



International Parish Nurse Resource Center Position Paper

A Ministry of the Church Health Center

Frequently Asked Questions about Faith Community Nursing Certification by Portfolio

1. What is the American Nurse Credentialing Center (ANCC) Nursing Certification by portfolio?

Certification is a way for registered nurses to validate their expertise in a specialized field of nursing. It is a way to be recognized and respected as a specialist in the practice of faith community nursing. Through the portfolio certification process, your skills, experience, abilities, knowledge, and accomplishments are showcased and evaluated by a peer-review process. Certified faith community nurses are recognized as experts in their specialty.

2. Where do I start?

Go to <http://www.nursecredentialing.org/certification.aspx> for eligibility criteria, costs, and detailed instructions for applying for Faith Community Nursing certification by portfolio.

3. What are the eligibility requirements?

- Hold a current, active RN license in a state or territory of the United States or the professional, legally recognized equivalent in another country
International Applicants: Learn about additional requirements for candidates outside the US on the ANCC website, <http://www.nursecredentialing.org/>.
- Have practiced the equivalent of at least two years full time as a registered nurse
- Have a minimum of 1,000 practice hours in the specialty area of faith community nursing in the past three years
- Have completed 30 hours of continuing education in faith community nursing in the past three years
- Fulfill two additional professional development criteria to be selected from the following:
 1. Academic credits
 2. Presentations
 3. Publication or research
 4. Preceptor
 5. Professional service

Once you complete eligibility requirements and successfully pass the portfolio review process, you are awarded the certification Registered Nurse-Board Certified (RN-BC). This certification is valid for five years. You can continue to use this credential by maintaining your license to practice and by meeting the renewal requirements in place at the time of your certification renewal.



4. What is considered “continuing education”?

Continuing education includes live, telephone, online, and correspondence conferences, workshops, classes, and training that helps you to improve your skills or to be better informed on issues related to your role as a faith community nurse. The topic must relate to the **practice of faith community nursing**.

All applicants are required to complete a minimum of 30.00 contact hours that must be formally approved and directly related to the certification specialty. These 30.00 contact hours must be completed within the three years preceding the submission of this application.

Additional contact hours: Additional continuing education hours, above the required 30 contact hours, that directly relate to the faith community nursing certification specialty should be included.

5. Does the *Foundations of Faith Community Nursing* course count toward continuing education?

Yes, the *Foundations of Faith Community Nursing* course from the International Parish Nurse Resource Center (IPNRC) contributes to the continuing education contact hour requirement for certification by portfolio. The course provides evidence-based training for faith community nurses. The current 2014 edition has 19 module authors and 10 reviewers, all considered experts in the field of faith community nursing. Module authors represent faith community nursing in a variety of roles, from educator, coordinator, to practicing faith community nurse. Module authors revised the modules based on assessment results and latest scientific evidence related to their topics. Two new modules, Spiritual Care and Behavioral Health, were developed based on feedback from faith community nurses. Susan Jacob, PhD, RN, education consultant and nursing textbook author, led the revision process. The IPNRC now has 85 education partners and to date, has trained more than 16,000 nurses in 23 different countries.

6. Does the contact hours received from attending the IPNRC Coordinator’s Course, the IPNRC Educators and Coordinator’s Annual Retreat, and/ or the Westberg Symposium count toward continuing education?

Yes. If you attended the *Foundations of Faith Community Nursing* Course and/or the FCN Coordinator’s Course at any time, it should be mentioned in the **Exemplar Narrative** of the certification by portfolio application.

7. Why isn’t the *Foundations of Faith Community Nursing* Course mandatory for FCN certification by portfolio?

The FCN certification by portfolio is based on the *Faith Community Nursing Scope and Standards of Practice* (American Nurses Association & Health Ministry Association [ANA & HMA], 2012). In the Faith Community Nursing Scope and Standards of Practice it states,



“A registered nurse may prepare for the specialty in one of several ways. Education offerings range from continuing education programs with extensive contact hours to baccalaureate and graduate [religious education] courses” (p 5).

Since the *Faith Community Nursing Scope and Standards of Practice* does not mention the *Foundations of Faith Community Nursing Course* specifically by name, it follows that the FCN certification by portfolio would not; however, the ANCC, ANA, and HMA organizations do recognize the course’s importance to the practice. Nurse specialty scope and standards of practice documents reflect the thinking of the nursing profession and provide guidance for nurses in the application of their professional skills and responsibilities. They do not endorse a specific professional training course.

8. What tools are available?

- a. Certification through Portfolio Application Requirements is found at <http://www.nursecredentialing.org/CertificationPortfolioRequirements>
- b. *Faith Community Nursing Scope and Standards of Practice* (American Nurses Association & Health Ministry Association, 2005, 2012) is available at <http://www.nursesbooks.org/Main-Menu/Standards/A--G/Faith-Community-Nursing.aspx>
- c. *Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice* (American Nurses Association, 2010) is available at <http://www.nursesbooks.org/Main-Menu/Standards/Nursing-Scope-and-Standards-of-Practice.aspx>

The American Nurses Association (ANA) is a national professional association. *Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice* reflects the thinking of the nursing profession on various issues and should be reviewed in conjunction with state board of nursing policies and practices. State law, rules, and regulations govern the practice of nursing, while the *Nursing: Scope and Standards of Practice* guides nurses in the application of their professional skills and responsibilities.

9. What should be included in the Exemplar Narrative?

“The applicant’s narrative should be no more than 8000 characters (approximately 1250 words) and show “evidence of innovation and excellence in the certification specialty practice area” of Faith Community Nursing. The exemplar narrative “...should incorporate aspects of reflective practice... that highlights areas of one’s practice as it related to the scope and practice and is not limited to the last three years.”

It states that:

“Applicants must include evidence of all of the criteria for the Professional and Ethical Nursing practice, Team Work and Collaboration, and Quality and Safety domains. The applicant can include additional information to enhance the Professional Development domain; however it is not required in the exemplar narrative”.



10. Who should I contact with additional questions as I go through this process?

Contact the ANCC staff about certification: certification@ana.org, 1.800.284.2378

Contact the IPNRC staff: <http://www.churchhealthcenter.org/leadershipstaff>

Contact HMA volunteers: info@hmassoc.org

11. Can I use the initials FCN after my name before I go through the certification process?

ANCC has asked that nurses do not use the initials FCN following their name as it is confusing. Once a nurse receives the certification, he/she will use the initials RN-BC, and then may use FCN or write out Faith Community Nursing to denote what the credentialing is in. Their professional title may follow this.

Example: After certification:

J. Doe, BSN, RN-BC
Faith Community Nursing
Title: Congregational Nurse

Registered nurses who meet the criteria for practicing as a faith community nurse as defined in the Faith Community Nurse Scope and Standards (ANA & HMA, 2012), may practice in the specialty of Faith Community Nursing. That may also be their title.

Example: Before certification:

J. Doe, BSN, RN
Title: Faith Community Nurse or Congregational Nurse or Parish Nurse...etc.