

To: Certification Summit Attendees

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RE: Certification Summit: Summary of Proceedings

The American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) hosted a Certification Summit at its offices in Silver Spring, Maryland, on May 2, 2019, to discuss strategies for advancing the research on nursing in certification, which has been noted to be remarkably limited. Attendees included more than 40 leaders from certification bodies, certification body member organizations, researchers, funders, and deans.

Background. The meeting's pre-read materials[†] included several articles and documents describing major activities since 2012 that had focused on developing a research agenda for certification in nursing.

- 2012 Institute of Medicine (IOM) Standing Committee on Credentialing Research in Nursing
- 2014 IOM Workshop: *Future Direction of Credentialing Research in Nursing*
- 2016 *A National Convening: The Value of Certification* hosted by the American Board of Nursing Specialties (ABNS)
- 2016 Launch of the study *Conceptual and Operational Definitions of Certification in the Research Literature—A Scoping Review*

Goals for the Certification Summit were three-fold:

- to review results of the scoping review study of certification in nursing launched in 2016
- to prioritize certification research questions
- to develop support strategies for research on certification in nursing

Pre-interviews. To inform the summit discussions, advance interviews were conducted with several participants and identified the following themes:

- Certification is believed to add value and impact outcomes but research evidence is extremely limited.
- Certification research is challenging due to unclear definitions and confounding variables.
- Follow-up work to past meetings on advancing the research has been slow and uncoordinated.
- A more rapid, coordinated approach is needed for both conducting and funding the research.

Presentations. Rick Meadows, ABNS Treasurer, reviewed descriptions of the four research priorities identified at the ABNS-hosted meeting, *A National Convening: The Value of Certification*, held in March

of 2016. Simon Kitto, Principal Investigator of the study *Conceptual and Operational Definitions of Certification in the Research Literature—A Scoping Review*, presented the background and methods that led to developing a sensitizing definition of certification for research purposes.

Discussions. Summit attendees collectively identified a number of barriers that have stalled efforts to advance the research on certification in nursing.

They confirmed that Strategic Priority Area #4 from the ABNS National Convening remains the top research priority today.

Priority Area #4: Advances safety, improves processes of care and quality of care.

The purpose of research in this area is to investigate and demonstrate the link/relationship between certification and processes of care, quality of care, and safety. Studies should focus on collecting data to explore and delineate outcomes and impacts of certified practice compared to non-certified practice on: (1) better outcomes or processes of care; (2) patient satisfaction; and/or (3) performance outcomes.

Attendees also agreed to accept the sensitizing definition as the starting point for advancing the research.

Certification in nursing acts as a mechanism for validation or formal recognition by documenting individual nurses' knowledge, skills, and abilities specific to their specialty. To become certified, nurses are required to meet predetermined eligibility criteria and achieve standards identified by a nursing specialty, including sufficient practical experience and passing a certification examination that provides external validation of knowledge and judgement. The intended outcome of certification in nursing is to validate competence with the overall goal of improving safety, quality of care, and health outcomes for people who use healthcare services. (Chappell et al., 2019).³

Summit outcomes. Through a collaborative and iterative process, attendees also committed to the following:

- **Establish a governance structure, charter, objectives and volunteers**
 - **Proposed Name:** Coalition for Nursing Certification Research (CNCR)
 - **Charter:** To advance the body of evidence in nursing certification research using the sensitizing definition.
 - **Objective 1:** Create a steering committee of 5-6 organizations/representatives to start the work.
 - **Objective 2:** Use Priority #4 as the focus.
 - **Volunteers:** Liz Madigan, Jim Stobinski, Karen Sutherland, Kathy Chappell, Lori Rhudy

- **Outline research strategies and data sources**
 - Start with accredited voluntary certification as opposed to APRN certification.
 - Begin developing common data elements.
 - Collate and review existing attributes of certifications across certifying organizations (e.g., methods, requirements, types, KSA). Concentrate on initial versus re-certification and requirements for certification.

- Generate research questions and methods to be prioritized using Needleman et al. (2014)⁴ model published as Figure 2-2 in the IOM *Future directions of credentialing research in nursing: Workshop summary* (2015)⁶.
 - Charge a workgroup to organize the process of broad stakeholder engagement.
 - **Volunteers:** Amy Grand, Cindy Lemek, Cindi Noe, Diane Thompkins, Marianne Weiss
- **Explore funding and resources**
 - Create an inventory of funders.
 - Collaborate with the leadership team to develop strategy for seeking funding and getting interested.
 - Support research teams.
 - Get a critical mass (using summit attendees as a start) of stakeholders to advance research forward. Build collective impact. Pilot studies to start giving researchers and potential funders findings that are scalable.
 - Leverage accreditors as they have interest in this work. Help communicate importance of the work to solicit support for this idea.
 - **Volunteers:** Edna Cadmus, Elizabeth Franzino, Christine Pabico

Next steps. In addition to this brief summary of the Certification Summit proceedings, ANCC will create a longer summary of the Certification Summit's background, discussions, and results for dissemination.

[†]Background Documents

1. Chappell et al. 2016. Conceptualization and operationalization of certification in the US and Canadian nursing literature. *J Nurs Adm*, 48(5):238-246.
 2. ElChamaa et al. 2019. Constructing a sensitizing definition of certification in nursing: A consensus-based approach. *J Nurs Adm*, 49(1):1-3.
 3. Chappell et al. 2019. Constructing a sensitizing definition of certification in nursing for research purposes: A hybrid methodology using consensus-building approach. *J Nurs Adm*, 49(1):12-18.
- Optional (listed in chronological order)
4. Needleman et al. 2014. *Nurse credentialing research frameworks and perspectives for assessing a research agenda*. Discussion paper. Institute of Medicine, Washington, DC. <https://nam.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/CredentialingResearchFrameworks.pdf>
 5. Hickey et al. 2014. Credentialing: The need for a national research agenda. *Nurs Outlook* 62:119-27.
 6. Institute of Medicine (IOM). 2015. *Future directions of credentialing research in nursing: Workshop summary*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. Available at <https://www.nap.edu/catalog/18999/future-directions-of-credentialing-research-in-nursing-workshop-summary>
 7. ABNS (American Board of Nursing Specialties). 2016. *A National Convening: The value of certification – Executive Summary*. Available at <http://www.nursingcertification.org/resources/documents/research/Value-of-Certification-Convening-Report-Final.pdf>