



Cardiac Care

FOR NURSES
NURSE PRACTITIONERS
CLINICAL NURSE SPECIALISTS
AND PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS

CV Certification Has Wings

By Jill Lucca, R.N., M.S.N., C.N.P.

In the January 2006 issue of Cardiology, Nancy Knaff wrote a letter concerning the certification possibilities for nurse practitioners in the field of cardiac care. Cardiac care is a growing field for nurses and physician assistants and with it has come an increased interest in certification.

Nurses actually do have options for achieving some sort of cardiac care certification. The American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) sponsors an exam at two levels for the Cardiac/Vascular Nurse. At present, one CV exam is available for an associate degree nurse and another for nurses with a bachelor's degree or higher. ANCC has also developed specialty exams for the advanced practice nurse as demand dictates, such as the exam for advanced diabetes management for nurse practitioners. Of course, many of ACC's courses are accredited now for ANCC CE points.

The American Association of Critical Care Nurses (AACN) offers cardiac medicine certification for certified nurses practicing in such diverse areas as the CCU, telemetry, progressive care, heart failure clinics/home care, interventional cardiology, cardiac catheterization labs and electrophysiology units. Requirements for testing include prior nationally accredited clinical nursing specialty certification, such as A.C.N.P., F.N.P., A.P.R.N., B.C. or C.C.R.N. Both ANCC and AACN exams also have prior practice requirements.

On the academic front, Loyola University-Chicago has developed a certificate program in cardiovascular nursing under the direction of Meg Gulanick, Ph.D., A.P.R.N., F.A.A.N., who is professor and project director of the Certificate Program in Cardiovascular Nursing at the Marcella Niehoff School of Nursing at Loyola. This online graduate program takes advantage of premiere distance learning technology and combines archived and "live" audio/video student/faculty sessions to create a dynamic format for learning. The online courses include



CMS Expands Rehab Coverage

By Marjorie King, M.D., F.A.C.C., F.A.A.C.V.P.R.



Marjorie King

On March 23, 2006, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced its decision to expand coverage for cardiac rehabilitation services to three additional groups of patients — those with heart valve repair or replacement, percutaneous transluminal coronary angioplasty (PTCA) or coronary stenting, or heart or combined heart/lung transplant. These categories are in addition to patients with recent myocardial infarction, coronary artery bypass grafting, and stable angina. This expansion improves patient care options for those CCA members whose primary responsibility is cardiac rehabilitation.

CMS' policy revision gives CV professionals the latitude to continue doing what is clinically appropriate for their patients, including medical evaluation, supervision, and input from physicians or other professionals who are most appropriate for a specific program and patient.

CMS recognizes that cardiac rehabilitation extends beyond exercise training and includes modifiable risk factors and long-term behavior change. This CMS decision affirms the position

that access to proper treatment is fundamental to improving a cardiac patient's quality of life. It validates the research, guidelines, and scientific statements developed and championed by American Association of Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Rehabilitation (AACVPR), the ACC and other leading medical societies.

This change by CMS reflects the efforts of many who have contributed over the past 20 years to bring it about. Thanks should be extended to all those who performed the research, wrote the guidelines and scientific statements, met with fiscal intermediaries and CMS, suffered OIG audits, served on committees, and persevered despite significant challenges to be recognized for the services they provide to patients.

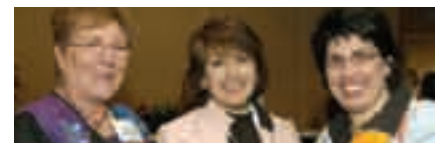
More work remains. When the Heart Failure-ACTION trial is completed, the issue of coverage for congestive heart failure patients looms. Also, specific legislative language to remove both cardiac and pulmonary rehabilitation services from the vagaries of the "incident to" rules is needed.

As president of the AACVPR, I am proud to be a part of the efforts by the cardiac rehabilitation community to pursue a National Coverage Determination for Cardiac Rehabilitation. We have accomplished something extremely important in our pursuit of quality care for our patients.



King is with Hudson Heart Associates, Suffern, N.Y.

NOTE: This final policy is not identical to the December 2005 proposed policy that was posted. It is recommended that program directors and compliance officers review the document in its entirety at www.cms.hhs.gov/mcd/viewdecision-memo.asp?id=164. Visit www.aacvpr.org for more information about AACVPR.



Good News and Good Numbers from Atlanta

ACC.06 in Atlanta was highly successful in many ways, but, for the non-physician members of the Cardiac Care Team, it was a particularly special year. In meetings, presentations and more, Cardiac Care Associates had more of a presence this year. Some of this year's highlights included:

- The new CCA Community Lounge averaged 125 attendees per day
- More than 31 CCA members gave presentations at ACC.06
- The pre-meeting pharmacology program, the first-ever CCA-developed educational program drew 75 attendees
- More than 250 nurses, PAs and physicians attended the CCA Reception
- Member and non-member focus groups were well attended

Other important non-ACC.06 information affecting CCA members included:

- CNE Workgroup is now a formal committee known as the Continuing Nurse Education Committee
- ACC Board of Governors voted unanimously to create "ex-officio" BOG slot for a CCA member
- CCA membership now totals more than 2,400

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Cardiac/Vascular Care of the Adult, Cardiac Risk Reduction/Exercise Therapies and 12 lead ECG Interpretation.

Other institutions that offer M.S.N. specialty programs for cardiac care include Kent State University and the University of California

San Francisco, which has launched a program that offers a M.S.N. in cardiovascular nursing. All of these programs offer preparation for cardiac care certification exams.

With all the added online educational programs from our professional organizations, especially the

ACC, which includes Cardiosource, the opportunities for learning and certification as an advanced practice CV nurse seem limitless.

Lucca is working in cardiology clinical trials in cardiovascular research at St. Mary's Duluth Clinical Health System, Duluth, Minn.

Texas Nurse Receives Award For Innovative Clinical Program

Mae Centeno, a clinical nurse specialist at Baylor University Medical Center at Dallas, recently received the prestigious 2005 Cherokee Inspired Comfort Award for her innovative clinical program that has dramatically reduced the repeat hospitalization rate for patients diagnosed with congestive heart failure at Baylor Dallas. The award, which is granted annually by Cherokee Uniforms, recognizes nurses and other non-physician health care professionals who demonstrate exceptional service, sacrifice and innovation and have a positive impact on others' lives.



Mae Centeno

Centeno, who studied nursing in her native Philippines, has 20 years of clinical experience. Her program, which was established in 2003, helps prepare congestive heart failure patients to manage their care and recovery once at home. As a result, hospital readmission rates for heart failure patients 30 days following discharge have declined dramatically — from 18.9 percent to 2.4 percent.

Discover Cardiosource By Suzanne Hughes, M.S.N., R.N.

Have you logged on to Cardiosource lately? In the past few weeks, some useful tools have been added to the site that nurses, advanced practice nurses, and physician assistants in cardiology will find to be helpful learning tools for professionals and also for your patients.



Suzanne Hughes

HeartSongs Research recently published by Michael Barrett, M.D., shows that practice makes perfect when a person is trying to master cardiac auscultation. For that reason, clinicians who listen to "Heart Songs" from

ACC's Cardiosource on their computers or MP3s will be able to refine their auscultation skills. Visit Cardiosource to listen, or better yet, to download heart sounds to your MP3 player.

Essentials for Cardiology Cardiosource has teamed up with Epocrates® to provide Essentials for Cardiology, a premium all-in-one mobile reference suite. There is no charge for this one-year subscription. Essentials for Cardiology contains:

- Cardiology calculator with 50+ formulas
- Epocrates SxDx™ premium drugs, diseases, and diagnostics clinical reference with integrated symptom assessment tool
- BMI & Obesity Tool with in-depth weight management information
- ACC DocAlert medical news channel expressly for *Cardiology*.

HeartAuthority Cardiosource is pleased to announce the launch of HeartAuthority. HeartAuthority is a unique educational resource created entirely by cardiology experts-physicians and nurses- who are dedicated to bringing contemporary and practical information on topics related to cardiovascular disease to you and your patients. We encourage ACC members to direct patients to this site to explore answers to questions commonly asked of cardiovascular clinicians.

Hughes is associate editor and the CCA representative for Cardiosource, ACC's online education tool.