
PERIOPERATIVE CERTIFIED NURSES CELEBRATE 20 YEARS OF SPECIALTY CERTIFICATION

Author:

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Certification provides a tangible distinction that confirms an RN has the specialty knowledge and skills for improved excellence in patient care.



Every year over 300 perioperative RNs across Canada step up to qualify, or maintain, their perioperative national certification designation. These RNs demonstrate to patients, employers and colleagues that they *Care to be the Best* in their specialty.

Specialty certification demonstrates a commitment to staying on the leading edge of national health-care standards. Certification provides a national scope for the principle of continued competence as encouraged by provincial and territorial quality assurance programs. Certification provides a tangible distinction that confirms an RN has the specialty knowledge and skills for improved excellence in patient care.

The inaugural CNA Perioperative Nursing Certification Exam took place in 1995 with 496 registered nurses passing the exam. Over 3,650 perioperative RNs have earned their national CPN(C) credential, in the 20 years since the first exam, and 1,555 still hold their certification!

Once CPN(C) certified your CNA certification credential is valid for a 5-year term. You have the option of

renewing the credential through the accumulation of 100 hours of continuous learning (CL) activities earned during the five-year term OR you can choose to write the exam again. The guidelines for the CL activities are pretty straightforward – it is most important to remember that your CL should relate to your nursing specialty in order to qualify as CL hours for your renewal. Details about the CL guidelines, and date of the next application period, are listed on the CNA website at getcertified.cna-aiic.ca.

Two recent studies demonstrate the positive impact of certification:

1. Schroeter, K. et al. (2012). The impact of certification on certified perioperative nurses: a qualitative descriptive survey. *ORNAC Journal*, (30)3: 35-46.

This study report describes perioperative nurses' perspective on certification, both professionally and personally. At the personal level, they mention having increased confidence, knowledge, pride and feelings of accomplishment and satisfaction. Professionally, they speak of receiving more credibility,

If you'd like assistance to decide on certification or to prepare for the exam there are CNA-certified perioperative colleagues are available to help.

respect and more opportunities for career advancement and being recognized as a resource for others.

2. Boyle, D. K. et al. (2014). The relationship between direct-care RN specialty certification and surgical patient outcomes. *AORN Journal*, 100: 511-528.

This study, conducted by the staff at the National Database of Nursing Quality Indicators and the University of Kansas, was sponsored by the Competency and Credentialing Institute. It found that units with higher rates of certified nurses were associated with significantly lower rates of central-line associated bloodstream infection in SICUs. Researchers were also able to assess the possible positive impact of specific specialty certification on surgical patient outcomes.

Did you know that certified nurses...

- choose to seek out certification to demonstrate expertise, knowledge and commitment;
- have gone beyond licensure to validate their specialty knowledge through a rigorous national

examination;

- are clinical experts dedicated to providing quality, evidenced-based clinical care;
- are shown to be committed to life-long learning, patient advocacy and professional practice;
- reassess their specialty knowledge throughout their career as part of their commitment to maintaining competency;
- maintain their specialty knowledge through specialized continuing education; and
- meet, or exceed, nationally recognized standards of proficiency and professionalism.

(certifiednurses.org – March, 2015)

Need help to decide or prepare?

If you'd like assistance to decide on certification or to prepare for the exam there are CNA-certified perioperative colleagues are available to help. Don't hesitate to consult them. These mentors volunteer their time to assist certification candidates because they really believe in the benefits of certification. See Table 1 for a list of CNA perioperative mentors.

Table 1

CNA Perioperative Mentors	
<p>Gabrielle DeBaie, RN, CPN(C) Banff, AB gdebaie@gmail.com</p>	<p>Sharon Asensi, RN, BScN, CPN(C) Toronto, ON sharonasensi@rogers.com</p>
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<p>Sarah Pelletier (Bilingual) Brighton, ON pelletiernfa@gmail.com</p>	