

Nursing Informatics Credential

From RN-BC to NI-BC: What's in A Name (or Credential)?

The American Nurse Credentialing Center (ANCC) has long been recognized as an accrediting organization that credentials both organizations and individuals who advance nursing. Advanced certification attests to an individual's body of knowledge and experience in a specialty of nursing. The American Nurses Association approved nursing informatics as a new nursing specialty in 1992, with the development of the first scope of practice statement in 1994, and the first certification offered in 1995 (Cummins, 2016). The 2022 ANA Nursing Informatics Scope and Standards of Practice, 3rd edition's revised definition reflects continued evolution of the contributions of this specialty to the broad healthcare ecosystem.

The number of specialty certifications offered by the ANCC has increased over time, with 183 specialties certifications in 2022, creating a need for an intuitive designation for each specialty, to reflect the specific area of certification and expertise. Some examples of this specialty designation that have evolved include:

- Family Nurse Practitioner, FNP-BC
- Nurse Executive, Advanced, NEA-BC
- Nursing Professional Development, NPD-BC

Until recently, the Nursing Informatics credential has been designated as RN-BC. This designation historically did not convey the specialty of nursing informatics. A core group of nursing informatics experts came together to advocate for a change in this designation to more aptly reflect the specialty.

Through advocacy in partnership with the Alliance for Nursing Informatics, Dr. Patricia Sengstack, Dr. Cathy Ivory, Dr. Kelly Aldrich, Dr. Sharon Giarrizzo-Wilson, Kathleen Ulanday, Dr. Brenda Kulhanek, Dr. Kathleen Morouse, Dr. Nancy Beale, Susan Hull, and Whende Carroll along with Dr. Carol Bickford and Dr. Oriana Beaudet from the ANA began the dialogue to pursue this change in the credential designation for nursing informatics. After awaiting legal review, trademark research, and now formal endorsement of this change, we share that this persistent effort has initiated a long-awaited change in designation that reflects the specialty knowledge and expertise the credential affords. The specialty of Nursing Informatics continues to grow and is now more clearly reflected in the credentials for those who attain this sought after certification.

“Let us never consider ourselves finished nurses...we must be learning all of our lives.” – Florence Nightingale

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References:

Center, A. N. C. (2023). Informatics Nursing Certification. Retrieved November 1, 2023.

<https://www.nursingworld.org/our-certifications/informatics-nurse/>

Cummins, M. R., Gundlapalli, A. V., Murray, P., Park, H. A., & Lehmann, C. U. (2016). Nursing Informatics Certification Worldwide: History, Pathway, Roles, and Motivation. *Year Med Inform (1)*, 264–271. <https://doi.org/10.15265/IY-2016-039>

Sengstack, P. -*Request to Change ANCC Nursing Informatics Board Certified Credentials to “NI-BC”*, personal correspondence to the Alliance for Nursing Informatics co-chairs, 2022, November 4.

From Patty S – the original SBAR

Request to Change ANCC Nursing Informatics Board Certified Credential to “NI-BC”

Situation

Nurses who are board certified in nursing informatics through the American Nursing Credentialing Center (ANCC) are only able to use the designation of “RN-BC” which does not represent or indicate their specialty practice area.

Background

Registered nurses who are dedicated to a career in the field of informatics have the ability to become certified via multiple organizations. See table below. All except ANCC include a credential that indicates expertise in informatics.

Certifying Organization	Credential/Designation	Website
American Nursing Credentialing Center (ANCC)	RN-BC – Registered Nurse, Board Certified	https://www.nursingworld.org/ancc/
American Medical Informatics Association (AMIA)	ACHIP - AMIA Certified Health Informatics Professional	https://amia.org/careers-certifications/amia-health-informatics-certification-ahic
Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS)	CPHIMS - Certified Professional in Healthcare Information & Management Systems	https://www.himss.org/resources-certification/cphims

ANCC uses more specific credentials for many other nursing specialties, but not for nursing informatics. Some of these include:

Specialty	Credential/Designation
Ambulatory Care Nursing	AMB-BC
Cardiac-Vascular Nursing	CV-BC
Gerontological Nursing	GERO-BC
Medical-Surgical Nursing	MEDSURG-BC
Nursing Case Management	CMGT-BC
Psychiatric-Mental Health Nursing	PMH-BC
Nursing Professional Development	NPD-BC

Assessment

Registered nurses who wish to demonstrate their commitment to the profession of nursing informatics with certification have choices for where they obtain that certification. We believe that ANCC is the most respected certification in the nursing profession, yet for informatics nurses the credential does not reflect the specialty. There is precedent at ANCC where many other specialties are able to add a credential that clearly reflects their area of expertise. We also believe that updating the credential to clearly identify the nursing informatics specialty would be more attractive to potential informatics nurses considering sitting for A_N_C_C_'s examination.

Recommendation

Update the credential/designation for nurses who successfully pass ANCC's certification board exam for nursing informatics to “NI-BC”.