

UC San Diego

Spring 2019 - UC San Diego Health Journal of Nursing: The Unique Power of Nursing

Title

Progressive Care Certified Nurse (PCCN): A Specialty Certification

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/6br5g1pc>

Journal

UC San Diego Health Journal of Nursing, 12(1)

Author

Bojorquez, Genesis R, MSN, RN

Publication Date

2019-04-01

Peer reviewed

Progressive Care Certified Nurse (PCCN): A Specialty Certification

By: Genesis R. Bojorquez, MSN, RN, PCCN

Progressive Care Certified Nurse (PCCN) is a credential granted by the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses (AACN) Certification Corporation and designates certification in adult progressive care nursing. Progressive care is the term used by AACN to collectively describe areas of which acutely ill patients are cared for, such as: intermediate care, direct observation, step-down, telemetry, transitional care, and emergency departments. The acuity of patients admitted to these areas are often transferred from critical care units while still requiring an increased level of vigilant nursing care. National practice analyses of the progressive care environment, patient populations served, and core competencies of progressive care nurses validated these areas as part of the less acute critical care continuum. Nurses who have achieved the PCCN certification provide patients and their families with validation that the nurse caring for them has demonstrated experience and knowledge in the complex specialty of progressive care.



Genesis R. Bojorquez, MSN, RN, PCCN is a Clinical Nurse II on the 11th floor surgical progressive care unit at UC San Diego Health. She earned her BSN at San Diego State University, her MSN at University of San Diego, and is currently enrolled in a PhD program in Nursing at the University of San Diego. She has been with UC San Diego Health since graduating with her BSN in 2015 and was a recipient of the 11th Floor PCU Rookie of the Year award in 2017. She is a member of the Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing, the National Society of Collegiate Scholars, and is a Progressive Care Certified Nurse (PCCN).

PCCN EXAM

ELIGIBILITY

Nurses seeking PCCN certification must have a current unencumbered licensure as an RN or APRN in the U.S. and meet one of the following clinical practice requirement options:

Option 1: Practice as an RN or APRN for 1,750 hours in direct care of acutely ill adult patients during the previous two years, with 875 of those hours accrued in the most recent year preceding application.

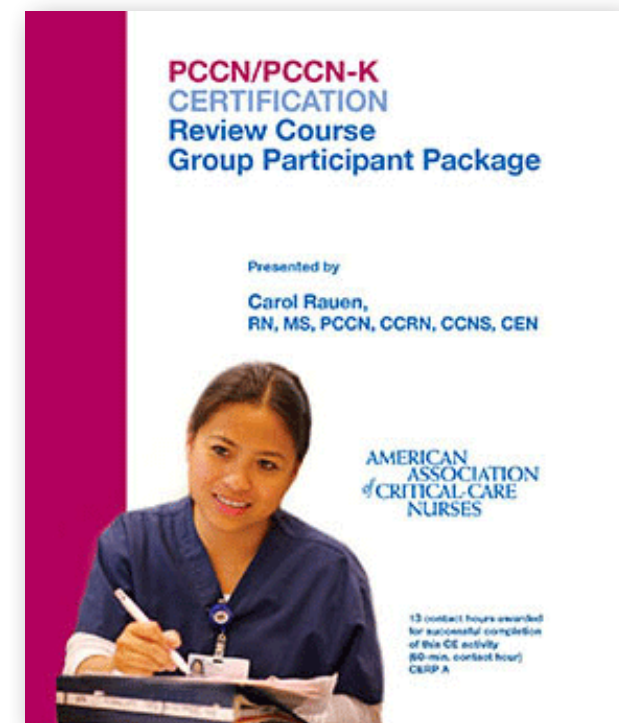
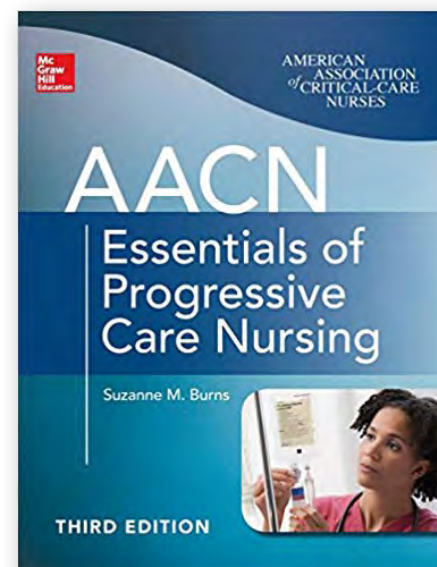
Option 2: Practice as an RN or APRN for at least five years with a minimum of 2,000 hours in direct care of acutely ill adult patients, with 144 of those hours accrued in the most recent year preceding application.

EXAM CONTENT

The PCCN Exam is 2 ½-hours and contains 125 questions; 100 questions are scored and 25 are used to gather statistical data on question performance for future exams. The items are based on the AACN Synergy Model for Patient Care, with 80% focusing on Clinical Judgment and 20% focusing on Professional Caring and Ethical Practice. The exam is offered by computer-based testing year-round across the U.S. and the score report becomes available immediately upon completion of the exam. **AACN offers an online PCCN review program at:** <https://www.aacn.org/store/books/pccnod13/pccnpccnk-certification-review-course-online>

PCCN RENEWAL

The PCCN certification is recognized for a 3-year period. During the 3-year certification period, the nurse must maintain a current, unencumbered RN or APRN licensure and complete the Continuing Education Recognition Points (CERPs) program outlined by AACN. The CERPs system awards credit for activities that don't fall into the direct clinical practice category, such as writing articles, serving on committees or being a mentor/



preceptor. In addition to CERPs, the nurse must meet the clinical practice requirement of 432 hours in direct care of acutely ill adult patients, with 144 of those hours accrued in the 12-month period prior to the renewal date.

SIGNIFICANCE OF PCCN CERTIFICATION

The PCCN certification provides patients and their families with validation that the nurse caring for them has proven specialty knowledge, experience, and clinical judgment of progressive care nursing. Acutely ill patients require intricate care from a team of highly skilled health professionals and as healthcare becomes more complex, nurses are encouraged to validate their knowledge and abilities through certification. As a voluntary process, obtaining a specialty certification points to nurses' commitment to career development and dedication to patient care. Furthermore, by becoming certified, nurses position themselves for appropriate recognition, advancement, and a sense of confidence and achievement. In progressive care areas, the PCCN is a mark of excellence to patients, their families, employers, and nurses.

CONCLUSION

PCCN certification promotes continuing excellence in progressive care nursing by assisting registered nurses in maintaining an up-to-date knowledge base of care of acutely ill adult patients. Achieving certification provides nurses with a sense of professional pride and commitment to the progressive care specialty, and reinforces the core competencies, special knowledge, and experiences required for progressive care nursing.

REFERENCES:

American Association of Critical-Care Nurses (AACN). (2018). PCCN Certification. Retrieved from: <https://www.aacn.org/certification/get-certified/pccn-adult>