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National Survey of Nephrology Nurses: The Perceived Value of Certification

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This is a replication of a certification study done in 2007 in collaboration with several nursing organizations, including a summary of the nephrology nursing responses. No published study of the value of certification conducted since that time has included nephrology practitioners. The results of this study reveal changes in nephrology nurses' attitudes about certification.

Both an on-line survey and paper-pencil surveys were utilized to conduct a convenience sample national survey of nephrology practitioners (N=448). The tools used were the Perceived Value of Certification Tool (PVCT) and a demographic survey of the practitioners relative to their nephrology practice.

Respondents identify an aging nurse work force of which 72% of certified RN's have no plans to make a change in their employment and 15% plan to retire soon. Only 9% were looking for another employer in nephrology and 2% were planning to leave nephrology for another specialty. Responses to the Value Statements on the PVCT reflect significant changes in perceptions, agreeing that there is an increased reflection of clinical competence, recognition from employers and other health professionals, consumer confidence and increased marketability. Barriers to certification are decreasing except in areas of lack of access to preparation course or materials and a general lack of desire or interest in certification, among others. The most frequently offered employer incentives include salary adjustments and reimbursement for costs of continuing education and attendance at educational meetings. However, greater than 30% of respondents reported no incentives were offered at their work site.

Certification is reported to be voluntary for their practice by 61% of responding nurses and 55% of APNs. But 30% of APNs report certification to be mandatory for their practice. The data can help guide employers and nurses to support nephrology certification and the benefits that can be derived from a demonstrated level of competence and professional autonomy.

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