



# **Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS)**

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# What is a CNS?

- Licensed registered nurses who have graduate preparation (master's or doctoral degree) in nursing as a Clinical Nurse Specialist.
- Recognized for Part B participation in Medicare, Title 18 and may independently bill for these services. They also are recognized as eligible for Medicare's Primary Care Incentive Program in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. *If their employing facility credentials them as such.*
- Have prescriptive privileges in 37 states.
- One of the four advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) categories as recognized by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN), individual state boards of nursing, and the American Nurses Association.

(National Council of State Boards of Nursing *Consensus Model for APRN Regulation: Licensure, Accreditation, Certification & Education* at [https://www.ncsbn.org/Consensus\\_Model\\_for\\_APRN\\_Regulation\\_July\\_2008.pdf](https://www.ncsbn.org/Consensus_Model_for_APRN_Regulation_July_2008.pdf))



# Clinical Nurse Specialists

- Diagnose and treat acute or chronic illness in an identified population with emphasis on **specialist** care for individuals with or at risk for chronic conditions; independently or as part of a multidisciplinary healthcare team.
- May serve as leaders and facilitators of change, coordinators of specialized care, and implementers of evidence-based care within/between organizations to facilitate quality improvement, patient safety, and lower healthcare costs.
- May prescribe medications, durable medical equipment, and medical supplies.
- May order, perform, and/or interpret diagnostic tests including lab work and x-rays.
- May provide health promotion, health teaching, and disease prevention in the acute and/or chronically ill.



# Clinical Nurse Specialist

- Can provide both health promotion and maintenance through assessment, diagnosis, and management of acute and chronic patient problems that includes pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic interventions.
- Facilitators of multidisciplinary teams in acute and chronic care facilities to improve the quality and safety of care, including preventing hospital acquired infections, reducing length of stays, and preventing hospital readmissions.
- Uses *system-level* knowledge to facilitate improved patient care and outcomes.
- May teach registered nurses and other healthcare professionals working in clinical settings.
- Must be registered nurses and must have specialized graduate education.



# Clinical Nurse Specialist

## The specialty may be defined by:

- Population (such as: pediatrics, geriatrics, women's health).
- Setting (such as: critical care or emergency room).
- Disease or medical subspecialty (such as: diabetes or oncology).
- Type of care (such as: psychiatric or rehabilitation).
- Type of problem (such as: pain, wounds, stress).



# Consensus Model

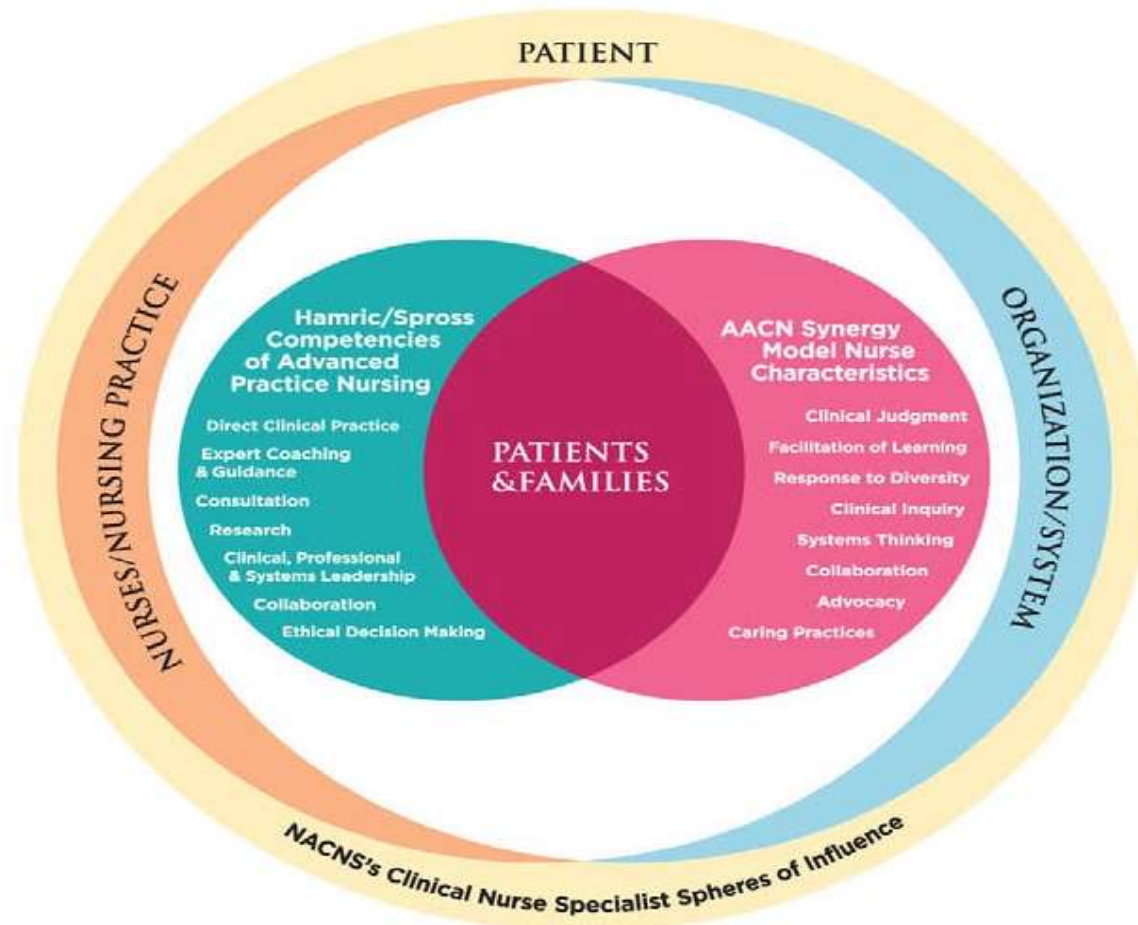


Figure 1. Model depicting organizational framework for CNS core competencies



# NACNS

## Spheres of CNS Practice

### **Patient**

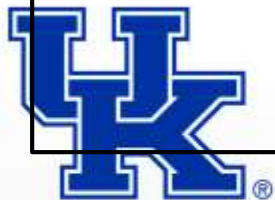
- May coordinate the direct care of an individual or a specialty population, e.g., HF, diabetics
- May manage clinics for specialty
- May be consulted to provide expertise, teaching, support for a newly diagnosed condition

### **Staff**

- Mentor, role model for staff
- Teach, rounds, consultant for complex cases

### **Organization**

- Lead system wide initiatives, multidisciplinary teams
- Instrumental in managing change of practice (EBP)



# Competencies

- **Healthcare providers-** direct care to individuals, to populations (Independent practitioners).
- **Leaders** of teams in organizations to improves quality and safety of care.
- **Developers** of programs to prevent avoidable complications
- **Coaches** of those with chronic diseases to prevent hospital readmissions
- **Consumers** of evidence-based practice to ensure best care and services (MSN, DNP)
- **Researchers** to create new knowledge to improves outcomes of care (PhD).





# Licensure and Regulation



# The Consensus Model for Advance Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) Regulation

## History

- Lack of standardization for educational requirements for APRNs.
- Excessive certification options confusing.
- Inability to practice across state lines on same license.

## Solution

- Collaborative effort between 40+ nursing organizations to standardize APRN licensure, accreditation, certification, and education (LACE).
- Lead by American Nurse Credentialing Agency (ANCC).
- To allow APRN's to practice to the full extent of their education and license.
- Ease mobility across state lines.
- Streamline number of certification options.



# Consensus Model for APRN Regulation

## **Four APRN roles:**

- Certified registered nurse anesthetist (CRNA)
- Certified nurse-midwife (CNM)
- Clinical nurse specialist (CNS)
- Certified nurse practitioner (CNP)

## **Six population foci:**

- family/individual across the lifespan
- adult-gerontology
- pediatrics
- neonatal
- women's health/gender-related
- psych/mental health



# Educational Options

- Master's degree
- Post-Master's certificate
- DNP
- PhD

*In order to be nationally certified as a CNS, your education and clinical hours have to be from a CNS program.*

*Some institutions use the CNS title without the national certification.*



# Clinical Nurse Specialist Certification

**Certification** is achieved by an examination in one of the population foci:

## **American Association of Critical Care Nurses – acute care**

- ACCNS-AG (adult gerontology)
- ACCNS-P (Pediatric)
- ACCNS-N (Neonatal)
- Renewal exams only – all critical care :
  - CCNS adult, CCNS peds, and CCNS neonatal

## **American Nurses Credentialing Center – primary care**

- AGCNS-BC (Adult-Gerontology CNS)
- Renewal exam only – ACNS-BC (adult health)



# Work Settings

- Inpatient care setting
- Home health care
- Long term care
- Public health centers
- Colleges
- Laboratories

- Ambulatory care
- Correctional facilities
- Private industry
- Specialized doctor's offices
- Psychiatric care facilities



# Job Market

- High demand from organizations to improve quality outcomes and save money.
- CNS's can provide specialized care at a lower cost than an MD.
- University of Kentucky Medical Center has 17 CNS's – at least one for most service lines.
- According to Healthcare Profession and Salary Database, average salary for CNS is \$80,000, with a max of \$120,000.



# References

- NACNS
- ANCC
- AACN
- Martha Biddle PhD, APRN, CCNS, FAHA  
Associate Professor UK College of Nursing



