



News Release

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American Board of Nursing Specialties (ABNS) Publishes White Paper Detailing the Results of the Value of Specialty Nursing Certification Study

AURO RA, Ohio, December 2006 | The American Board of Nursing Specialties (ABNS) has published the findings of its *Nurses' Perceptions, Values, and Behaviors Research Study* announced ABNS CEO Bonnie Niebuhr. The entire white paper is now posted on the ABNS Web site – 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 certification. The ABNS organizational structure has two components – a Membership Assembly and an Accreditation Council. There are 28 specialty nursing certification organization regular members, one associate member, and 12 affiliate members of ABNS. The activities of ABNS are directed toward achieving its mission: to promote the value of specialty nursing certification to all its stakeholders.

To support its mission, ABNS undertook a strategic plan that focused on promoting the value of specialty nursing certification in a variety of ways, including serving as the authoritative voice and resource for specialty nursing certification, supporting accreditation of quality nursing certification programs, and promoting research activities to advance knowledge regarding specialty nursing certification. In 2005, the organization approved a position statement on “The Value of Specialty Certification.”

The research study originated in the summer of 2004 when the ABNS Research Committee developed a draft of the Value of Specialty Nursing 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.

“The ABNS Value of Specialty Nursing Certification Survey provided an unprecedented examination of nurses’ perceptions, values, and behaviors related to nursing specialty certification. With over 11,000 nurse respondents across 20 specialty nursing certification organizations that represented 36 different certification credentials, this study clearly documented the perceived value of certification among certified and non-certified nurses and nurse managers,” noted Bonnie Niebuhr. “Among the top perceived values, certification is perceived to enhance feelings of personal accomplishment, provide personal satisfaction and a professional challenge, enhance professional credibility, and provide evidence of professional commitment.”

Nurse managers’ ratings also indicate a high value placed on nursing certification. Managers are in an excellent position to support nurses in obtaining and maintaining specialty certification. Many nurses pursue certification for the important intrinsic values it brings. However, it is also incumbent on health care organizations to reduce barriers and offer recognition for certification as a worthwhile accomplishment. Employers and managers are encouraged to engage nurses in a dialogue to determine strategies to overcome identified barriers and offer appropriate incentives to certification. Nursing specialty organizations and boards of certification also play an important role in offering incentives and reducing the barriers identified in this study.

“This study took an important step in furthering our understanding of nursing certification and the implications for healthcare organizations, nursing certification boards, and certified and non-certified nurses,” she added.

The Value of Nursing Specialty Certification Executive Summary and White Paper can be found 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-eight 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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