



News Release

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American Board of Nursing Specialties (ABNS) Issues Findings from the Value of Specialty Nursing Certification Study

AURORA, Ohio, May 2006 | The American Board of Nursing Specialties (ABNS) Research Committee has released the results of its Value of Specialty Nursing Certification Survey announced ABNS CEO Bonnie Niebuhr. The Executive Summary is now available on the ABNS – www.nursingcertification.org.

Since its founding in 1991, ABNS has worked to create uniformity in nursing certification and to increase public awareness of the value of quality certification. In response to the ABNS mission and priority research goals, the member organizations opted to undertake a study that would validate nurses' perceptions, values, and behaviors related to certification. In order to gather the information necessary on these issues, a survey was developed and disseminated to over 94,000 nurses, including certified and non-certified nurses and a subset of nurse managers.

The research study originated in the summer of 2004 when the ABNS Research Committee developed a draft of the Value of Certification Survey and the survey protocol. This survey incorporated the Perceived Value of Certification Tool[®] (PVCT), which was developed, validated and copyrighted by the Competency & Credentialing Institute (an ABNS member) in 2000-2001. The draft survey and protocol was presented to the ABNS membership for review and feedback. The Value of Certification Survey was hosted via the Internet by ABNS affiliate member, Professional Examination Service. ABNS applied for and received Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for the study.

Over 80% of the ABNS membership participated in the survey and provided a research sample of 94,768 participants which produced a 12.1% response rate. "Of the respondents, over 8,000 identified themselves as certified, almost 3,000 were non-certified nurses, and over 1,500 held the position of Nurse Manager, so we feel we had great coverage across the profession," Niebuhr added.

In all five areas that the ABNS study sought to examine, the results were noteworthy.

1. ***Perceptions of certified nurses, non-certified nurses and nurse managers on the value of certification*** – Using the Perceived Value of Certification Tool[®] (PVCT), certified and non-certified nurses show a high level of agreement with the value statements related to nursing certification.

Nurse Managers bolster these perceptions with their correspondingly high rate of agreement on the certification value statements.

2. ***Challenges and barriers to certification*** – For those nurses who had never been certified, the highest barriers to obtaining certification were the cost of the exams, the lack of institutional rewards, and the lack of institutional support.
3. ***Benefits and rewards for being certified*** – Nurse respondents noted many incentives that their organizations offer to promote and recognize certification, the top three being reimbursing exam fees, displaying certification credential on nametag and/or business cards, and reimbursing for continuing education.
4. ***Impact of certification on lost workdays*** – There was no difference in absences between certified and non-certified nurses.
5. ***Impact of certification on nurse retention*** – The results from this study do not provide a clear enough picture to determine whether certification status, the benefits and rewards offered by organizations to its certified nurses, or the challenges and barriers organizations present to certification have an impact on nurse retention rates.

“This study was a valuable examination of nursing certification issues from the perspective of over 11,000 nurse respondents, across 20 specialty organizations, representing 36 different certification credentials,” noted Bonnie Niebuhr, CEO of ABNS. “This study took an important step in furthering our understanding of nursing certification and the implications for health care organizations, nursing certification boards, and certified and non-certified nurses,” she added.

The Value of Nursing Specialty Certification Executive Summary is available on the ABNS website at www.nursingcertification.org.

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Editors Note:

The American Board of Nursing Specialties (ABNS) is a membership organization that maintains a national peer review program for nursing specialty certification. The mission of ABNS is to promote the value of specialty nursing certification to all stakeholders. Currently, twenty-seven ABNS Regular Member and one Associate Member Organizations represent nearly half a million specialty certified registered nurses. Its twelve Affiliate Members include providers of key certification-related testing products and services. One Public Member represents the consumer’s perspectives on issues about specialty nursing certification. For further information about ABNS, visit www.nursingcertification.org or email Bonnie Niebuhr, MS, RN, CAE, Chief Executive Officer, at ABNSCEO@aol.com.

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