



# sentara nurse

## SNVMC Nurse Specialty Certification Proposal

### A Culture Shift to Achieve our Goal

## “To Improve Health Every Day through Nursing Excellence”

M. Inga Vinroot, MSN, RN, PCCN, ACNP



### BACKGROUND

Specialty Certification is defined by the American Board of Nursing Specialties as “the formal recognition of the specialized knowledge, skills and experience demonstrated by the achievement of standards identified by a nursing specialty to promote optimal health outcomes” (Williams, Counts, 2013). Specialty certification affirms advanced professional practice that meets the challenges of modern nursing and medicine thereby ensuring excellence in nursing care for optimum patient outcomes. The benefit of specialty nurse certification has been demonstrated in numerous studies and articles and has also been associated with increased satisfaction and retention of staff. This designation demonstrates to the public that expert knowledge, skills, and experience have been achieved by the practitioner.

### PROBLEM

Professional development is critical to expanding competence in practice, and supports achievement of one’s career goals. Currently, 53 of 420, or 12.6%, of registered nurses (RN) employed at Sentara Northern Virginia Medical Center (SNVMC) hold active specialty certification. This project documents a preliminary assessment of barriers that impede successful pursuit of specialty certification and proposals to minimize those barriers.

During a round table discussion in August 2014 between nursing and senior leadership, interest in bringing education to SNVMC was clearly voiced. Staff also expressed high interest in increased access to professional conferences/workshops and certification seminars. It was suggested that electronic survey would of all staff would support the need.

### METHODS

- Assess staff interest in specialty certification via electronic survey of all 420 registered nurses currently employed at SNVMC.

### SURVEY QUESTIONS

- Please describe yourself: clinical work area, years of experience, education level
- Do you have interest in Specialty Certification?
- Which Specialty Certification interests you?
- Barriers to obtaining said certification
- I would seek Specialty Certification if...

### RESULTS

Electronic survey to all 420 RNs

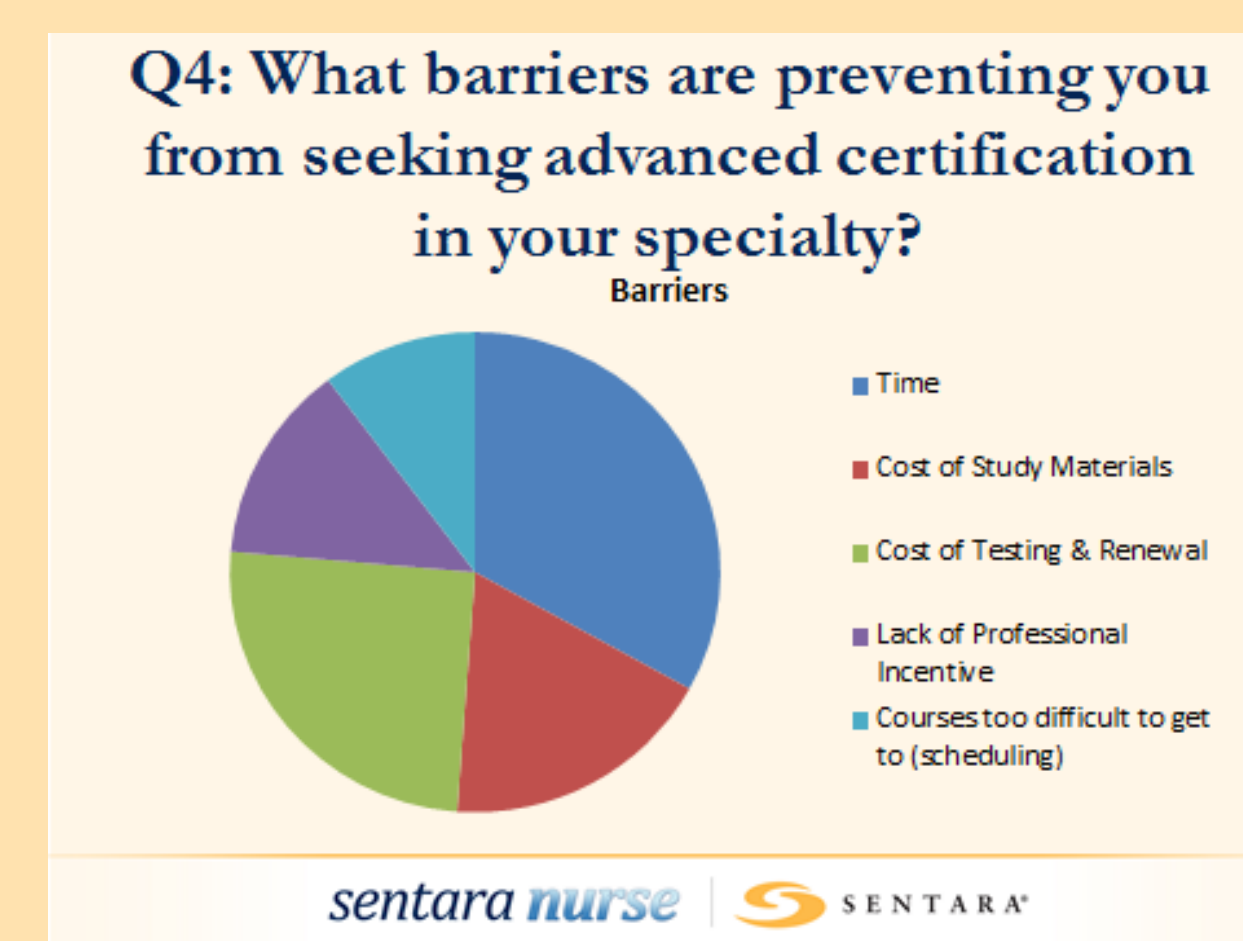
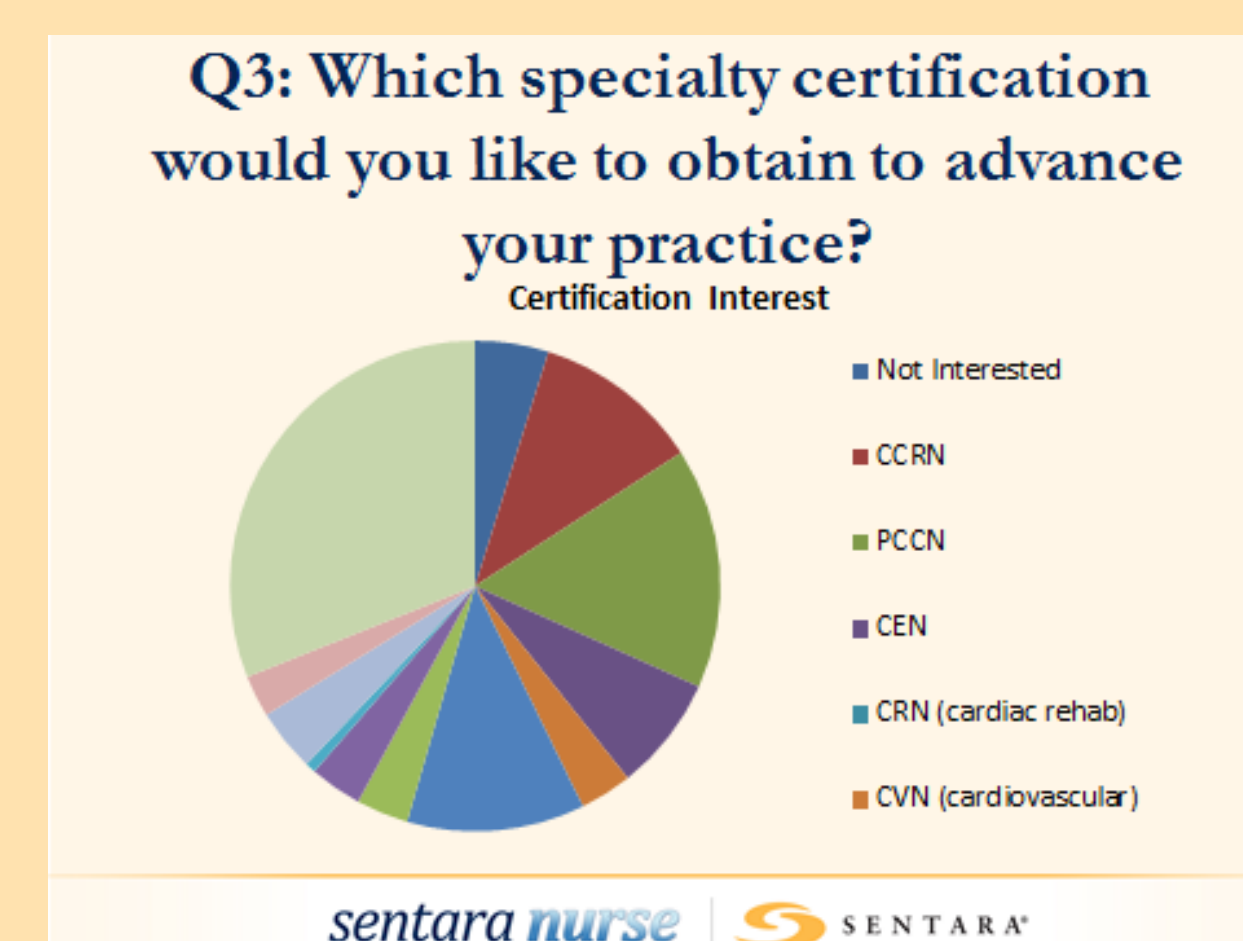
- 69 respondents: 16.4%
- 74%: currently enrolled in degree programs
- 87%: interested in obtaining specialty certification

Greatest barriers to obtaining certification:

- Lack of professional incentive
- Inability to attend certification prep courses due to scheduling.

Vast majority responded they would seek specialty certification if:

- “My employer would cover financial cost of testing”
- “My employer would offer on-site certification study conference.



- Survey sent to all SNVMC units with RN employees as well as to leadership RNs.
- 62% of respondents are direct care RNs.
- 35% of respondents represent Medicine/Oncology .
- 29% of respondents represent Progressive Care Unit.
- 25% of respondents report 10-20 years of experience, 20% report 2-5 years experience, 10% report 20+ years of experience.

Further investigation reveals:

- Approximate cost of on-boarding 1 RN FTE equals \$30,000; this is equivalent to 125 RNs completing a 2-day certification course.
- Sentara Healthcare has a tuition assistance program for eligible employees. The program covers tuition assistance for secondary, vocational, technical, collegiate or adult learning programs from accredited facilities. Some courses not covered include workshops, seminars, continuing education courses and certification exams.
- Approximately only 30% of the total Sentara workforce utilizes the program.

### RECOMMENDED FUTURE ACTIONS

Brain-storm of possible solutions to reported barriers:

- Amend Tuition Assistance Policy
- Investigate certification revenue-generating host-site opportunities
- Offer on-site conferences/seminars
- Media campaign designed to enhance professional pride in certification achievement.

### HOST SITE OPPORTUNITIES

#### Option #1 Host Site Opportunity: MED-ED

Class enrollment does not require advanced payment

- Discounted tuition rates of \$239 to attend.
- MED-ED supplies all media-related expenses and advertisement
- MED-ED receives all tuition collected.
- Require registration of 25 nurses hosting
- Hosting site provides conference space, refreshments, and AV support.

#### Option #2 Host Site Opportunity: PESI Healthcare

One-day event:

- \$2000 Base rate for first 25 attendees; \$45 additional attendee
- PESI - Faculty travel and lodging, CE credits, evaluation forms
- Host site- Meeting facility/classroom space

Certification Prep courses:

- Program Cost: \$7,000; \$100 per attendee up to 35
- Program Duration: 2 Consecutive days, 8:00 am to 4:30 pm
- Membership to the Nurses' Success Network for additional study tools. Challenge Exam to assess your readiness to sit for the actual exam. Certification planner to help you prepare for the big day .

#### Option #3 Host Site Opportunity: ANCC Credentialing

- Registration open to public
- 2-day workshop at \$370/person held at hosting site
- Registration restricted to hosting facility for 35 or more participants
- ANCC’s new Success Pays™ program. Hospital contracts to provide at least 20 eligible certification exam test takers. ANCC provides hospital a code, distributed to nurses at facility. 25+ ANCC nursing certification exams available.



March 19 has been designated as Certified Nurses Day to honor and recognize the important achievement of nursing specialty and subspecialty certification. Certification is a milestone of personal excellence along the professional journey.

### CONCLUSION

Currently SNVMC does not offer in-house nurse specialty certification education. While tuition assistance is available for some certification study courses, barriers still exist that might deter staff from acquiring certification. Nurse specialty certification is associated with better patient outcomes, with several studies demonstrating a decrease in mortality and failure to rescue patients when the RN is baccalaureate-educated. This project provides great opportunity for further study regarding the cost effectiveness of the investment of baccalaureate-educated workforce and specialty certification and the potential to improve the quality of care.

### CONTACT INFORMATION

M. Inga Vinroot, MSN, RN, PCCN, ACPN

PCU Staff Educator

Sentara Northern Virginia Medical Center

[MIVINROO@Sentara.com](mailto:MIVINROO@Sentara.com)

Date Crafted: April 2015