

## NURSING CERTIFICATION and COMPETENCY SUMMIT

### *Building an International Research Agenda*

The Competency & Credentialing Institute (CCI), in partnership with the American Board of Nursing Specialties (ABNS), convened a *Nursing Certification and Competency Summit* October 7-9, 2009 in Baltimore, Maryland. The event brought together 87 participants who represented nursing certification organizations, affiliated credentialing agencies, testing companies and consumer advocates.

The purpose of the Summit was to obtain consensus on a unified research agenda in support of nursing certification.

The Summit objectives were to:

- Identify research projects that address the research priorities.
- Create opportunities for organizations to partner on research activities.
- Establish plans for organizations to adopt the research agenda.
- Design a communication and marketing plan to disseminate key messages about the international nursing certification research agenda.
- Develop a funding plan for nursing certification research.

#### Research Agenda

As a result of the collaborative work done by the Summit participants, a research agenda was formed. The purpose of the research agenda is to promote research that investigates the contribution of nursing certification to health care. Through an innovative, iterative design process, the group developed and gained consensus on three overarching research priorities that serve as the framework for future research projects. The priorities are: the impact of certification on patient outcomes; continuing competence in nursing; and the health care work environment and certification. These priorities were used to generate ideas for potential research projects and are listed below.

#### Priorities

#### Projects

Patient Outcomes

Nursing certification and its impact on adverse events, symptom relief, failure to rescue, and other outcome-specific topics.

Continuing Competence

Best practices, methods, frequency and processes for recertification.

Work Environment

Critical thinking skills of certified nurses.

While not the final research projects or questions, these topics serve as a direction for future research. Using strategies identified by the Summit participants, ABNS will continue to refine the questions and work with content experts to design the projects.

Some projects were initially defined as potential research projects, but after further conversation the collective opinion of the group was that these issues could be better addressed using marketing strategies. These topics included:

- Consumer/RN Awareness of the value of certification
- Employer value of certification
- ABNS will incorporate the marketing of these issues into its strategic plan.

### **Key Characteristics/Critical Elements/Values**

Through Summit activities and discussions, a number of key characteristics emerged that were validated to be critical elements and/or values of a unified research agenda. These included:

- Certification makes a difference to patients and nurses
- Certification is a marker of professional development
- Research on nursing certification can be a collaborative process that is inclusive of a variety of stakeholders and partners
- Future research will build on previous work
- We will commit to research that will drive improvements and refine the certification and re-certification processes
- Consensus will be reached on definitions and measurements for certification

### **Next Steps**

Summit attendees agreed to a number of next steps that will move us forward toward implementing the research agenda.

- ABNS member organizations will be asked to support/endorse this research agenda. (A draft document that outlines our work at the Summit and requests the involvement of each member board will be made available to assist with this process.)
- The ABNS Board will examine the proposed structure of creating and staffing a non-profit foundation to support the research agenda.
- The ABNS Board will develop a funding model to present to the ABNS members that will be used to financially support the implementation of the research agenda.
- The ABNS Research Committee will review the consensus recommendations made for each research priority and establish a plan(s) to pursue specific research projects. Recommendations will include funding options and desired partnerships.
- The marketing and communication strategies that identify the value of certification for consumers/public, employers and nurses will be incorporated into the ABNS strategic plan. A marketing consultant will be engaged, and the PR Committee will be tasked with monitoring this initiative.
- Options for a certification database will be explored. The ABNS Board will develop a strategy to further examine the options for a nursing certification database.
- The ABNS Research Committee will be asked to develop and validate a definition of competency and continuing competency in specialty nursing through a review and synthesis of existing literature on the topic.

### **Contact Information**

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