

May 20, 2008

To: AACN Members

From: C. Fay Raines, President
Geraldine “Polly” Bednash, Executive Director

For more than three years, AACN and multiple nursing organizations have engaged in a process to develop a national consensus on issues related to education, certification, licensure, and accreditation for Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs). We are now writing to provide an update on that national consensus project and to respond to multiple inquiries we recently have received regarding the work of the Council for the Advancement of Comprehensive Care (CACC).

Through the national consensus process, many nursing organizations have collaborated on the development of a model for the future regulation of all APRNs. The group has agreed to use the protected title “APRN” to designate all individuals prepared for direct care roles as nurse practitioners (NPs) certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs), certified nurse midwives (CNMs) and clinical nurse specialists (CNSs). **A critical element of this consensus is the agreement that all APRNs should be certified through a nationally recognized nursing certifying body and that the exams offered by these certification agencies will be used by state boards to grant APRNs the authority to practice.** We continue to support strongly this work and urge all of you to inform your faculty, students and potential students of the need to seek national certification through one of these recognized bodies. These certifications will play a central role for APRNs as they acquire state recognition for practice as an APRN. A copy of the draft consensus report that includes the recommendations of the consensus group and a complete list of the participating organizations can be found at <http://www.aacn.nche.edu/education/apn.htm>.

As noted above, AACN has received many inquiries regarding the proposed CACC exam for graduates of Doctor of Nursing Practice programs (for more information visit the American Board of Comprehensive Care [ABCC] Web site at www.abcc.dnpcert.org). This exam is not part of the consensus project. AACN has been asked to rejoin the CACC and has agreed to do this based on our interest in monitoring and informing the process that this group will use to develop and assess the efficacy or usefulness of their proposed exam. Moreover, it is our understanding that the CACC exam is not intended to replace the national certification exams that lead to recognition for state licensure as an APRN. As noted on the ABCC Web site, to be eligible to sit for the CACC certification exam the candidate must hold national certification as an advanced practice nurse and be a graduate of a DNP program (<http://www.abcc.dnpcert.org/overview.shtml>).

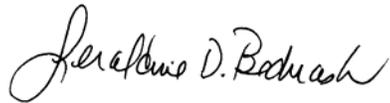
ADVANCING HIGHER EDUCATION IN NURSING

We continue to believe that the above referenced national nursing certification exams administered by the nationally recognized nursing certification bodies must serve the essential role of providing recognition for state licensure as an APRN. We urge you to inform your current and potential APRN students about the draft consensus report and the need for them to successfully complete one of these exams in order to be granted authority to practice.

We also will continue in our work as a part of the CACC to ensure that the work of the group is informed by and responds to the work of the consensus process. We believe that this collaboration will allow for clarity regarding the unique purpose of each process, and we will maintain our strong support for the work of the consensus process. Please feel free to bring to us any questions you may have, and we will maintain an open communication with AACN members about the work of both the consensus process and the CACC.



C. Fay Raines, PhD, RN
President



Geraldine "Polly" Bednash, PhD, RN, FAAN
Executive Director