

Advanced Practice Nurse Prescriber: Continuing Education Requirements

WANA leadership has recently fielded questions from several members regarding the continuing education requirements for CRNAs who want to become or wish to maintain advanced practice nurse prescriber status.

There seems to be more interest of late in Wisconsin CRNAs becoming APNPs, as more hospitals are requiring nurse anesthetists to also have their APNP certification from the State of Wisconsin.

Therefore, we thought it would be helpful to clearly describe the applicable requirements for Wisconsin APNP certification purposes.

New APNP Applicants

One particular area that seems to be most difficult for new APNP applicants is the clinical pharmacology/therapeutics requirement. The APNP applicant must document that he/she has completed at least 45 "contact hours" in clinical pharmacology/therapeutics within three years preceding the APNP application. (See N 8.03 (4) of the Wisconsin Administrative Code.) "One contact hour means a period of attendance in a continuing education program of at least 50 minutes." (See N 8.02(6m)).

By "clinical pharmacology/therapeutics" is meant "the identification of individual and classes of drugs, their indications and contraindications, their likelihood of success, their side-effects and their interactions, as well as, clinical judgment skills and decision-making, based on thorough interviewing, history-taking, physical assessment, test selection and interpretation, pathophysiology, epidemiology, diagnostic reasoning, differentiation of conditions, treatment decisions, case evaluation and non-pharmacologic interventions." (See N 8.02(4).)

If you want to have your APNP application processed without delay, make sure the materials you submit clearly document the 45 contact hours and that those hours are in clinical pharmacology/therapeutics within the last three years of your application. Do not simply send in a brochure from seminars that you have attended, expecting that the staff at the Department of Regulation & Licensing (DRL) has the time (or authority) to determine if you have properly documented the contact hours. Lay it out clearly the first time. Obtain a letter from the seminar educational coordinator breaking down the pharmacology/therapeutics contact hours in each seminar session you attended.

If you are having difficulty meeting this requirement consider taking a specific course in pharmacology/therapeutics (such as is offered @ <http://mynursingce.son.wisc.edu>).

Existing APNPs

In Wisconsin, existing APNPs are required to submit to the Board of Nursing evidence of having completed an average of at least eight contact hours per year in clinical pharmacology/therapeutics relevant to the APNP's area of practice. (Please refer to the previous

section of this memo regarding what are "contact" hours and what is included in "clinical pharmacology/therapeutics.")

In addition, the CRNA APNP must retain supportive documentation of continuing education for at least four years. Here again, existing CRNAs who are APNPs should do everything possible to make their continuing education submission as easy to process as possible. Do not put the DRL staff in the position of having to interpret or analyze the materials you submit. Obtain a letter from the seminar educational coordinator breaking down the pharmacology/therapeutics contact hours in each seminar session you attended. If you are having difficulty meeting this requirement consider taking specific CEUs in pharmacology/therapeutics. The WNA offers a meeting every year "Pharmacology and Clinical Update" specific for this purpose.

Note: Audio-digest Anesthesiology, pharmacology contact hours (0.5), will NOT meet CRNA requirements. These contact hours are approved for members of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners ONLY!