Re-entry Handbook

Certification Process for Anesthesiologist Assistants

National Commission for Certification of Anesthesiologist Assistants, Inc.
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NCCAA OVERVIEW

The National Commission for Certification of Anesthesiologist Assistants (NCCAA) is a not-for-profit corporation organized under the laws of the state of Georgia. NCCAA certification provides assurances to the public that Certified Anesthesiologist Assistants (CAA) possess the knowledge, skills and competency to practice as CAAs.

While individual states provide the legal credential for the practice of anesthesiologist assistants, private voluntary certification with the NCCAA indicates compliance with the professional standards for practice as an anesthesiologist assistant. The certification credential for anesthesiologist assistants has been adopted by many health care facilities, practice groups and health systems as a requirement for practice. The certification credential for anesthesiologist assistants has also been recognized in state medical practice acts as well as state administrative rules and regulations.

NCCAA Mission

The mission of the NCCAA is to promote patient safety through certification programs which assess the knowledge, skills and competency of the anesthesiologist assistant and to instill lifelong learning through continuing education requirements.

History

In 1989, a group of five anesthesiologists, two anesthesiologist assistants and one member of the public formed the National Commission for Certification of Anesthesiologist Assistants (NCCAA). Anesthesiologist Assistants had been in practice for a couple of decades. The need for independent credentialing of anesthesiologist assistants was deemed important to:

- Ensure the public of the training, knowledge and skill of anesthesiologist assistants.
- Protect the anesthesiologist assistants in practice by developing and ensuring standards for practice as an anesthesiologist assistant.

Purpose

The purpose of the NCCAA is to ensure that CAAs have the necessary knowledge and skills to practice safely and effectively. In so doing, the NCCAA also protects the value of the CAA credential. The NCCAA is responsible for:

- Establishing and maintaining criteria for the earning of designation as a Certified Anesthesiologist Assistant, including requirements for initial certification and continued certification.

- Adopting and confirming compliance of initial and continued certification eligibility requirements for certified anesthesiologist assistants.

- Formulating, adopting, and confirming compliance of the requirements for eligibility for admission to NCCAA-administered examinations or assessments including, but not limited to, the NCCAA Certification Exam (CERT) and the NCCAA Continued Demonstration of Qualifications (CDQ) Exam.

- Developing, administering, scoring and analyzing the NCCAA examination to establish proficient applicants for the credential of Certified Anesthesiologist Assistant.

- Formulating, adopting and administering NCCAA-created examinations or assessments to candidates who have met all requirements for examination or assessment and have been found eligible.

No national organization can expect to determine the specific procedures that any individual CAA is qualified to perform. Nor can any national organization adequately determine whether an individual CAA may have developed an impairment that could interfere with the proper administration of anesthesia. Ultimately, these judgments must be entrusted to the individual CAA, to those with whom they work, and those that provide state licensing for CAAs. The NCCAA seeks to protect the public's interest by enacting a plan of certification and recertification on evidence of continued competence in providing anesthesia as indicated by participation in continuing medical education, substantiation of satisfactory performance, and undergoing periodic re-examination to confirm maintenance of current medical knowledge.

Structure

The NCCAA Board of Directors is composed of certified anesthesiologist assistants who hold the NCCAA issued credential of CAA, board certified physician anesthesiologists and representatives of the public.

Communications

Five mechanisms are available for communicating with the National Commission:

- **Website**: www.nccaa.org
- **Email**: contact@nccaa.org
- **US Postal Service**:

  NCCAA
  Box # 160
  8459 US HWY 42
  Florence, KY 41042

- **Phone**: 859-903-0089
- **Direct Message through NCCAA Mobile Application**

Change of Address
The NCCAA maintains on file the mailing address of each applicant/candidate/practitioner as they submit it via the practitioner portal of the NCCAA application. **It is the responsibility of the applicant/candidate/practitioner to maintain accurate contact information, including address, email, and telephone number, with the NCCAA by use of the practitioner portal available on the NCCAA application.**

The NCCAA will not make changes of address based on letterheads, return addresses on envelopes, plain text email requests, etc. The NCCAA will not be responsible for lost or missed communications due to failure by the applicant/candidate/ practitioner to update the NCCAA of a change of address or contact information.

Change of Name

NCCAA maintains on file the name of each applicant/candidate/practitioner as they submit it via the practitioner portal of the NCCAA application. The name on file is used for communications, verification of certification, entrance to testing center, and other documents. **It is the responsibility of the applicant/ candidate/practitioner to maintain accurate name information with the NCCAA by use of the practitioner portal available on the NCCAA application.**

A name change is a two-step process within the NCCAA application. Upon changing a name within the practitioner account, notification must be made via email to contact@nccaa.org before the change of name will appear on the certificate of certification.

The NCCAA will not make changes of names based on letterheads, return addresses on envelopes, plain text email requests et cetera. **The NCCAA will not be responsible for lost or missed communications due to failure by the applicant/candidate/ practitioner to update the NCCAA of a change of name or contact information.**

Notification

Communication from the NCCAA via telephone, email or US postal service shall be considered valid notification. The NCCAA will not be responsible for loss of communications by the US Postal Service, facsimile, email or electronic communication via the NCCAA application.

RE-ENTRY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Re-entry Program is offered to those anesthesiologist assistants who have had a lapse in their certification. The requirements for re-entry into the profession are tailored, depending on the length of time since the anesthesiologist assistant has been certified. The Re-entry Program provides the opportunity for an anesthesiologist assistant to obtain current knowledge and skills necessary for safe anesthesia practice and enables the anesthesiologist assistant to become NCCAA-certified, compliant, and restore their certification.

RE-ENTRY PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Certification Lapse more than Four (4) Years
Eligibility is for CAAs who have graduated from an Anesthesiologist Assistant educational program offered at an institution that is accredited by an agency recognized by the US Department of Education (USDE) or the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), with a minimum of a Masters degree and have allowed their certification to lapse, and have been out of practice for greater than four (4) years.

Certification is granted to applicants who successfully:

1) Pass the primary Certification Exam with scores as determined by the standards setting protocol.

2) Hold current ACLS and BLS certification.

Certification Lapse less than 4 Years
Eligibility is for CAAs who have graduated from an from Anesthesiologist Assistant educational program offered at an institution that is accredited by an agency recognized by the US Department of Education (USDE) or the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), with a minimum of a Masters degree, have allowed their certification to lapse and have been out of practice for less than 4 years.

Certification is granted to applicants who successfully:

1) Pass the Continued Demonstration of Qualifications (CDQ) Exam with scores as determined by the standards setting protocol.

2) Hold current ACLS and BLS certification.

3) Bring all CME arrears to current status.

    - Registration of 50 hours of eligible CME are required biennially to maintain certification.

    - Up to 10 of the 50 hours may be CAA Category II CME.

- The NCCAA will provide the candidate with instructions as to CME requirements to re-enter certification based on the candidate's individual CME lapse.

STEPS AND COMPLIANCE

Due to the individualized nature of re-entry into certification, candidates for re-entry are encouraged to contact the NCCAA at contact@nccaa.org early in the process to confirm eligibility to re-enter and requirements to comply.

Once all requirements are met for re-entry, the NCCAA will notify the candidate and update the online verification of certification database to reflect the certification status of the candidate.