

Certification: Your Commitment to Excellence

Certified Clinical Hemodialysis Technician (CCHT) Examination: Dispelling the Myths

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There are a number of myths about the Certified Clinical Hemodialysis Technician (CCHT) examination.

Myth: It is premature to plan for hemodialysis technicians attaining certification.

April 2010 is fast approaching. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) surveyors visiting dialysis facilities are expecting to see a quality assessment and performance improvement (QAPI) plan for hemodialysis technicians to attain certification.

Myth: CMS is going to extend the dialysis technician certification deadline.

There is no indication that CMS will change the April 2010 certification deadline. Certification protects the public from unsafe and incompetent caregivers, gives consumers more choices in seeking healthcare providers, and distinguishes among levels of care.

Myth: Hemodialysis technicians whose role is limited to equipment set up do not need to be certified.

The CMS requirements for the “patient care dialysis technician” apply to any technician who has any responsibility for direct patient care, including setting up the dialysis machine for patient use (CMS, 2009).

Myth: Hemodialysis technicians do not need assistance completing the CCHT exam application.

Many hemodialysis technicians need and appreciate assistance completing the CCHT exam application. Nearly all pre-exam delays are related to incomplete applications. The oversight of an educator or supervisor can serve to ensure accuracy and completeness of application entries. For example, the name entered on the application *must match* the name on the government issued photo ID (driver’s license, passport).

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Myth: Falsifying high school education rarely happens.

Diploma mills are a billion dollar industry that extends worldwide. Falsifying an educational background is a serious thing – some states have laws against it. The Internet makes bogus diplomas and degrees easier to get than ever before. Employers are burdened with determining whether a diploma or degree earned by correspondence is really legitimate. The other side of the story is the victim who really wants and needs a legitimate diploma or degree but doesn’t know enough to tell the difference. The Center for Nursing Education and Testing (C-NET) is very savvy about recognizing phony credentials. Beware of misleading advertisements for hemodialysis technician study guides, flash cards, schools, and training programs that guarantee to raise CCHT scores.

Myth: There is an advantage to submitting multiple exam applications.

Having more than one application submitted to C-NET for the CCHT only serves to confuse and may delay the issuance of the CCHT certificate. Additionally, the applicant may be charged multiple times. If an applicant is asked to supply previously missing information, the applicant should only supply the information requested and *not* submit a duplicate application.

Myth: There are not enough proctors to administrate the CCHT exam.

No exam has been cancelled for lack of exam manager or proctor. To help meet the increased demand for the CCHT exam, both traditional paper-and-pencil and computer-based testing will be available in January 2010.

The **Certification Department** focuses on issues related to nephrology nursing certification. Readers are invited to submit questions, which will be answered by a member of the Nephrology Nursing Certification Commission. Address correspondence to: Barbara Prowant, Certification Department Editor, Nephrology Nursing Certification Commission; 200 East Holly Avenue/Box 56; Pitman NJ 08071-0056, or at nccc@ajj.com. The opinions and assertions contained herein are the views of the members of the Nephrology Nursing Certification Commission.

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Myth: The computer-based version of the CCHT will be an adaptive test that can be hosted by local dialysis facilities.

The computer-based version of the CCHT exam will be a linear or fixed-form test, just like the traditional paper-and-pencil test. Computer-based testing will be by availability of appointment at LaserGrade/PSI testing centers. There are approximately 260 center locations in the United States and Canada. Dialysis facilities will *not* be able to host computer-based testing.

Myth: CCHT exam repeaters tend to do better on each successive exam taken.

Unfortunately, there is a lower pass rate by repeaters. While 80% of first-timers pass and approximately 50% of second-timers pass, the pass rate decreases after the second attempt. This also holds true for nurses. This phenomenon may correlate with ability or exam preparation. Don't become discouraged, but do change exam preparation strategies. In order to show noticeable improvement, focus on test-taking skills, weak areas described in the report of test results, and studying core curricula.

Myth: LPN/LVNs have to be certified as dialysis technicians.

No, as stated at 42 CFR 494.140(b)(4), "Each nurse who provides care and treatment to patients must be

either a registered nurse or a practical nurse who meets the practice requirements in the State in which he or she is employed" (CMS, 2008).

Myth: There are no resources for CCHT exam questions.

The NNCC National Office welcomes queries at 1-888-884-6622, and for more information, please visit the NNCC Web site (www.nncc-exam.org).

Myth: The CCHT exam is too difficult for hemodialysis technicians.

Since January 2008, over 9000 technicians have successfully passed the CCHT exam.

References

- Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). (2008). *ESRD conditions for coverage (CfCs) final rule rollout: Frequently asked questions (FAQs)*. Retrieved from <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/CFCsAndCoPs/downloads/FAQsESRDRolloutFINAL082808.pdf>
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