ANNA
American Nephrology Nurses Association

Position Statement

Certification in Nephrology Nursing

Certification is defined by the American Board of Nursing Specialties (ABNS) as "the formal recognition of specialized knowledge, skills, and experience demonstrated by achievement of standards identified by a nursing specialty to promote optimal health outcomes" (ABNS, 2024). The American Nurses Association (ANA) defines certification as "the process by which a nongovernmental agency or an association grants recognition to an individual who has met certain predetermined qualifications. Certification can be used for entry into practice, validation of competence, recognition of excellence, and/or regulation. It can be mandatory or voluntary. Certification validates an individual's knowledge and skills in a defined role and clinical area of practice, based on predetermined standards" (ANA, 2026).

The American Nephrology Nurses Association (ANNA), in addition to ANA, recognizes nephrology nursing practice as a distinct nursing specialty.

It is the position of ANNA that:

- Certification is an essential component in the recognition of the unique body of knowledge for nephrology specialty nursing practice.
- Certification assists in protecting the public.
- Certification credentials that meet the Accreditation Board for Specialty Nursing Certification requirements are recognized and endorsed.
- Nursing practice has many levels of experience: novice, advanced beginner, competent, proficient, and expert (Benner, 1984).
- Certification is encouraged for all levels of nephrology nursing practice.

Background and Rationale

ANNA identified certification as an essential component of the model of nephrology nursing specialty practice in 1993. As early as 1979, the ANA acknowledged that the main objective of certification in nursing is to assure that the public receives quality-nursing care and is safe from incompetent practitioners. Nurse specialty certification is "a mechanism for validation or formal recognition by documenting individual nurses' knowledge, skills, and abilities specific to their specialty" (Chappell et al, 2019). The pursuit of specialty certification demonstrates a commitment to professional growth, ongoing learning, and competency in a specialized area of care. The intended outcome of certification in nursing is to improve safety, quality of care, and health outcomes (Dierkes et al, 2021).

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Recommended Sites:
Accreditation Board for Specialty Nursing Certification. (2026). Accreditation standards for examination-based certification programs. https://absnc.org/accreditation/accreditation-standards-examination-based-certification .

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