

NCCAA Is Restructuring Its Exam and Fee Schedule



Since 1989, the National Commission for Certification of Anesthesiologist Assistants (NCCAA) has developed and administered an initial certifying (CERT) exam, interval examinations for continued demonstration of qualifications (CDQ) and maintained ongoing registration of continuing medical education (CME) for certified anesthesiologist assistants (CAA). Historically, each CAA has been expected to submit CME every two years and sit for a CDQ examination every six years. The fees for these services have not changed over the past two decades of the NCCAA. In 2023, the NCCAA will restructure and modernize the exam and fee schedule.

Over the past several years in the spirit of continuous improvement, the NCCAA has worked to provide new services, to modernize offerings, and to provide more value to the CAAs and to state licensing boards where CAAs practice. In the past six years, the organization has supported an increase of 73% in the number of CAAs served, administered 58% more exams, and seen an increase of 74% in CME registrations. To support this growth, the NCCAA has led key initiatives that:

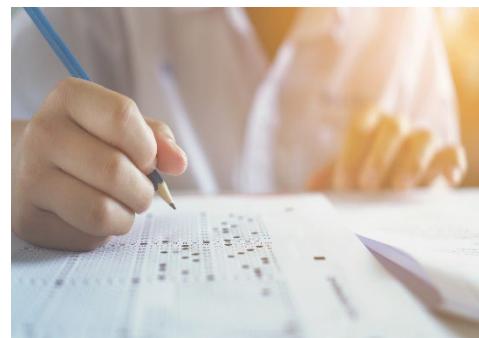
- Revamped the IT infrastructure and implemented a new website and portal to streamline the CME submission process.
- Enhanced exam development and improved delivery partner management.
- Redesigned the Continued Certification Process and reduced the frequency of CDQ examinations.
- Modernized the exam registration and scheduling process.

3 FEWER CDQ exams means....

**.....YOU may
SAVE TIME and
\$\$\$ over YOUR
career!!**

In addition to its duty to ensure a general knowledge of anesthesia and clinical skills of practicing CAAs and tracking of their CME for patients and state licensing boards, the NCCAA has strived to offer affordable services to CAAs to prevent being a barrier to the workforce.

Like other organizations, the NCCAA has faced significant cost increases with its operations and services. The NCCAA has managed to mitigate or absorb these costs through close coordination with its vendors and providers. Consequently, there has not been any NCCAA fee increases over the past two decades. To continue with modernization



projects and provide services to meet the current needs of CAAs, the NCCAA will change its fee structure, beginning with the 2023 exam registrations and the 2022-2024 CME Submission cycle (CAAs on the odd-year CME cycle will not see the change until the 2023-2025 submissions, due June 1, 2025).

What fees are changing?

To minimize the impact to CAAs, the fee restructuring was designed with a focus on budget neutrality over time. Starting in 2023, the fees for the CERT exam and the CDQ exam will increase, and the CME registration fee will increase over a 2-year period, beginning June 2, 2022 for CAAs on an even-year cycle. To maintain budget neutrality for CAAs, the change in fees that occurs will be offset by the reduction of frequency for the CDQ exam, which will save CAAs time and money.

The specific fee changes are outlined below:

- CERT exam will increase by \$72.50
- CDQ exam will increase by \$300
- CME registration will increase by \$60 over 2-year period

How did the CDQ exam intervals change?

Starting in 2020, we began the process of a rolling CDQ exam interval, transitioning from every six years to every 10 years, with the initial CDQ for graduating students required at the four-year mark before the 10-year interval goes into effect. Once a CAA has passed their exam on their current and final six-year cycle, the next interval is in 10 years.

What will the impact of these changes mean over time?

Although CAAs will experience a slight fee increase at the time of an examination or CME Submission, by eliminating approximately three CDQ exams over the career of a CAA, the CAA will benefit from a potential decrease in expense of NCCAA fees over their career.

- Over a 34-year career, the costs are approximately the same, averaging ~\$303/year.
- With three fewer CDQ examinations, you could save money over a longer career.

The NCCAA continues to strive toward patient safety through certification programs which assess the knowledge, skills, and competency of the CAA and to instill lifelong learning through continuing education requirements. As we move into the future, we will look for innovative ways to maintain financial stability for the Commission while being cognizant of the burdens maintaining certification places on a CAA's resources.