

Should We Build It? Responding to Perceived Stakeholder Needs

Dr. Larry Fabrey, Senior Vice President, Psychometrics

Building a new certification program is not as easy as just saying “yes.”

Certification organizations often face pressure from stakeholders in their field to establish new certification programs. But building a new certification program is not as easy as just saying “yes” to these requests and then creating an exam for the new certification (not that doing those tasks are easy in and of themselves!). The decision of whether or not a new certification is needed should be a thoughtful process that assesses the impact and usefulness of a new credential for all stakeholders – practitioners, employers, third party reimbursers, educators, industry organizations, customers and the general public. With all of the individuals and groups that could be affected, it is clear that determining whether or not a new certification is necessary can be a difficult task. AMP assisted the Board of Certification for Emergency Nursing (BCEN) respond to stakeholder requests for certification of advanced practice registered nurses (APRN) in an emergency setting with an evaluation of the market for a new program. The lessons from that experience can provide valuable insight for other organizations.

Impetus for a New Program

BCEN is dedicated to certifying nurses who provide emergency nursing across the emergency care

continuum including the Certified Emergency Nurse (CEN), Certified Flight Registered Nurse (CFRN), Certified Transport Registered Nurse (CTRN) and the Certified Pediatric Emergency Nurse (CPEN) program which is developed and maintained through a partnership with the Pediatric Nursing Certification Board. BCEN was approached by clinical nurse specialist and nurse practitioner interest groups within the Emergency Nurses Association (ENA) about a new certification program for APRNs in an emergency setting. In order to respond to their stakeholders’ needs, BCEN moved forward with evaluating the feasibility of creating this new program.

Careful Planning

The first step in evaluating the need for a new program was to establish a steering committee that would direct the research and decision making process. The committee was comprised of key stakeholders including the BCEN Chairperson, Chairs of the ENA Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) and Nurse Practitioner (NP) groups, and key staff from ENA and BCEN. At a preliminary meeting, objectives were established and a draft of a script was created with a plan for gathering information from a focus group. The goal was that results of this study would provide the empirical

continued on page 2

New Business

2

A Day in the Life of a Candidate
Support Center Specialist

3

On the Road

4

Stay Connected

4

evidence for whether or not a new program was truly needed.

Gathering Data

Invitations for a focus group study were sent to individuals in targeted groups. The focus group was held in conjunction with the ENA annual conference to maximize participation. There were three primary questions that the focus group was trying to answer:

- Is there a need for a “validation mechanism” for APRNs in emergency care?
- What should be the primary goal of the new certification?
- What would be the best method of assessment?

Participants were provided background information and asked a variety of questions as approved by the steering committee.

The responses from each session were reviewed for accuracy and a consensus document was drafted and reviewed.

Based on the results of the focus group feedback, a short Needs Assessment Survey was created. After a pilot test with the steering committee and a few other respondents, the survey was delivered to a sample of 10,000 APRNs. Of the 509 responses, 280 respondents signified interest in this new program. This meant the anticipated candidate volume in the first year would be fewer than 200 since not all interested individuals would likely apply in the first year.

Results and Decision

The focus group and subsequent survey revealed that there was definitely interest in establishing a certification program for APRNs in an emergency setting, but there was not a consensus on the best type of assessment (examination, portfolio, etc.) for this new program. In addition, projections about candidate volume were too low to support ongoing program development. There were also some concerns that another certification was not needed because:

there are already enough certifications; APRNs in emergency care are already recognized; and that while new graduates

might perceive a need, experienced practitioners might not. After a thorough analysis of all the information, BCEN decided not to move forward with a new program. All of these steps were important to give legitimacy to the decision and ensure that BCEN was not trivializing the initial stakeholder requests for a new certification program.

Lessons for All Organizations

Deciding whether or not to develop a new certification program can be a difficult endeavor, but it is much easier with a thorough, systematic analysis of all affected parties. Responsible certification organizations should evaluate stakeholder requests for new programs in a structured process to ensure that a decision is made with an accurate assessment of the market and attention to true need and likely success. Organizations must be open-minded for all possibilities. Fervent initial interest may not mean that a new program is supportable after further analysis. Conversely, modest initial interest may later show a great urgency for a new program upon further research. Whatever the outcome, AMP is always here to assist our clients in making decisions that are best for their organizations.

New Business:

PENS

The Pediatric Endocrinology Nursing Society (PENS) is a voluntary non-profit specialty nursing organization committed to the advancement of the art and science of pediatric endocrine nursing. PENS recently selected AMP Management Services (AMP/MS) to act as its management company. To support PENS, AMP/MS provides full association management services with executive leadership, executive office and administrative services that include strategic and long range planning, leadership development, membership support and planning and oversight for its annual conference. In addition, AMP/MS provides support for education, communications, website, publications and meetings. For further information about PENS, please visit www.pens.org.

ABWM

The American Board of Wound Management (ABWM) is a national inter-disciplinary certifying board dedicated to helping patients who suffer from acute and chronic wounds. ABWM uses an interdisciplinary approach in promoting prevention, care and treatment. ABWM has established a certification process to elevate the standard of care across the field of wound management. ABWM has selected AMP to provide examination development, computer-based test administration, scoring and reporting services for ABWM's Certified Wound Care Associate (CWCA), Certified Wound

Specialist (CWS) and Certified Wound Specialist Physician (CWSP) examination programs. For further information about ABWM, please visit www.abwmcertified.org.

www.goAMP.com



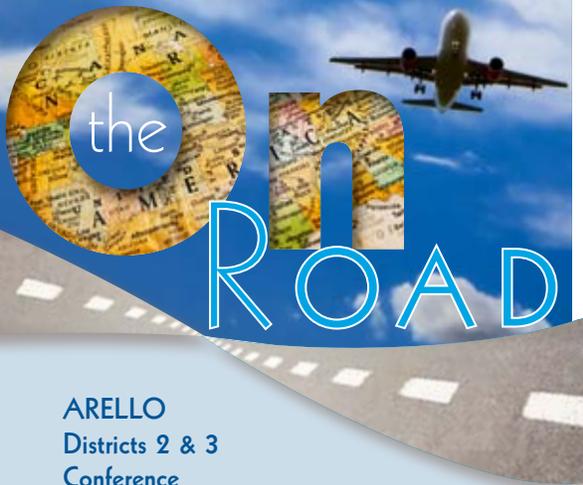
A Day in the Life of a Candidate Support Center Specialist

Helping Your Candidates Find Their Way

We know your candidates are your top priority. That's why we make them our top priority. We employ qualified, compassionate candidate support center specialists to serve our in-house call center and provide top-notch service to testing candidates and association members on behalf of the organizations for which we provide testing and association management services. For many testing programs, the AMP candidate support center specialist may be the candidates' first contact with your examination program, and we want to make it pleasant. Certification and licensure can be stressful processes for many professionals, and we stand ready to help iron out the wrinkles and deal with all the requests. You might not believe some of the questions we deal with on our clients' behalf! Spending a typical day with an experienced AMP candidate support center specialist will give you an idea.

I always prepare myself for a day full of handling interesting candidate calls. Most will be routine and easy to fulfill quickly and to completion. A few will need follow up or further research. My day is always full and never dull. To be prepared, I open an online tool which puts useful, up-to-date information on every AMP testing program at my fingertips, get a big cup of coffee and put a smile on my face. At 7:00 am, the call center opens and our phones go live. I will handle more than 100 calls before the day is over, but here are some highlights from my day.

- 7:00 am** I receive a call from a candidate for a water treatment examination. He passed the exam over 9 years ago, but needs to order a new wall certificate for his office. I inform him of the process and tell him where to find the appropriate form.
- 7:11 am** A candidate for an asthma education examination needs her password reset so she can access her online account for scheduling. Although we provide security questions online which allow candidates to reset their own password, we still occasionally get calls from candidates who prefer to handle this process by phone.
- 7:28 am** A candidate for a financial examination wants to reschedule her appointment which was originally scheduled for the next day. I explain the requirement of rescheduling within 2 days of the appointment. She understands and decides to test the following day and not forfeit her examination fee.
- 7:45 am** I schedule three candidates for testing at the same time and location so they can carpool and save on gas money. They are looking forward to a nice lunch in the city afterward as well.
- 8:03 am** I return messages from two candidates who called last night after the call center closed. All are easily resolved.
- 8:12 am** I spend time on the phone doing an evaluation with a potential healthcare certification candidate questioning her eligibility to take an examination. She is excited to learn she meets the eligibility requirements. She will start her application process through the sponsoring organization. I wish her luck.
- 8:25 am** Time for a second cup of coffee. Taking a brief break from the phones helps me recharge and maintain a positive attitude.
- 9:10 am** I answer questions for a real estate licensee inquiring about the rules for reciprocity in a neighboring state. She is excited to be moving, but worried about what it will take to transfer her license.
- 9:35 am** A candidate calls to confirm receipt of her fax. I check our incoming fax queue and was able to quickly confirm that we received it.
- 10:07 am** Three hours into my day, I get my first difficult call. A candidate has a complaint about the noise level at her recent testing appointment the previous day. I pull up her candidate record and take down all the details. I very clearly tell her the steps AMP will take to research and resolve the situation. She is upset at first, but talking her through the process seems to calm her down. I end the call, letting her know she will hear from someone at AMP within 24 hours, and I immediately send the information to my manager to begin AMP's process for complaint resolution.
- 10:17 am** I receive a call to order an online self-assessment examination. I refer the candidate to our online store to process their order.
- 10:53 am** A candidate calls from Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates to schedule a healthcare examination in our international network.
- 11:12 am** I email a candidate a copy of his receipt from a healthcare examination he previously scheduled. I also let him know this service is available online if needed in the future.
- 11:35 am** A candidate requests an extension for two examinations for which he is eligible. Per the program rules, I referred him to the sponsoring organization. As always, I make sure he has all the correct contact information to make those next steps as easy as possible.
- 11:45 am** Lunch time!
- 12:45 pm** Unfortunately, I now deal with a candidate request I can't resolve. She is having trouble registering online for a healthcare examination and none of my typical advice works. I forward her to my manager to get to the bottom of her difficulties. (Later I follow up and find out she is having internet connectivity problems.)
- 1:40 pm** A candidate has questions about the security of paying online. I was able to ensure her that we are fully PCI compliant and all her payment card information will be kept confidential. I provide her with payment alternatives so she can choose a payment method she finds most comfortable.



2:07 pm A healthcare certificant calls wanting to update her last name in our database, since she had recently been married. After using our online tool to confirm that the certifying organization does not require proof of documentation, I congratulate her and make the change, double-checking the spelling of her new last name.

2:19 pm A construction candidate calls to schedule her accommodations as covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act. I check her record and confirm her accommodations were previously approved, then transfer her to my colleague who schedules accommodations.

2:52 pm An orthotics practitioner calls wanting to schedule an examination. Unfortunately he is not an eligible candidate in our system. While talking through the situation with him, I conclude he has not waited the appropriate amount of time before calling to schedule his examination. I advise him to wait two more days, then call the sponsoring organization to check on the status of his application.

3:00 pm I handle the strangest call ever! The owner of a car wash has called saying he found a wallet. It had no direct contact information, but it did have a certification wallet card with our phone number on it. I take down the man's name, look him up in our system, and call the certificant to let him know where he can find his wallet. He was thrilled to learn where his wallet could be found. What a rewarding finish to a long day!

That ends a typical day in the AMP Candidate Call Center. We will remain open until 9:00 pm Central time this evening, but my shift is over. Other specialists will continue answering calls from association members and testing candidates, determined to see each inquiry through to the end in an efficient and friendly manner.



**ARELLO
Districts 2 & 3
Conference**

06/05/2012 – 06/07/2012
Rapid City, SD

CLEAR Annual Educational Conference

09/06/2012 – 09/08/2012
San Francisco, CA

ARELLO Annual Conference

09/20/2012 – 09/23/2012
Halifax, NS, Canada

ABNS Fall Assembly

10/05/2012 – 10/06/2012
Chicago, IL

ICE Annual Conference

11/06/2012 – 11/09/2012
Rancho Mirage, CA



We look forward to seeing you at one of these upcoming *On the Road* events!

For more information about any of our products or services, please contact the AMP Marketing department at 913.895.4600 or visit our website at www.goAMP.com.

Stay
Connected

Visit www.goAMP.com and join our mailing list to receive the eConnect newsletter or sign up for RSS feeds for news and press releases.

You can now also follow us on LinkedIn!

