



CAREER RESOURCE GUIDE

**(for CNL students, employers,
and certificants)**



provided by the



COMMISSION ON NURSE CERTIFICATION

This document is designed to provide you with resources to enhance your knowledge and communication of the CNL skill set. This guide features examples of patient outcomes and definitions of the CNL skill set as reported by CNLs as well as a summary of CNC's professional development products and services.

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www.aacnursing.org/CNL

WHY HIRE A CLINICAL NURSE LEADER (CNL®)?

The Key to Positive Patient Outcomes

CNLs provide efficient and cost-effective patient care services as well as the leadership needed to repair fragmented care delivery across settings. CNLs are having a measurable impact on the quality of nursing services with practice settings reporting that CNLs...

- **Are raising patient, nurse, and physician satisfaction; improving care outcomes; and realizing sizable cost-savings.**
- **Elevate the level of practice for all nurses** on the unit by promoting critical thinking and innovation in nursing care.
- **Constructively manage change and promote a team-based approach to care.**
- **Understand the bigger picture**, including outcomes and patient satisfaction, when considering next steps, needed changes, and improvements to the setting.

CNLs improve quality of patient care. Below are just a few of the outcomes as reported:

My current position as a CNL is in the Geriatric Evaluation and Management Clinic. My most recent project is with post hospitalization follow up calls to determine home safety of our clients. The project numbers so far for 9 months have indicated that we have reduced our falls by 75%. The exit interview was my project last year to reduce calls to the clinic and increase medication adherence; the results at end of one year indicated that the phone calls were reduced by 89% and medication adherence increased by 67%.

Mary E. Mather, MSN, RN, CNL

We are now using the Hendrich II tool and we developed interventions to correlate with the assessment tool. Our falls have decreased as a result in our med-surg areas and ICU.

Diana Ellison MS, RN, CNL

I have experienced first-hand how seven CNLs can collectively make a difference. By reducing falls, central line infections, pressure ulcers, etc. is not only cost avoidance but tells its community, come to this hospital where we collectively will provide the safest quality care you as a patient deserves. Still not sure? Experiment with one unit and a CNL and see the difference they make.

The CNL as lateral integrator and safety nurse provides a safety net to patients and a reminder to busy nurses of the importance of follow-through and checking. The CNL has expertise in microsystems and has the ability to make complex systems more efficient and streamlined. Their unique position as clinical leader has resulted in numerous positive outcomes for our patients. A number of examples are as follows: a 16% reduction in one unit's yearly NIM rate producing a savings of over \$240,000, 20% reduction in falls, 22 months of being VAP free, 28 months of being Central Line Infection free and 11% increase in foley removal. These all can be quantified as cost avoidance and a huge savings for any healthcare organization. But for a patient not receiving an infection etc., it is priceless.

Linda Rusch, MS, APN-C

The CNL works collaboratively with the unit nurse manager and other interdisciplinary team members, such as Clinical Nurse Specialists (CNS), nursing staff, physicians, dietitians, case managers, quality/risk managers, infection control, housekeeping, physical therapy, occupational therapy, social service, pastoral service, clerical staff, information technology, radiology, laboratory, pharmacy, nurse educators, and data support systems, to enhance lateral integrated care. The CNL ensures that the multitude of diverse cohorts of patients/families receive care based on the best available evidence. Promising signs of positive impacts of the CNL skill set are decrease in patient fall and fall injury rates, improved patient satisfaction scores, decrease in blood culture contamination rates, improved staff handoff communication, improved results of core measure data, and everyday staff gratitude of the CNL presence.

Patricia Baker, MSN, RN-BC, CNL

Reduced frequency of G/J tube replacements by improving provider education. Decreased loss to the system by approximately \$45,833 after improving provider knowledge of G/J tube care and maintenance.

Cathy Kristan, MS, RN, CNL

At the Albany New York Stratton VA Medical Center, the rate of PICC catheter related blood stream infections (CRBSI's) in catheters placed by an in-house vascular access (combined skill set dedicated to Interventional Radiology: Acute Care Nurse Practitioner and Certified Clinical Nurse Leader-NP/CNL) has dropped to ZERO PICC CRBSI's in 2007-present thus far, saving patient lives (IHI's 5 MILLION LIVES/CENTRAL LINE BUNDLE), decreased patient morbidity and mortality associated with PICC line placement, decreased LOS, and cost avoidance of \$1,260,000 to the medical center.

Michele Biscossi, ACNP-BC, MS, RN, CNL

DEFINING THE CNL

**CNLs are often asked to explain what it means to be a Clinical Nurse Leader.
Below are a few examples from actual CNLs:**

CNLs are master's prepared nurses who are experts in overseeing the clinical functioning of a microsystem, a nursing unit, bridging and closing the gaps in health delivery processes to improve patient outcomes and staff satisfaction. CNLs are a new light on healthcare delivery teams.

Patricia Baker, MSN, RN-BC, CNL

The CNL is a master's prepared RN specially educated to improve the quality of care delivery at the micro system level. The CNL applies advanced competencies in nursing leadership, clinical outcomes and care environment management to:

- lead and sustain a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration as a basis for delivery of safe, comprehensive care*
- laterally integrate care services efficiently and cost-effectively across disciplines and care settings*
- apply evidence-based criteria for measuring the quality of care delivery and lead quality improvement processes based on evidence*
- become a professional advocate for holistic, defragmented, patient-centered care at the micro system, organizational and political level of healthcare practice.*

Miriam Bender, MSN, RN, CNL

The CNL was developed in 2003 by the IHI and AACN to decrease fragmentation in healthcare. My goal is to improve patient outcomes by putting the whole big picture together for patients, families and the healthcare team. Although the educational level is very similar, a CNL, unlike a CNS, doesn't specialize with a certain patient population, but works as a generalist to care for patients and staff within a given unit. I am a "lateral integrator," meaning that I may not know the answer to your question, but I know who to call that might! I can use evidence-based research to help you find the answer as well. The take-away message is this: I am here to help you and your patients; call if you need help!

Ann Deerhake, MSN, RN, CNL

The CNL is the keeper of the patient's story. We bring continuity to the patient's care and mentor the bedside nurse. The CNL is responsible for quality outcomes and patient satisfaction. We assist the patient in developing a comprehensive plan of care to help prevent re-admissions. The CNL intentionally searches for processes that can be improved and utilizes process improvement strategies to achieve what is best for the patient and staff.

Bridget Graham MSN, RN, CNL

A CNL works within the microsystem to improve patient outcomes through a systematic evaluation of the microsystem needs and the application of EBP to the point of care. The CNL is the thread that binds the healthcare team and the client through defragmentation of care, lateral integration and coordination of the client plan of care. The CNL raises the bar of clinical practice through modeling and mentoring at the microsystem level.

Mary Stachowiak, MSN, RN, CNL

CNL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

CNC offers products and services designed to advance the CNL skill set and CNL certification. CNL products and services are available on www.aacnnursing.org/cnl-certification include the following:

CNL Certification Exam Resources: <http://www.aacnnursing.org/CNL-Certification/Prepare-for-the-Exam>

The following is a list of CNL Certification Exam resources:

- CNL Certification Guide
- CNL Job Analysis Study
- AACN Competencies and Curricular Expectations for Clinical Nurse LeaderSM Education and Practice
- Recommended Reading List
- CNL Self-Assessment Examination
- Multiple Choice Tutorial
- CNL Education Program Review Materials

CNL Webinars <http://www.aacnnursing.org/Professional-Development/Webinars>

CNC offers webinars focusing on CNL certification as well as the value hiring CNLs. Click on Search for Webinar and select Webinar by Topics – CNL. Participation is free.

CNL Research Symposium <http://www.aacnnursing.org/Professional-Development/Upcoming-Conferences>

This annual event is hosted by CNC in February and offered as a pre-conference workshop to AACN's CNL Summit. This half-day workshop focuses on data collection and analysis, the financial impact of the CNL, and presenting data to demonstrate outcomes.

The CNL Community <http://www.aacnnursing.org/CNL-Certification/Get-Involved>

Hosted by CNC, this online discussion board is designed for CNL students, graduates, and CNLs in practice. *The CNL Community* provides a forum to share information and resources, learn about innovative practices and patient outcomes, and network with peers. In addition, you will learn about the many CNL resources and initiatives available through CNC.

CNL Online Discussion Board for Faculty and Education Partners

<http://www.nurseslounge.com/lounges/profile/16380/clinical-nurse-leader>

Join the CNL discussion board for faculty and education partners.

CNL Job Bank <http://www.aacnnursing.org/CNL-Certification/CNL-Career-Services>

The **CNL Job Bank** posts positions of interest to CNLs. If you are seeking a CNL to join your staff, consider posting a position - employers and recruiters may post positions for \$199 for two months or until the position is filled.

CNL Vanguard Award <http://www.aacnnursing.org/Membership/AACN-Awards/CNL-Visionary-Leader-and-Vanguard-Awards>

AACN and CNC offer the CNL Vanguard Award, a national award that recognizes a certified CNL for innovative and outstanding professional performance and advocacy of the CNL. In addition, the award promotes the contributions of the CNL in transforming healthcare. Applications are available in August and the winner is notified in November.

CNL Verification [Log into the CNC Portal](#)

If you require formal verification of your certification status, log into the CNC Portal and under the "Forms tab" select "View Available Forms" to submit the Verification of CNL Certification Request form and CNC will notify your employer in writing.

CNL Merchandise <http://www.aacnnursing.org/CNL-Certification/Order-CNL-Merchandise>

Celebrate your CNL certification! CNC offers lab coats, lapel pins, tote bags, and much more!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

American Association of Colleges of Nursing

<http://www.aacnnursing.org/>

Clinical Nurse Leader Association (CNLA)

www.cnlassociation.org



COMMISSION ON NURSE CERTIFICATION

<http://www.aacnnursing.org/cnl-certification>

The Clinical Nurse Leader (CNL) Certification Program is managed by the Commission on Nurse Certification (CNC), is the autonomous certifying arm of AACN, and governed by the CNC Board of Commissioners. CNC recognizes individuals who have demonstrated professional standards and knowledge through CNL certification. The CNC Board of Commissioners and staff are solely responsible for the policies and administration of the CNL Certification Program.

CNC promotes high quality patient care through the certification of qualified individuals by:

- recognizing individuals who meet the eligibility requirements of the certification program and pass the examination;
- encouraging continued professional growth in one's practice; and
- providing a national standard of requisite knowledge and experience required for certification, thereby assisting communities of interest in the assessment of certificants.

For questions regarding the CNL Certification Program and CNC's professional development products and services, contact CNC Staff at cnl@aacnnursing.org