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Since the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) announced it would shelve the Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) Core Certification, we have received some comments and questions about the factors that led to this decision. It is important to note that this difficult decision came only after due consideration that weighed a number of factors.

As the world's leading nurse certification body, ANCC is committed to producing certifications that are relevant to the profession. While ANCC often works with specialty nursing organizations to develop certification exams, it is ANCC alone that is responsible for the decisions made regarding its Certification Program.

In 2003, ANCC began working with the National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists on a certification program to recognize the core competencies of CNSs, especially those practicing in specialties for which no certification is available. The resulting CNS Core Certification Program measures competencies required in the CNS role with patients across the lifespan (from birth to death) and health continuum, regardless of specialty.

The process ANCC uses to develop certification exams ensures that they are psychometrically sound, legally defensible, and meet national certification accreditation standards. These rigorous standards help ensure the integrity of ANCC certification.

With regard to the CNS Core Certification, the low turnout during the pilot period of the program led ANCC to conclude that there would not be a sufficient candidate population to support the program in the future.

ANCC understands that this decision was a disappointment to some, and that is why we opened a second testing window to accommodate nurses who may have been preparing for the certification.

Candidates who meet eligibility requirements and pass the exam will receive ANCC's Clinical Nurse Specialist-Board Certified (CNS-BC) credential. In addition, all CNS-BC credential holders will be able to renew their certification using professional development and practice hours on ANCC's regular five-year renewal cycle.

ANCC will continue to evaluate the needs of the advanced practice nursing environment and the role the CNS Core Certification Program can serve in advancing the interests of the profession.

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