



Position Statement

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Emergency Nursing Certification

Description

The *Emergency Nursing Scope and Standards of Practice* (2011) asserts emergency nurses to be dedicated to quality, competent, and safe emergency nursing practice.¹ Quality, competent, and safe emergency nursing care requires a specialized knowledge base. Certification has been defined as “formal recognition of the knowledge, skills, and experience demonstrated by the achievement of standards identified by the profession.”² Certification is reported to also serve as an indication of greater professionalism, and an assurance to the public and other healthcare professionals the certified nurse has achieved a level of knowledge and clinical acumen necessary to provide quality care.³

Referred to as a “mark of distinction,”⁴ certification has been positively linked to outcomes such as “professional achievement, career advancement, professional opportunities, personal accomplishment, and higher pay.”⁵ A review of studies regarding certification and patient outcomes reveals a connection between certification and decreased patient infection rates; quality outcomes for patients; higher patient satisfaction rates and higher nurses’ salaries.⁶ They also relate a connection between certification and nurses feeling empowered in the workplace. There is, however, little data specifically related to emergency nursing certification and indicators for safe, quality care and patient satisfaction.

ENA Position

It is the position of the Emergency Nurses Association that:

1. Specialty certification and credentials function as a measure for achieving excellence in emergency nursing.
2. Attainment of emergency nursing certification contributes to the delivery of safe, effective, quality care.
3. Practice environments that encourage and facilitate emergency nursing certification and continuing education opportunities promote improved patients outcomes and greater nursing satisfaction.
4. Certifications and credentials integrated into professional advancement models are a means to recognize specialized knowledge and clinical judgment.
5. Research specific to and regarding the relationship of emergency nursing certification to safe, effective, quality practice, and both nurse and patient satisfaction, is essential.

Background

A major recommendation from the Institute of Medicine’s (IOM) Future of Nursing Report states: “Ensure that nurses engage in lifelong learning.”⁷ The report further explains lifelong learning is necessary to achieve and maintain competency in patient care. The process of certification can serve to validate lifelong learning as nurses engage in studying to achieve certification and continue scholarship and learning as a means to recertify on a regular basis.

Various opportunities exist for emergency nurses to attain certification and demonstrate essential knowledge.^{4,8,9,10} Certification by examination is available through the Board of Certification for Emergency Nursing (BCEN) as a generalist,⁴ or focused specialist in flight, transport,^{4,8} or pediatric emergency nursing.^{4,9} An advanced practice credential by portfolio for emergency nurse practitioners is available through the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC).¹⁰



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