

Pediatric Nurses Value Certification

Did you know there are over 15,000 Certified Pediatric Nurses and Certified Pediatric Nurse Practitioners? With so many pediatric nurses who have obtained certification in their specialty field, it may come as no surprise that pediatric nurses value certification. To further prove that point, the Pediatric Nursing Certification Board recently joined with other nursing certification organizations to specifically measure the value of nursing certification and identify ways nurses are recognized for their certifications.

The Pediatric Nursing Certification Board (PNCB) is a member of the American Board of Nursing Specialties (ABNS), an organization that was formed in 1991 to create uniformity in nursing certification and to increase public awareness of the value of certification. In 2005, the PNCB joined with 19 other specialty nursing certification organizations as part of an ABNS-sponsored study on the Value of Specialty Nursing Certification that validated nurses' perceptions, values and behaviors related to certification.¹ The study used an Internet-based survey tool to ask nurses their perceptions of certification, rewards and barriers to certification, and a variety of demographic data. Central to measuring the value of certification, the survey incorporated the Perceived Value of Certification Tool (PVCT)^{©2}, a reliable tool that incorporates 18 certification-related value statements.

Participating organizations were asked to invite certified nurses and non-certified nurses from their practice area to complete the survey. In addition to the certified and non-certified samples, each organization was also asked to select a nurse manager sample. For the PNCB, 470 nurses completed the survey; 451 (96%) were certified, and 42 (8.9%) out of the total sample indicated they were managers. A quick "snapshot" of a typical survey respondent is a female

(97.8%), staff nurse (45.6%), with a baccalaureate degree (46.8%). She works at a nonprofit, acute care hospital (65.4%), earns between \$40,000 to \$70,000 a year (56.5%), and has 20 years of nursing experience.

Study Findings

Results of this survey overwhelmingly validated that pediatric nurses do have positive perceptions on the value of certification. Using the Perceived Value of Certification Tool (PVCT)[®], pediatric nurses showed a high level of agreement with the value statements on certified practice.

Value Statements	Total Pediatric Nurse Respondents (N=470) Percent who strongly agree and agree with the value statement
Enhances feelings of personal accomplishment	99.7%
Provides personal satisfaction	99.3%
Validates specialized knowledge	99.1%
Indicates professional growth	98.6%
Provides evidence of professional commitment	98.1%
Enhances professional credibility	97.6%
Indicates attainment of a practice standard	96.4%
Provides professional challenge	96.0%
Provides evidence of accountability	89.7%
Enhances personal confidence in clinical abilities	88.1%
Promotes recognition from peers	87.0%
Indicates level of clinical competence	85.1%
Increases marketability	83.8%
Promotes recognition from other health professionals	83.5%
Promotes recognition from employers	83.4%
Enhances professional autonomy	80.3%
Increases consumer confidence	78.7%
Increases salary	40.5%

The pediatric nurses who responded to this survey shared a high rate of agreement that certification:

- Enhances feelings of personal accomplishment,
- Provides personal satisfaction,

- Validates specialized knowledge, and
- Indicates professional growth.

Only one statement - “Certification increases salary” - did not receive overall agreement from the respondents. And when compared to the entire ABNS sample of 11,427 respondents, pediatric nurses had higher ratings for the value statements that state certification:

- Enhances professional credibility,
- Provides evidence of professional commitment,
- Promotes recognition from employers, and
- Increases consumer confidence.

These results demonstrate why pediatric nurses choose to pursue CPN and CPNP certification status; for many valid reasons, their accomplishment is valued.

Recognition and Incentives for Certification

To encourage certification among pediatric nurses, employers have adopted a variety of incentives and methods of recognition. As another component of the Value of Certification study, nurses were asked to document the benefits of certification. The following table lists the recognition methods for certification by the frequency an incentive was noted by the pediatric nurse respondents. The survey participants were asked to mark as many methods for recognition as applied to their work settings.

Incentives	Count (number of times incentive cited)
Reimbursement for examination fees	199
Listing of certification credential(s) on nametag and/or business card	128
Reimbursement for continuing education	119
Paid time off for attending continuing education classes	114
Advancement on the nursing clinical/career ladder	105

No Incentive	86
An increase in salary (including annual bonus)	
Recognition as an expert in my field by my colleagues	77
Reimbursement for recertification fees	75
Paid time off for taking examination	61
Publication of names in institutional newsletter or other relevant literature	61
A one-time bonus, other than salary	49
Retention in the position held at the time	22
Plaque displayed listing certified nurses	14
Annual recognition event, i.e., breakfast, luncheon	10
Promotion to a higher level position	10

The top benefits and rewards provided by employers, as noted by the pediatric nurses in the survey included: reimbursing examination fees, displaying certification credential on nametag and/or business card, and reimbursing for and providing paid time off for continuing education. A positive finding was that for over one-fifth of the pediatric nurses surveyed (22.0%) their employers offered an increase in salary for certification. Of note, a smaller percentage of pediatric nurses (18.3%) stated that their facilities offered none of the above listed incentives for certification.

Promoting the Value of Pediatric Nursing Certification

The ABNS Value of Specialty Nursing Certification Survey provided an unprecedented examination of nurses' perceptions, values and behaviors related to nursing specialty certification. As a participant organization in this study, the Pediatric Nursing Certification Board added the voice of pediatric nurses to that of nurses among all specialties who validated the high value placed on nursing certification.

This study also authenticated the high value health care employers place on certification. Pediatric nurses identified a number of incentives offered to those who are certified, including increases in salary, reimbursements for certification-related expenses, recognition by employers,

and advancement in their careers. The Value of Nursing Certification study expresses the meaningful value placed on nursing certification and explains why every PNCB-certified pediatric nurse should take pride in their certification achievement.

References

¹ American Board of Nursing Specialties. (2006). Value of Certification Study. Executive Summary. www.nursingcertification.org/pdf/executive_summary.pdf

² The PVCT was developed, validated and copyrighted by the Competency & Credentialing Institute (formally the Certification Board Perioperative Nursing) in 2000-2001. The PVCT consists of 18 items that utilize a five point Likert scale response, labeled strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, and no opinion.