



OVERVIEW OF ANCC

Accreditation of Continuing Nursing Education

Recognizing the strength of continuing nursing education programs.

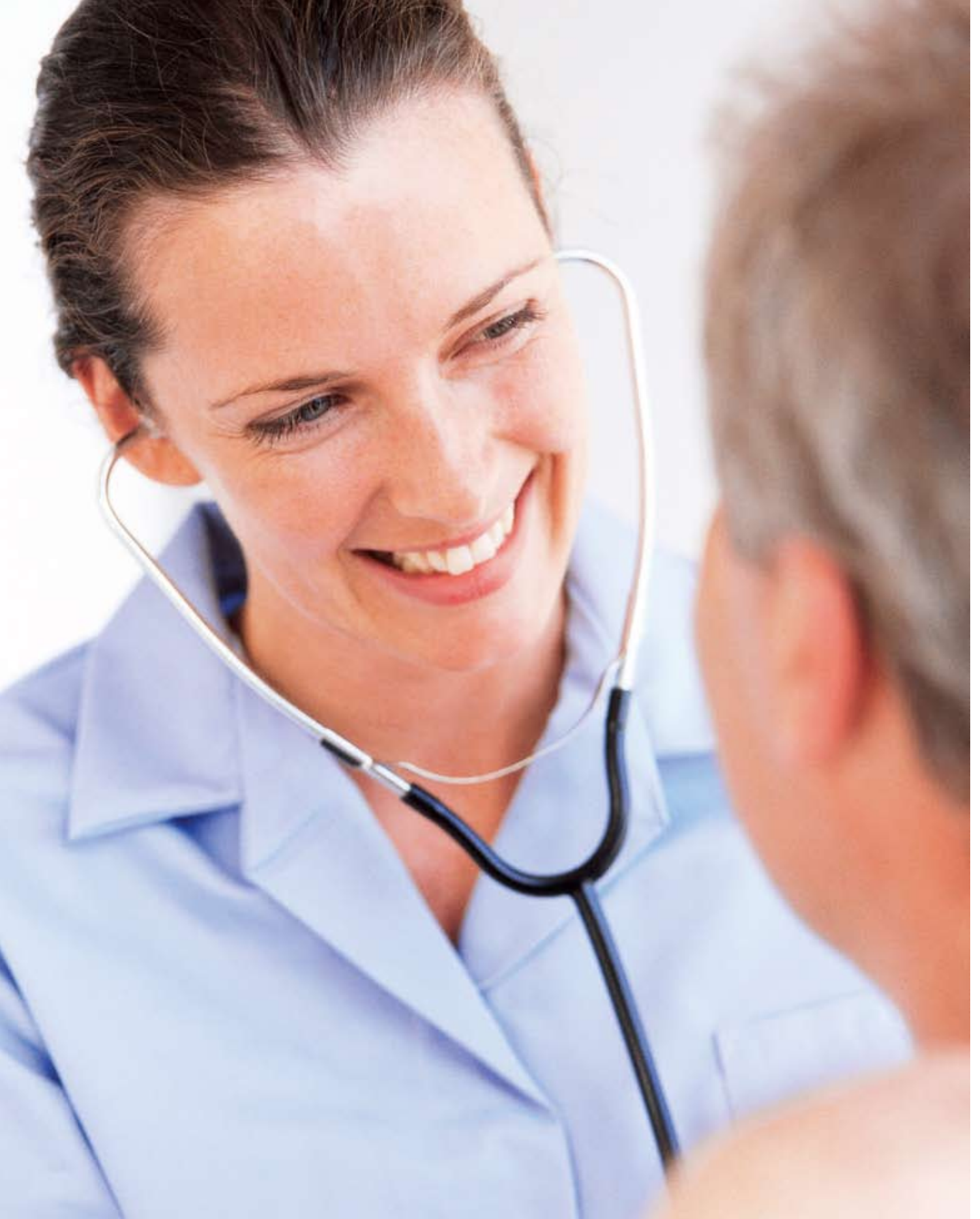


Visit www.nursecredentialing.org/accred to get more information about the ANCC Accreditation Program. >>

Accreditation of Continuing Nursing Education

In today's constantly changing healthcare environment, nurses must engage in a life-long process of active participation in continuing education activities. Most nurses need contact hours awarded for participation in continuing nursing education courses to maintain their certification or to meet re-licensure requirements. ANCC accreditation gives nurses assurance that they are choosing the highest caliber of continuing nursing education (CNE) available.

Contact hours are typically calculated according to the time continuing education participants spend in each educational activity. ANCC's Accreditation Program specifies a comprehensive set of educational design criteria to ensure that these activities are effectively planned, implemented, and evaluated according to educational standards and adult learning principles.



The American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) is the largest and most prestigious nurse credentialing organization in the United States. For more than 30 years, ANCC's Accreditation Program has contributed to healthcare quality and improvement by defining standards for high performance in continuing nursing education and measuring adherence to those standards.

What Is Accreditation?

Accreditation is a voluntary, peer review process intended to strengthen and sustain the quality and integrity of continuing nursing education, making it worthy of public confidence. Accrediting organizations assess educational programs to determine whether the content is designed to produce competent graduates and then offer accreditation to those programs meeting the accreditation standards.¹ ANCC-accredited providers have demonstrated a commitment to continuous improvement of their continuing nursing education programs. They adhere to rigorous standards for quality continuing education program design criteria and evaluation.

ANCC accreditation provides increased credibility for your continuing education program.

Why ANCC Accreditation?

- >> Increased credibility for the continuing nursing education program
- >> Demonstrated high standards of performance through adherence to objective national standards
- >> Increased organizational visibility among registered nurses
- >> Needed for more than a quarter million nurses to maintain ANCC certification
- >> Accepted by most state licensing boards for RN re-licensure
- >> Communicates a commitment to providing the highest quality continuing education for nurses
- >> Promotes higher professional standards for nursing.

“You cannot imagine how much this (ANCC accreditation renewal) has motivated us to continue our journey to excellence and refuse to give up. During these times, it is extremely difficult to continue the drive of achievements because you do not know if today you will go home safely. You all need to know that allowing us to participate in promoting education is an honor and privilege and has made a big impact on the delivery of care. Once again on behalf of the nursing services department, I would like to thank you all for your support and encouragement. I speak on behalf of the nursing leadership, including staff development, when I say you have helped keep the flame alive at American University of Beirut Medical Center.”

Gladys Mouro
Assistant Hospital Director for Nursing Services
American University of Beirut Medical Center

Foundation of the ANCC Accreditation Program

ANCC's Accreditation Program supports the nursing profession's adherence to high standards in the delivery of education programs by (1) ensuring that qualified individuals provide nursing professional development and educational services and (2) ensuring that the continuing nursing education activities are designed in an appropriate way to provide the highest quality of education to the nurse. By assisting nurses in preparing for contemporary practice, educators ultimately contribute to improving the health and well-being of all individuals.ⁱⁱ

The foundation of the ANCC Accreditation Program application and evaluation criteria is based on the philosophy that learning activities, as a component of nursing professional development, must assist nurses in developing and maintaining their continuing competence, enhance their professional practice, and support achievement of their career goals.ⁱⁱⁱ By evaluating these learning activities based on national standards of educational design criteria (including planning, needs assessment, purpose and objectives, implementation, and activity evaluation) and outcomes evaluation, ANCC accreditation allows nurses to select the highest quality educational programs.

These publications provide a practice framework and have guided the development of the ANCC Accreditation Program criteria:

- >> *Scope and Standards of Practice for Nursing Professional Development* (ANA 2000)
- >> *Code of Ethics for Nurses with Interpretive Statements* (ANA 2001)
- >> *National Nursing Staff Development Organization Strategic Plan* (2000)
- >> Teaching-learning principles, education theory, and pedagogical literature on adult learning principles and behavioral objectives

“We have the ability to raise the bar for standards of care and standards of practice through the provision of quality learning activities, workshops, practicums, and events to support nurses becoming certified in their specialty areas and meeting continuing education requirements for obtaining and maintaining their credentials and licenses under various nurse governance agencies.”

Diana L. Swihart, PhD, DMin, MSN, CS, RN-BC
Clinical Nurse Specialist in Nursing Education
Bay Pines VA Healthcare System



Values of the ANCC Accreditation Program

A set of core values underlie the activities of the ANCC Accreditation Program and the standards from which its criteria are derived. These values state that the program and its representatives will:

- >> Maintain the integrity of the accreditation process through a consistent, fair, and honest application of the criteria;
- >> Promote and maintain competence in relation to standards, criteria and components of lifelong learning;
- >> Foster the peer review process and mentoring within ANCC and by its consumers;
- >> Maintain a high level of accountability and responsiveness to the community of interest of the accreditation process;
- >> Value and encourage innovation in the accreditation process and in the delivery of continuing education;
- >> Maintain an accreditation process that is purposeful, relevant, and responsive to the community of interest;
- >> Focus on providing quality in the accreditation process and in the provision of continuing education;
- >> Recognize and value the diversity in the community of interest;
- >> Promote inclusiveness throughout the accreditation process;
- >> Assure fiscal responsibility and accountability of the accreditation process; and
- >> Value and be engaged in lifelong learning.

Eligibility Criteria for ANCC Accreditation

Any organization responsible for the overall development, implementation, evaluation, and quality assurance of continuing nursing education in nursing may apply for ANCC accreditation. To be eligible, the organization must:

- >> Have been operational using ANCC Accreditation Program criteria for their continuing nursing education program, for a minimum of six months;
- >> Have planned, implemented, and evaluated at least three different educational activities reflecting compliance with ANCC Accreditation Program criteria; and
- >> Have an RN with a graduate degree (one degree, either baccalaureate or graduate, must be in nursing) who is responsible for planning, developing, implementing, and evaluating the continuing nursing education activities.

Becoming ANCC-Accredited

The American Nurses Credentialing Center's system for awarding accreditation of continuing nursing education provides professional nursing judgment on the quality of the continuing nursing education offered.

ANCC accreditation operates on a four/six year application cycle, similar to the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME®) and Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE) application processes. If an organization is already accredited by more than one of these organizations, much of the paperwork can be duplicated, saving the organization time and energy.

An organization submits to an in-depth analysis of its education program (referred to as a self-study) to determine its capacity to provide quality continuing education activities for nurses. In order to be accredited, applicants must document adherence to all applicable criteria based around 1) goals and organization, 2) educational design, 3) unit outcomes evaluation, and 4) unit operations.^{iv}

A site visit is made to each eligible applicant by the individuals who evaluate the submitted documents. These individuals are currently engaged in continuing nursing education and are well-qualified to provide a valid peer review of the applicant.

Accredited organizations agree to abide by the standards of the ANCC Accreditation Program and to regulate themselves by taking responsibility for their own improvement.

ANCC-accredited organizations must submit a new application before the end of each accreditation period to continue their accreditation status.

ANCC accreditation
promotes higher professional
standards for nursing.

Nurses Want and Need Quality Continuing Education

The American Nurses Association (ANA), the national professional organization for registered nurses, has continually emphasized professional growth for nurses. *The American Nurses Association's Code of Ethics* has several requirements for nurses to maintain competence, grow professionally, and advance the profession through knowledge development.^v By selecting educational programs with ANCC accreditation, nurses can meet this obligation with the highest quality continuing nursing education.

A recent study looking at intensive care nurses' intention to leave due to working conditions found that improving clinical competence of nurses and improved professional practice (opportunities for nurse advancement and involvement in hospital governance) in the work environment may reduce turnover and help ensure a stable and qualified work force. Nurses in the ICU – and in all specialty areas – need the appropriate knowledge, skills, and abilities to provide quality patient care.^{vi} Providing the necessary high quality educational programs – ANCC-accredited education programs – helps to improve professional practice and nursing competence environment for all nurses.

Sources

- ⁱ *Health Professions Education: A Bridge to Quality*, Institute of Medicine of the National Academies. 2003.
- ⁱⁱ *Scope and Standards of Practice for Nursing Professional Development*. American Nurses Association. 2000.
- ⁱⁱⁱ *Scope and Standards of Practice for Nursing Professional Development*. American Nurses Association. 2000.
- ^{iv} Detailed descriptions available in the *ANCC Manual for Accreditation as an Approver or Provider of Continuing Nursing Education 2006*.
- ^v *Code of Ethics for Nurses with Interpretive Statements*, American Nurses Association. 2001.
- ^{vi} *Critical Care Med 2006*. Vol 34, No. 7. Organizational climate and intensive care unit nurses' intention to leave. Lippincott, Williams & Wilkins.

The American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) provides individuals and organizations throughout the nursing profession with the tools they need on their journey to excellence. ANCC's internationally renowned credentialing programs certify nurses in specialty practice areas, recognize healthcare organizations for nursing excellence through the Magnet Recognition Program®, and accredit providers of continuing nursing education. In addition, ANCC offers an array of informational and educational services and products to support its core credentialing programs.

ANCC is the largest and most prestigious nurse credentialing organization in the United States. ANCC certification exams validate nurses' skills, knowledge, and abilities. More than a quarter million nurses have been certified by ANCC since 1990. More than 75,000 advanced practice nurses are currently certified by ANCC.

The ANCC Magnet Recognition Program recognizes healthcare organizations that provide the very best in nursing care and professionalism in nursing practice. The program also provides a vehicle for disseminating best practices and strategies among nursing systems. The ANCC Magnet Recognition Program is the gold standard for nursing excellence.

ANCC Accreditation of a continuing nursing education program is the hallmark of quality. ANCC is the nation's leader in accreditation of continuing nursing education programs.

ANCC produces a variety of educational services and products to support those seeking certification, Magnet recognition, or accreditation. Review and resource manuals, review seminars, and web-based learning all support individuals who are on the path to certification. ANCC's National Magnet Conference™, workshops, and consulting services support organizations on the Journey to Nursing Excellence™. Consultants are available to assist organizations that provide continuing nursing education accreditation programs in achieving the highest caliber education.

ANCC is passionate about helping nurses on their Journey to Nursing Excellence.

The American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) is a subsidiary of the American Nurses Association (ANA).



8515 Georgia Avenue, Suite 400
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3492

1.800.284.2378
301.628.5000 *tel*
301.628.5004 *fax*

www.nursecredentialing.org