



News Release

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St. Mary's Medical Center Receives National Award for Nursing Certification Advocacy

AURORA, Ohio, April 15, 2009 | The American Board of Nursing Specialties (ABNS) selected St. Mary's Medical Center in Evansville, IN as the recipient of the 2009 Award for Nursing Certification Advocacy. The award recognizes healthcare organizations, facilities or departments that are strong advocates of specialty nursing certification.

"ABNS has worked to create uniformity in nursing certification and to increase public awareness of the value of quality certification since its inception in 1991," Victoria Norton, Chair of the ABNS Awards and Recognition Committee, said. "We are honored to recognize St. Mary's Medical Center with this award not only for its support of specialty certification but also because they are strong proponents of professional development for all members of their nursing staff."

Of the 694 direct patient care RNs eligible for certification on St. Mary's staff, approximately 35 percent are certified. Nearly 75 percent of the nurse managers and 100 percent of the nursing executive leadership are certified. St. Mary's pays for certification fees for any eligible nurse who takes an exam to help encourage credentialing among all specialties.

"These are impressive numbers for any healthcare institution, but even more impressive is the strong focus and support the staff receives to become certified and continue their professional development," Norton, who made the award announcement during the ABNS Assembly Meeting in Ft. Lauderdale, FL in March, said.

The center's leadership promotes community building within the institution as a whole, but also within individual specialties by encouraging colleagues to form study groups to prepare for the exams. Additionally, nurses seeking certification receive first priority to attend national meetings where exams are offered.

“St. Mary's believes that specialty certification is a mark of excellence and is proud to promote certification among their nurses,” Suzanne Buchanan, RN, BSN, CGRN said. “Part of our nursing strategic plan for the past 3 years has been to promote professional development of staff nurses through specialty nursing certification.”

Recognizing nurses who earn a credential is another key element of St. Mary's long-term plan. Certified nurses receive monetary bonuses and are honored at annual dinners and with plaques throughout the institution's hallways.

St. Mary's nurses have also taken an active role in corresponding with legislators regarding various subjects related to providing high quality patient care. For example, St. Mary's Rehab sent letters to state and Federal representatives concerning the “Preserving Patient Access to Inpatient Rehabilitation Hospitals Act of 2005.” Staff has also testified to the State Legislature regarding development of a state trauma program, funding of trauma care, and graduated driving licensure.

Among the criteria necessary to win this award, the organization must document the total number of direct patient care RNs and nursing managers and the number and percentage who are certified in specialty nursing. Other criteria include how the organization supports those nurses interested in seeking certification. For more information on the requirements of the award, visit 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, 31 ABNS Regular Member represent nearly half a million specialty certified registered nurses. Its 11 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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