TIMELY TOPICS
ABPANC Answers Your Toughest Questions About the CPAN® and CAPA® Certification Process

DOES ABPANC HAVE A RETIRED OR INACTIVE STATUS?
ABPANC introduced a retired status in April of 2017. ABPANC will continue convene a Recertification Taskforce and, as a part of this taskforce, will evaluate the feasibility of creating an inactive status.

WHY DOESN’T ABPANC OFFER A “FAIL-SAFE” PROGRAM?
We are aware of the Fail-Safe type programs offered by a few of our colleague organizations in the nursing certification space but ABPANC is not offering such a program and has no plans to do so. ABPANC is always identifying ways for providing study tools to help prepare perianesthesia nurses to take the CPAN® and CAPA® examinations.

We are pleased to offer the following resources for our candidates:

- A scholarship for exam fees
- A mobile study App
- A 12-week Study Plan
- Certification Candidate Handbook
- A free Study Question of the Week program
- Certification coaches
- Listing of Study References used to validate exam questions
- 4 Practice Exams for Sale, which are buy one get one free
- 2 webinars one on Test-Taking Strategies and the other on Fear of Failure

And many more! These can be found on the ABPANC website, www.cpanca.org, under resources. In addition, candidates who are not successful are given a $50 discount on a subsequent examination. We continue to address how we can most cost effectively offer the CPAN and CAPA examinations.

DOES ABPANC OFFER A VOUCHER PROGRAM FOR HOSPITALS THAT WANT TO PURCHASE MULTIPLE EXAM REGISTRATIONS?
At this time, ABPANC does not offer a voucher program, but we are exploring the feasibility of adding this type of program in the future.

WHY DON’T THE PRACTICE EXAMS THE STUDY QUESTIONS OF THE WEEK OR THE APP GIVE THE RATIONALE FOR THE ANSWERS?
The ABPANC practice exams have been revised so that the correct answer is provided for each question as well as at least one current reference from the Study References List to validate the correct answer. ABPANC believes that empowering candidates to refer to the reference themselves to find the correct
answer and understand the rationale makes them active participants in the learning process, which is ultimately better for their comprehension and retention.

WHY ISN’T THERE A PEDIATRIC SPECIFIC PERIANESTHESIA EXAMINATION?

As part of the past four Role Delineation Studies, the survey includes information that would give us data to determine if, indeed, a stand-alone pediatric examination is warranted. Ten percent of the content of the CPAN® and CAPA® exams address needs of pediatric patients specifically. There are also many other questions that apply to pediatric nurses and their patients. The RDS Advisory Team always includes a participant who is a CPAN or CAPA pediatric perianesthesia nurse. However, ABPANC will consider whether doing a feasibility study in the future to create a pediatric perianesthesia nursing certification program is possible and cost effective.

IS IT SUFFICIENT TO JUST STUDY FROM ONE BOOK, LIKE THE CORE OR DRAIN?

No! ABPANC provides the Study References List, which can be found in the Certification Candidate Handbook and on the ABPANC website. These references are the only ones used to validate the questions and answers used on the certification examinations. If ABPANC was to develop their exams based on only one or two references, then the exams become a test about those references. Reviewing the content outlined in the Test Blueprint will help one identify one's study needs. And, while candidates are not expected to study from all the references listed, choosing multiple references based one's specific learning needs is the best study plan.

I CAN’T AFFORD ALL OF THE REFERENCES. WHAT DO YOU RECOMMEND?

Individuals should see what references are available at their workplace or local library; ask other nurses in your unit who have passed the exam to borrow their references; speak to Component colleagues if any of them have some of the references; see if a study group has been formed locally – there may be an opportunity to share references; consider “renting” from Amazon, or buying the books used.

WHAT DOES THE CLINICAL PRACTICE REQUIREMENT OF DIRECT CARE EXPERIENCE MEAN FOR INITIAL CERTIFICATION?

For those individuals seeking initial certification, as published in ABPANC’s Certification Candidate Handbook, the clinical eligibility requirement is:

“Candidates applying for initial CPAN® or CAPA® certification must have a minimum of 1800 hours of direct perianesthesia clinical experience as a Registered Nurse during the past two years prior to application. In other words, when seeking initial certification, a candidate must have bedside interaction caring for perianesthesia patients.”

Those in staff nurse roles will obviously have no problem meeting this requirement. However, confusion exists regarding how educators, managers, researchers, and Clinical Nurse Specialists can meet the requirement.

One does not need to be “technically” employed in a “direct care” position. If one's role (e.g., educator, manager, Clinical Nurse Specialist) involves bedside interaction with the patient and/or family in some capacity, then you are actively participating in the individual patient experience and those hours would count toward meeting the experience requirement.
DOES WORKING IN THE PREADMISSION DOING PRESCREENING BY PHONE QUALIFY FOR CERTIFICATION?

Yes. Peri-anesthesia nurses in this role have direct interactions with this population of patients – screening and providing guidance for them as they prepare for surgery, including but not limited to taking a pre-anesthesia history, determining need for preoperative labs and testing, teaching patients about medical and pharmacological management in preparation for surgery. The CAPA examination is the examination most relevant to the needs of their patients. Carefully review the examination blueprint because there will be patient needs you may not have encountered in this role but you will still need to know about these needs and the knowledge required to meet them.

WHY DOES ABPANC HAVE A DIRECT CARE REQUIREMENT?

The importance of nursing practice stems from its connection to patient care. In order to translate nursing knowledge and judgment into practice, one needs to have practiced direct, “hands-on” care prior to being CPAN® and/or CAPA® certified. The CPAN and CAPA certification programs are intended to assure the public that the certified nurse has both the knowledge and experience to meet their needs. Patients should logically be able to assume that the certified peri-anesthesia nurse has actually provided direct, “hands-on” care to peri-anesthesia patients. Putting ourselves in the position of being a patient or family member, would we feel comfortable having a board-certified cardiovascular surgeon perform open heart surgery on us or a loved one if the surgeon has never actually done so before or performed such surgery recently?

In summary, the CPAN and CAPA credentials are an affirmation of ABPANC’s commitment to quality nursing care and patient safety. ABPANC is committed to ensuring that our patients receive care from CPAN and CAPA certified nurses – such certification reflecting current and the most up to date knowledge and experience. If you are unsure whether your role would meet the new clinical practice experience requirement, do not hesitate to contact ABPANC for clarification at abpnc@proexam.org.

DOES ABPANC REQUIRE THE BSN DEGREE TO SIT FOR THE CPAN AND/OR CAPA CERTIFICATION EXAMINATIONS?

No. While over 55% of CPANs and CAPAs possess a BSN degree, ABPANC does not require the BSN to sit for certification.

WHAT IF I DON’T MEET ABPANC’S DIRECT CARE REQUIREMENT BUT STILL WANT TO BE CERTIFIED?

For those who do not have “hands-on” experience, we encourage them to seek certification in an area more relevant to their role, such as ANCC’s NE-BC or NEA-BC certification for nurse executives, or their staff development certification program. In addition, NLN offers certification for academic educators.

WHY SHOULDN’T I JUST TAKE THE CCRN EXAM?

The focus of the CPAN® and CAPA® examinations, unlike the CCRN examination, is on meeting the specific needs of peri-anesthesia patients. If you compare the test blueprints for each examination you will see some overlapping content, however, content related to the knowledge required to care for patients receiving anesthesia, analgesia, and sedation is specific to the CPAN and CAPA examinations.
WHY AREN’T THE CPAN AND CAPA EXAMINATIONS GIVEN YEAR ROUND LIKE THE CCRN EXAM?

The number of times the CPAN® and CAPA® examinations are given each year is largely driven by the number of test-takers. At this point in time, our volume is not nearly that of the CCRN program. In addition, giving examinations more frequently requires a robust bank of questions that have been pre-tested. Our ability to pre-test items is also driven by the number of test-takers. Pretested items are needed to develop examinations. When the number of test-takers increases, the ABPANC Board of Directors will carefully review the efficacy of adding a 3rd examination registration and administration window.

ARE THE CPAN AND CAPA EXAMINATION PROGRAMS ACCREDITED?

Yes! The CPAN® and CAPA® certification programs are accredited by the Accreditation Board for Specialty Nursing Certification (ABSNC).

I HAVE ALREADY SUBMITTED MY RECERTIFICATION APPLICATION AND CAN NO LONGER ACCESS MY CONTINUAL LEARNING DOCUMENTATION LOG. HOW CAN I RETRIEVE THE INFORMATION?

You will need to print out the summary page of the recertification document before you click submit. Some of our certified nurses use that summary page to renew their state RN license. Some states are moving to the certified nurse submitting their certification card for proof dependent on the state requirement for contact hours earned within a year. Once you click the submit button the Log is wiped clean for the next recertification cycle. You would need to contact the ABPANC National Office to ask for help in retrieving the previous Log – contact abpnc@proexam.org.

I AM DUAL CERTIFIED SO CAN I USE THE CONTACT HOURS EARNED FOR BOTH THE CPAN AND CAPA OR DO I HAVE TO OBTAIN 90 FOR EACH?

You may use the same contact hours earned to recertify both CPAN® and CAPA® credentials. However, contact hours accrued in the Spring and Fall Cycles are date-specific, and those dates are defined in both the Recertification Handbook and are re-iterated to you in the First Renewal Notice. The Spring Cycle is April 1st thru April 30th three years later; the Fall Cycle is October 1st thru October 31st three years later.

WHAT IF MY RECERTIFICATION FOR THE CPAN AND CAPA ARE NOT IN THE SAME RECERTIFICATION CYCLE?

Dual Certified CPANs and CAPAs in different cycles must be careful to claim their contact hours in the appropriate (date-specific) cycle.

IF I PASSED THE EXAMINATION WHY CAN’T I KNOW MY SPECIFIC SCORES?

ABPANC only provides “You Passed” information to Passers, primarily because scores are often misused by Passers and Employers. The score is not intended to be used as a criterion for hiring or making a hiring decision between two employees. For credentialing exams, the purpose of the examination is to distinguish between candidates who have mastered the knowledge for entry level. The exams are not designed to rank order employees – which is the danger of providing total scores.
ARE THE CPAN/CAPA EXAMS GIVEN INTERNATIONALLY?

Yes. Nurses working overseas in perianesthesia nursing must meet the eligibility requirements of having current and unrestricted RN licensure in the United States and the clinical practice eligibility as defined on page 6 of the Candidate Handbook, and must contact PSI at -800-733-9267 at least 4-6 weeks prior to taking the exam. They must sit for the exam during one of the exam administration windows. Military nurses stationed overseas must contact ProExam at abpancapp@proexam.org to request an overseas testing site.