demonstrate specialty knowledge and expertise in clinical practice and as role models to others. This is accomplished through specialized scientifically developed exams incorporating neuroscience nursing clinical practice. The examination outlines are based on periodic job analysis or role delineation studies that identify the knowledge and experiences required of a practicing neuroscience or stroke nurse.

Our Mission and Vision

ABNN's mission is to promote and advance the practice of neuroscience nursing through specialty certification. ABNN's vision is that every person with neurological health needs receives care from ABNN certified registered nurses.

Our Purpose

- Encourage the study of neuroscience nursing
- Promote and advance the practice of neuroscience nursing through specialty certification
- Determine minimum requirements for individuals who seek certification in neuroscience nursing and its subspecialties
- Conduct examinations for certification of qualified candidates
- Provide a mechanism for recertification in neuroscience nursing and its subspecialties.



ABNN offers 2 certification exams: Certified Neuroscience Registered Nurse (CNRN) and Stroke Certified Registered Nurse (SCRN).

Benefits of Specialty Certification

- Professional recognition and credibility
- Distinction in the Neuroscience and Stroke specialty
- Supports career advancement and increased professional opportunities
- Benefits hospital Magnet and Magnet framework
- CNRN and SCRN certification are effective for a period of 5 years.



CNRN Certification

Earned and maintained by more than 4,700 nurses, the Certified Neuroscience Registered Nurse (CNRN®) credential represents specialized experience and knowledge in the care of patients with neurological trauma and illness. The CNRN examination is composed of 220 focused and in-depth questions representing specialized experience and knowledge in the care of patients within the specific neurological domain areas below:

- Trauma
- Cerebrovascular
- Tumors
- Infection and Immune Complications
- Neurodevelopmental Conditions
- Neurological Disorders



SCRN Certification

Earned and maintained by more than 5,500 nurses, the Stroke Certified Registered Nurse (SCRN®) credential formally recognizes the attainment and demonstration of a unique body of knowledge necessary for the practice of stroke nursing. The SCRN examination is composed of 170 focused and in-depth questions representing specialized experience and knowledge in the care of patients within the specific stroke domain areas below:

- Anatomy, Physiology, and Etiology of Stroke
- Hyperacute Care
- Acute Care
- Postacute Care
- Primary and Secondary Preventative Care

Accreditation

The CNRN and SCRN certification programs are accredited by the Accreditation Board for Specialty Nursing Certification (ABSNC), the only nationally recognized accrediting body for specialty nursing certification programs. [ABSNC accreditation](#) is a peer-review mechanism that allows nursing certification organizations to obtain accreditation by demonstrating compliance with the highest quality standards available in the industry. The CNRN and SCRN are also Magnet-recognized.



The demanding and competitive healthcare environment creates ever-increasing challenges for healthcare institutions. Patients, staff, and the community evaluate your institution's commitment to excellence in nursing. By demonstrating your investment in and commitment to leading practice in neuroscience and stroke care, you bolster your institution's image and gain a competitive edge. Certification is a testament to the outstanding caliber of your nurses, promotes your commitment to neuroscience and stroke nursing, and makes your institution more attractive to prospective nurses. In addition, certification is an indicator of quality that will reassure patients. It also may aid in attaining and maintaining Magnet Status (as awarded by the American Nurses Credentialing Center [ANCC]) and Joint Commission Certification.

The value of certification extends beyond the individual nurse and will benefit the employer in significant ways. Encouraging your nurses to earn the CNRN and SCRN certification creates a valuable competitive edge for your institution.

[Click here](#) to read the white paper.

Recommendations/Resources for Nurse Leaders

- Define Certification Philosophy and Goals in your organization
- Designate Certification Champions in your organization
- Gain support of administrative colleagues as appropriate
- Share plan with Nurse Leaders to gain input and support
- Incorporate plan and input from Shared Governance or other Nurse councils
- Develop 3-5 year Certification and recertification plan and budget
- Plan campaign for nurses with collateral materials to support, encourage and champion Certification utilizing materials from ABNN website
- Provide resources from ABNN and AANN websites to support study
- CNO can recognize each applicant with letter of acknowledgment and encouragement
- Reward and recognize each Candidate (View a [sample congratulatory letter](#))
- [Reward](#) and recognize each nurse passing the exam, consider including CEO, Governing Board Members and CFO in celebrations

A Hospital-Based Neuroscience Nursing Course Designed to Improve Competence and Confidence

Lisa B.E. Shields, MD

Lewis Perkins, DNP, APRN, GNP-BC, NEA-BC

Lisa Clark, BSN, RN, CNRN

Christopher B. Shields, MD

After experiencing growth in a neuroscience service line, nurse leaders identified a need for increased competencies among clinical staff. This hospital met the need by developing a unique multidisciplinary neuroscience nursing course to improve the clinical competence, confidence, and professional development of bedside nurses.

[Click here](#) to read the article from *JONA: The Journal of Nursing Administration*.



Grants

The Agnes Marshall Walker Foundation (AMWF) believes that all nurses should have access to education and the opportunity for professional development. The following grants are offered by AMWF:

- Travel Grants to AANN Annual Meeting, AANN Stroke Care Conference, INNRS Conference – receive up to \$750 to use towards travel to the conferences
- CNRN or SCR N Certification Grants – receive funding to cover certification application fees.
- CNRN or SCR N Recertification Grants – receive funding to cover recertification application fees.
- Research Grant – receive funding for research projects that address clinical practice, educational, certification, or administrative dimensions of neuroscience nursing.

ABNN's Hospital Registration Program

ABNN's [Hospital Registration Program](#) is an employer program designed to help nurses earn certification for the neuroscience and stroke specialty. Having CNRN- and SCR N-certified nurses on your staff is an excellent way to demonstrate to patients and their families that your hospital provides expert care. And don't forget, the CNRN and SCR N certifications aren't only for the nurses at the bedside. Consultants, educators, researchers, chief nursing officers (CNOs), and other roles who hold a current, unrestricted RN licensure also are eligible to take the exams.

Here are key details about the program:

- There is no minimum number of nurses required to test per year.
- There is no cost for employers to join.
- Nurses can test with no out-of-pocket fee.
- Enrolled employers pay monthly exam invoices after the nurse takes the exam. The employer receives a \$100 discount for nurses who are unsuccessful in passing the examination.
- Nurses and employers receive free, ongoing program guidance to help promote the certifications.
- Enrolled employers also can receive group discounts on AANN's online Review Courses.

Sign up for ABNN's [Hospital Registration Program](#) today! Contact info@abnncertification.org to learn more and get started.

Over 150 nurses from 25 different hospitals participated in the first year of the Hospital Registration Program!

**Why should a nurse Certify?**

Certification is a process consisting of preparation, study and examination and it represents:

- Demonstration and validation of requisite neuroscience specialty knowledge beyond licensure.
- Privilege of the use of a nationally recognized Neuroscience or Stroke credential
- Demonstration of commitment to learning and the specialty of Neuroscience and Stroke Nursing
- Recognition in practice setting
- Recognized as a specialty certified nurse among other national nursing certification organizations through the American Board of Nursing Specialties

Recommendations/Resources for Nurses

- Certification Checklists – Print the certification checklists to help keep track of your progress towards certification and for a list of helpful day of exam reminders.
 - [CNRN Checklist](#)
 - [SCRN Checklist](#)
- [Sample letter](#) requesting support from supervisor or administrator
- Grants available for education and certification and/or recertification:
 - The [Agnes Marshall Walker Foundation \(AMWF\)](#) believes that all nurses should have access to education and the opportunity for professional development. The following grants are offered by AMWF:
 - Travel Grants to AANN Annual Meeting, AANN Stroke Care Conference, INNRS Conference – receive up to \$750 to use towards travel to the conferences
 - CNRN or SCRN Certification Grants – receive funding to cover certification application fees.
 - CNRN or SCRN Recertification Grants – receive funding to cover recertification application fees.
 - Research Grant – receive funding for research projects that address clinical practice, educational, certification, or administrative dimensions of neuroscience nursing.
- Preparation Material*
 - [Review Courses \(online\)](#)
 - Review Courses (live)
 - Join your [Local AANN Chapter](#) for opportunities for Live Review Courses!
 - CNRN Review Course – [AANN Annual Meeting](#)
 - SCRN Review Course – [AANN Advances in Stroke Care Conference](#)
 - [AANN Calendar of Events](#)
 - [CNRN Self-Assessment Exam](#)
 - [SCRN Self-Assessment Exam](#)
- [Recertification/CE](#)

**ABNN does not endorse any preparation material.*



Steps to Earning CNRN or SCRN Certification:

1. Earn RN licensure
2. Have 1 year (or 2,080 hours) of neuroscience or stroke nursing experience in the last 3 years (indirect or direct)
3. Select your examination window:
 - **CNRN** – March, July, October windows
 - **SCRN** – February, May, September windows
4. Complete an application for the CNRN or SCRN exam in your [Certification Center](#).
5. Prepare for the exam
6. Day of Exam:
 - a. Arrive on time
 - b. Bring two forms of identification, including one with a current photograph. View the Candidate Handbook for further instructions.
 - c. You will receive your pass/fail status at the testing site.
 - i. Certificates will be mailed to those who pass within 4-6 weeks of the examination date.
7. Celebrate your achievement with a CNRN or SCRN pin and plaque available for purchase on [ABNN's website](#).

ABNN's new Certification Center allows you to access your certification information.

In the Certification Center you can:

- Access your current CNRN and SCRN Applications
- Schedule your exams and/or view your upcoming exam date in your **Exam Details Widget**
- View your Certification History in your **Completed Certifications**
- View your Certificate Details and Expiration Date in your **Certification Widget**
- Request a **Certificate Reprint**
- View ABNN's latest news and updates
- View testimonials from your peers
- Look-up fellow certificants in the new [Certificant Directory](#)

[Log-In To the Certification Center](#)

SAMPLE Letter to Supervisor/Administrator

Fill in the information below to personalize and send to your Supervisor/Hospital Administrator to support CNRN or SCRN certification.

<FACILITY LETTERHEAD>

[DATE]

[CERTIFICANT'S ADDRESS]

Dear <Name>,

I am proud to announce that <INSERT NURSE NAME> has fulfilled the practice hour requirements and is eligible to apply for the <Certified Neuroscience Registered Nurse (CNRN)/Stroke Certified Registered Nurse (SCRN)> examination through the [American Board of Neuroscience Nursing](#) (ABNN)!

The demanding and competitive healthcare environment creates ever-increasing challenges for our healthcare institutions. Patients, staff, and the community evaluate our institution's commitment to excellence in nursing. Certification is a testament to the outstanding caliber of our nurses, promotes our commitment to neuroscience and stroke nursing, and makes our institution more attractive to prospective nurses. In addition, certification is an indicator of quality that will reassure patients. It also may aid in attaining and maintaining Magnet Status (as awarded by the American Nurses Credentialing Center [ANCC]) and Joint Commission Certification.

ABNN offers a [Hospital Registration Program](#) for facilities that provide support for nurses taking the [CNRN](#) or [SCRN](#) examinations with key details below that I believe our facility could benefit from:

- Nurses, consultants, educators, researchers, and anyone with a current, unrestricted RN licensure may be eligible to earn the CNRN or SCRN.
- There is no minimum number of nurses required to test per year.
- No out-of-pocket testing fee for nurses.
- Nurses and employers receive ongoing program guidance.
- Group discounts on AANN certification prep materials are available.
- Employers enroll for free!

The value of certification extends beyond the individual nurse. The certified nurse represents a commitment to excellence.

Thank you in advance for your continued support for professional development. Encouraging our nurses to earn the CNRN and SCRN certification creates a valuable competitive edge for our institution and we hope that you consider supporting this certification.

Sincerely,

NAME

TITLE

Cc: Nurse Applicants

SAMPLE Congratulatory Letter

Fill in the information below to personalize and send to your newly certified CNRNs or SCRNs.

<FACILITY LETTERHEAD>

[DATE]

[CERTIFICANT'S ADDRESS]

Dear <Name>,

Congratulations on your pursuit and achievement of the **<Certified Neuroscience Registered Nurse (CNRN)/Stroke Certified Registered Nurse (SCRN)>** credential through the American Board of Neuroscience Nursing (ABNN)! This achievement is valued and highly respected at <Facility>!

Your certification as a <CNRN/SCRN> is a major accomplishment and demonstrates your commitment to advancing your knowledge in this specialty and your dedication to the care of your patients.

I wish you continued success in your professional endeavors and thank you for your commitment to our organization and <neuroscience/stroke> nursing excellence.

Sincerely,

NAME

TITLE

Cc: Supervisors

<FACILITY FOOTER>