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Development of a Certification Preparation Course

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According to the American Nurses Credentialing Center, specialty certification, while not required by hospitals, is encouraged as a standard excellence in practice. Certification can be defined as the criterion standard of professional practice, distinguishing excellence in nursing care, mastery of knowledge, skills, and abilities beyond the scope of professional licensure. Certification supports an individual nurse's qualifications for practice in a defined area (Fleischman, Meyer, & Watson, 2011). Obtaining your specialty certification is supported by our Nursing Strategic Plan, the UCSDH Certification differential compensation, the Patrons of Nursing Scholarship, CNA Union Contract Article 6, and Certified Nurses Day. Professional development guidance is available on Pulse (<https://pulse.ucsd.edu>) and the Education Development and Research center hub (<https://pulse.ucsd.edu/departments/EDR/Development/Pages/default.aspx>).

As a clinical nurse of six years with four years in Hillcrest's Progressive Care Unit (PCU), 10E, I was ready to professionally advance but unsure how to go about this. I had heard from others that "getting certified" was a good next step yet was unaware of available resources to help nurses prepare for the Progressive Care Certified Nurse (PCCN) exam. Navigating my way through the certification process on my own, I often found myself frustrated, overwhelmed, and not prepared for the exam with my

own self-study. After two attempts, I achieved my PCCN in July of 2016, but knew there had to be a better way! I also knew that I could not be the only nurse feeling lost and confused on their certification journey. After conversations with my manager about these feelings, he enthusiastically supported my idea to create a PCCN prep class. From there, the journey to obtain my Clinical Nurse III (CNIII) began as I started my project "Creating a Culture of Certification Through Education and Acknowledgement."

In 2016, 10 East, a 26-bed medical-surgical telemetry unit transitioning to a PCU with approximately 50 nurses, needed to meet nursing education needs to care for patients with PCU-level of acuity. In order to address this, nurses needed to increase their competency, with PCU didactic and direct clinical training on a PCU. With Jacobs Medical center opening and the need for greater numbers of PCU-skilled nurses across the system the prep course was timely. The purpose of this project was to create a culture of certification by increasing nurse awareness of PCCN certification benefits and increase the percentage of certified nurses on 10 East. Content was developed for two 8-hour course days with curriculum to support PCU RNs seeking to successfully pass the national PCCN exam, the PCCN certification criteria.

The evidence-based curriculum I created included a curriculum built within over 500 PowerPoint slides to support the RN's learning. To



Steffanie Bartholme, BSN, RN, PCCN

has been a nurse for 10 years graduating from the University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana campus in May 2011. She worked as a nurse in Illinois for 2 years before moving across country to San Diego. She has worked in a variety of units including med/surg, PCU telemetry, and now in the Critical Care Unit (CCU) at UCSD Hillcrest Campus. She has a passion for lifelong learning and career advancement. Outside of work, Steffanie enjoys running, snow skiing, and spending time with her nieces and nephew.



Melissa "Missy" Meehan, MSN, RN, ACNS-BC is the Quality and Professional Development Liaison for Hillcrest Inpatient Med/Surg Service (HIMS). She graduated from Cerritos College with an AA degree in Nursing and later from Point Loma Nazarene University's bridge program (RN to MSN). I have 34 years of acute hospital, ambulatory, home health nursing, and academic research experience. Twenty plus years experience in liver disease, transplantation, hepatobiliary surgery and pediatric infectious disease have all involved a high degree of project management and program development in high risk/vulnerable patient populations. Additionally, I am a National Board certified Adult Clinical Nurse Specialist. My current position at UC San Diego Medical Center as Quality and Professional Development Liaison, affords me the opportunity to support and engage RN staff as an entire division, at a specific unit level, or one on one individual to meet their professional development and educational needs to elevate our nursing practice. Mentoring, educating, role modeling and life-long learning are integral elements of both my personal and professional life. Beyond my current staff responsibilities, I have participated in additional activities representing our division and the role within UC San Diego Health (UCSDH), and to the greater local and national professional community. I am an adjunct professor at for several University Nursing programs. I am a single mother to a very vivacious and inquisitive 14-year-old daughter who has been keeping me on my toes ever since we adopted each other. I enjoy many creative endeavors of the textile nature to fine art oil painting. I garden, bake, quilt, knit, and sew. I have enjoyed much world travel and served on 3 medical missions to Haiti and Guatemala.

further support the RN's learning I coordinated with multiple internal content experts to validate and teach portions of the curriculum. During prep course planning, there were numerous challenges related to building the didactic, coordinating with content experts and scheduling the courses. Establishing the prep course as formal nursing education associated with continuing education contact hours (CEUs) included work I had not previously managed. Developing this program pushed me to a new level, learning many new skills along the way.

Since the launch of the PCCN prep course in May 2017, 10 East has seen an increase in PCCN-certified nurses from 9 to 20, with an overall certification rate of 40%. This is above the national average of 38%. In July 2018, 10 East officially transitioned to a PCU unit. After success on 10 East, I wanted to extend my PCCN prep course across Hillcrest Inpatient Medicine division. I held a second round on classes in summer 2018 with 18 total nurses attending from four units. I presented my project for my CNIII reclassification and at the Nursing Inquiry and Innovations Conference in 2018 via poster.

In 2018, with the help of our educator, Amy Kalinowski and my mentor, Missy Meehan, the prep course expanded to a house-wide program. Content experts generously continued to volunteer their time teaching sessions. Prep course content was further aligned with the PCCN exam and amended to be inclusive of learners seeking to obtain their med/surg certification exam (CMSRN) as well. In 2019, four two-day sessions were offered free of charge to all UCSDH nurses between August and November. Over 200 nurses registered and 154 attended, each receiving 16 CEUs. Identifying those who successfully passed the exam was challenging and even more so with the pandemic emerging.

PCCN certification rates will be included with our Magnet redesignation application as part of all RN professional certifications. With the support of many, it has been an honor to turn what was my personal struggle to become PCCN certified, into a valued resource and for not just my unit or division, but also for any nurse across UCSDH wishing to become PCCN or CMSRN certified. Each session's evaluations, filled with RN thank yous and notes of gratitude, was also validation of work to create change.

This year, amid the pandemic, Amy and our content experts adapted the course to virtual option with the addition of two additional Zoom sessions in June and September. Adaptations included converting over 200 review questions to PollEverywhere to enhance participant engagement (answering questions through app on their smart phones and seeing results on Zoom slides) and confirm comprehension, as well as simulate sample test question experience. Conference rooms were reserved for some speakers to teach virtually with support of educator, with some speakers teaching from their remote location and Amy or Missy managing the Polling and chat room questions for each session. Where possible, content was converted to slides with voice over to be reviewed by participant ahead of class at their own pace—in an effort to help reduce 'Zoom fatigue'. It 'takes a whole village' to innovate and persevere with dissemination of knowledge in a pandemic! Obtaining your certification has also become more difficult through the pandemic with testing centers having stricter rules or shorter hours as well as individuals being more strapped financially to afford the upfront cost of the exam. Either way, turnout for the 2020 virtual classes were a success and nurses continue to be interested in expanding their nursing knowledge. Due to popularity and demand, we have three sessions scheduled for 2021 beginning in March.

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We proudly recognize...

Erin Prudoff	Hillcrest PACU	Improving Inpatient Throughput in Preop Holding: A Pilot Project to Reduce Operating Room Delays and Increase Preop Checklist Compliance	CNIII
Sandy Jellen	Moore's Cancer Center	Implementation of a Patient Acuity Tool to Develop an Efficient Infusion Center Nursing Assignment Tool	CNIII
Brittney Sullivan	JMC 6BMT	BMT Specific Trigger Tool to Increase Advance Care Planning and Goals of Care Conversations in Critically Ill Cancer Patients	CNIII
Yvette Greffrath	5 West	Addressing Barriers to Performing Oral Care (Making Oral Care Mindful on a Progressive Care Unit)	CNIII
Michael Hammer	JMC 4FGH	CSI: Reflective Practice by Case Study Investigation	CNIII
Laurena Downing	L&D	Improvement of Nurse to Provider Communication and Patient Treatment Times for Obstetrical Patients Experiencing Hypertensive Emergencies	CNIII
Heather Davis	11th floor	Improving Progressive Mobility in Post Operative Intermediate Care Unit Patients Through the Implementation of a Standardized Communication Tool	CNIII
Breanna Champion-Ybarra	5 West	Abuse Assessment Screen (AAS) Implementation: Improving Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Management	CNIII
Dennis Gerrits	8th floor	Decreasing HgbA1c: Apply ICE—Improving Confidence through Emmi	CNIII
Shannon Cotton	CCU	Pronation Therapy and Paralytic Medication in Covid-19 ARDS: A Retrospective Study	CNIII
Megan Yap	JMC 4FGH	New Grad Launch Pad: Preparing for Take Off!	CNIII
Megan Fung	JMC 4FGH	Onboarding Mentorship Program to Increase Retention Rates on PCU	CNIII
Scott Sniffin	Hillcrest ED	The Modified Valsalva Maneuver (REVERT): Treating Patients Presenting to the ED with Stable Ventricular Tachycardia	CNIII
Jillian Sherman	JMC NICU	Utilizing Bedside Tablets to Improve Parent Education, Confidence, Satisfaction	CNIII
Kelly Wagner	Cardiology	Kansas City Cardiomyopathy Questionnaire (KCCQ) and 5 Meter Walk (5MW) Performance Improvement	CNIII
Elise Groves	CVC ICU	The Ventilation Liberation Protocol	CNIII
Zohra Cincotta	JMC NICU	Improving the Lives of Babies by Empowering Nurses to Initiate and Provide Efficient Neonatal Resuscitation	CNIII
Michaela Rojas	JMC Kidney Transplant	Implementation of a new Kidney Transplant waitlist protocol, thereby increasing the number of transplants and decreasing 801 and 812 codes for donor offers in UNET	CNIII
Marcon Nicdao	5 West	Keep "PIN" it Clean: An Evidence-Based Practice on Pin Site Care	CNIII
Grace Nasi	5 West	National Early Warning Score 2 (NEWS2) Bundle: Enhancing the Identification of Patient Decline in Trauma PCU	CNIII
Paen Smith	L&D	Phase 2: Hand Scrub	CNIII
Mary Ekno	NICU	Use of mobile technology to improve breastfeeding rates among preterm infants: A non-randomized interventional pilot study	CNIV



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Through this process of creating a class and obtaining my CNIII, I learned that meeting staff education needs is important for patient outcomes and specialty certification has value. I learned that if something doesn't exist in your organization, you can create it while collaborating with others.

If you are considering taking the next professional step or looking to advance to CNIII, connect with others for support on preparing for the specialty certification for your

area. There may be an in-house prep course or support for obtaining preparation outside of UCSDH. Look at the Nursing Resource Hub for more information. You won't regret it! (<https://health.ucsd.edu/medinfo/nursing/professional-development/Pages/calendar.aspx>).

Rebecca Garrett-Brown, CNM MS

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Rebecca is known for being thorough and for attention to detail. It is no surprise that she works on the Quality Assurance team for our practice. She has been integral in getting a chart review system in place to improve midwifery care and documentation. She also functions as the lead midwife at one of our prenatal offices. She participates in operations meetings and provides a CNM perspective.

Rebecca is active in the California Nurse-Midwives Association (CNMA). In 2016, she was elected President, and worked tirelessly to promote legislation for independent practice. As immediate past president, she has been an active member of the CNMA Health Policy committee which this year successfully got a bill passed, now signed into law, removing physician supervision for Nurse-Midwives in California.