



PEDIATRIC NURSING CERTIFICATION BOARD

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For Immediate Release

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PNCB Launches Pediatric Primary Care Mental Health Specialist Certification *PMHS Specialty Certification Validates Advanced Practice Nursing Expertise and Strengthens Care for Children and Adolescents with Behavioral and Mental Health Concerns*

GAITHERSBURG, MD (December 5, 2011) – The Pediatric Nursing Certification Board (PNCB) announced today that the new Pediatric Primary Care Mental Health Specialist Certification exam is now open to PNP, FNP, and CNS applicants. Successful exam candidates will earn the credential **Pediatric Primary Care Mental Health Specialist (PMHS)**.

The PMHS exam was developed in response to the urgent need to strengthen care to children, adolescents, and families experiencing behavioral and mental health concerns. The purpose of this exam is to validate the added knowledge, skills, and expertise of primary care advanced practice nurses who meet the needs of children and adolescents through the early identification, intervention, and collaboration of care of behavioral and mental health concerns. These providers include pediatric nurse practitioners, family nurse practitioners, and clinical nurse specialists who meet the exam eligibility requirements.

“Improving access to expert care in pediatric behavioral and mental health is urgently needed now more than ever,” stated Sarah Gutknecht, DNP, RN, CPNP-AC/PC, PNCB Board President. “Validating this specialty expertise on a national level provides added assurance for patients and families when they need it most.”

Peg Harrison, MS, RN, CPNP, PNCB Chief Executive Officer adds, “In spring 2011, the response to the opportunity to pilot test this exam was tremendous. All 250 beta exam seats were filled within eight hours. Psychometric analysis concluded in fall 2011, and 182 advanced practice nurses earned PMHS status via pilot testing. We expect PMHS to be a highly sought after credential given the important national focus on access to care for children and adolescents with behavioral and mental health concerns.”

Specialty certification provides added recognition, beyond advanced practice nursing certification, of practice knowledge and expertise. PMHS specialty certification is not linked to advanced practice nursing state licensure requirements. To learn more about the PMHS exam, including eligibility requirements, visit www.pncb.org/bmh.html.

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The Pediatric Nursing Certification Board is the largest independent pediatric nursing certification organization in the country. Today, over 30,000 pediatric nurses and nurse practitioners are certified by the PNCB. All of PNCB's exams are endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners (NAPNAP) and the Society of Pediatric Nurses (SPN). For more information about the PNCB, visit www.pncb.org.