

Update on the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) Psychiatric and Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Exam Development

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In February of this year the Psychiatric and Mental Health Nurse Practitioner (PMHNP) Content Expert Panel resumed work on the PMHNP exam. After many long months of discussions and input during 1999 from the leadership of the American Psychiatric Nurses Association (APNA) and the International Society of Psychiatric Mental Health Nurses (ISPN), ANCC made the decision to continue with the development of the PMHNP exam. It is the belief of ANCC that the role of the Advanced Practice PMH nurse (the CNS and the NP) is moving toward one role (APRN-PMH) and will probably reach that goal within the next four to five years. The work of the PMH Scope and Standards Committee is exemplary of this vision. It is also the belief of ANCC that this is not yet the reality. Educational institutions still vary in their preparation of advanced practice PMH nurses and the majority of state boards of nursing still require separate recognition of the CNS and NP roles.

The exam that is under development is for the PMHNP who was prepared for that role in either a master's or post-master's program which included academic preparation in advanced health assessment, pathophysiology, pharmacology, and a clinical practicum which focuses on diagnosis and management of psychiatric illnesses from the nurse practitioner perspective. This is the first step in a multi-phased approach toward the one role concept. This new exam is currently planned for administration via computer in mid to late October 2000. It will probably be administered during a window of time (4-6 weeks), and then be held until 2001. This will allow us to test enough candidates to obtain sufficient statistical information for scoring and data collection.

The next step will be to work with universities to develop a mechanism for recognizing non-academically based continuing education and to identify and develop the components of a PMHNP module that already certified PMH CNS candidates can take if they so choose. If CNS candidates meet the eligibility criteria and their programs or coursework covered the required components, they may already be eligible to sit the PMHNP exam if they so choose.

Definition of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nurse Practitioner

A Psychiatric and Mental Health Nurse Practitioner is a registered nurse with a graduate degree in nursing who is prepared for advanced mental health practice in primary care throughout the lifespan in accordance with ANA's scope and standards of psychiatric and mental health nursing. This practice includes independent and interdependent decision-making and direct accountability for clinical judgment. Graduate preparation expands the comprehensiveness of the psychiatric-mental health nurse practitioner role to include participation in and use of research, development and implementation of health policy, leadership, education, case management, and consultation.

Eligibility Criteria

1. Currently hold an active RN license in the U.S. or its territories
2. Have graduated from an accredited master's or post-master's degree program that prepared you as a psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner/advanced practice psychiatric and mental health nurse which includes:

- a. Advanced health assessment
 - b. Pathophysiology
 - c. Pharmacology
 - d. Diagnosis and medication management of psychiatric illness (clinical practicum)
3. Have supervised clinical training at the graduate or post-graduate level in two psychotherapeutic treatment modalities

I. Statement of Functions for Psychiatric and Mental Health Nurse Practitioners

Upon completion of a formal education of a master's or higher degree in nursing with a concentration in psychiatric and mental health nursing, the psychiatric nurse practitioner is able to do the following:

1: Nurse Practitioner/Client Relationships	
Competency 1:	Establishes and modifies a theory-based advanced application of the nurse-client relationship
Competency 2:	Recognizes and responds to all forms of client presentation
Competency 3:	Facilitates adaptive client coping
Competency 4:	Promotes principles of client advocacy in client interaction and in the selection of treatment modalities
2: Management of Client Care	
Competency 5:	Elicits a history appropriate to client, presentation, and setting
Competency 6:	Performs a health assessment/examination appropriate to client, presentation, and setting
Competency 7:	Recognizes and responds to emergency situations
Competency 8:	Orders, conducts and interprets pertinent laboratory and diagnostic studies and procedures
Competency 9:	Creates and maintains a client profile for the purpose of facilitating care
Competency 10:	Maintains clinical records
Competency 11:	Analyzes client data to determine health status
Competency 12:	Formulates a list of differential diagnoses based on clinical findings
Competency 13:	Involves the client in formulating an outcome-based integrated plan of care to maximize optimal well being
Competency 14:	Determines and implements appropriate psychotherapy, as well as educational, pharmacological, and other treatment modalities to achieve expected client outcomes
Competency 15:	Facilitates client health promotion and disease prevention
Competency 16:	Implements a plan of care
Competency 17:	Refers client to the other care professionals and community resources, when appropriate
Competency 18:	Evaluates and modifies a plan of care in relation to client outcomes
3: Professional Role Responsibilities	
Competency 19:	Uses principles of ethical decision-making
Competency 20:	Demonstrates a sensitivity to cultural, lifespan, gender, and ethnic diversity
Competency 21:	Applies knowledge of the regulatory process to deliver safe, effective client care
Competency 22:	Participates in implementing a quality assurance/improvement plan to evaluate and modify practice
Competency 23:	Articulates the nurse practitioner role and scope of practice
Competency 24:	Adheres to professional standards of care and clinical guidelines in the delivery of

	health care including the evaluation and application of research findings pertinent to clinical practice
Competency 25:	Collaborates with health care professionals to meet client health care needs

A. Program of Study

A master's degree in nursing and completion of a graduate-level program for preparation of psychiatric and mental health nurse practitioners are required for certification. Please refer to the Eligibility Requirements for Psychiatric and Mental Health Nurse Practitioners for more specific information.

B. Length of Program

As appropriate to meet eligibility requirements and National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties (NONPF) guidelines.

C. Curriculum

Teaching content and strategy should include, but not be limited to the following:

A theory-based curriculum that uses scientific inquiry as the basis for advanced clinical practice. The curriculum is well based in psychiatric-mental nursing theory and prepares the nurse practitioner in a minimum of two specific methods of psychotherapeutic treatment modalities.

A multidisciplinary approach

The role of the consumer in health care

The role of the professional in advanced practice

The impact of health policy and organizational issues on health care

The commitment to advancing clinical practice through research

A commitment to and responsibility for continuing education for faculty and students

A commitment to ongoing clinical practice for faculty

1. Didactic Content

a. A review and application of theories from the biological, social, and behavioral sciences:

- Anatomy and physiology
- Pathophysiology/Psychophysiology
- Pharmacology
- Mental Health Theory/Conceptual Models
- Psychiatric Disorders: Diagnosis and Treatment

b. The decision-making and clinical management process for adult clients or clients across the lifespan

- Theories of normal and abnormal psychology, psychophysiology, substance abuse, and addiction
- Use of a variety of data collection techniques to obtain a comprehensive biopsychosocial assessment
- Health promotion and maintenance, education, teaching, counseling, and anticipatory guidance

- Psychotherapy
- Management of acute and chronic mental health problems
- Consultation and referral
- Ethical considerations
- Data management

c. Research

- Participation
- Utilization

d. Professionalism in advanced practice

- Standards
- Legal parameters of advanced practice
- Credentialing
- Outcome management
- Peer review
- Supervision
- Prescriptive authority
- Professional organizations
- Risk management

2. Clinical Component

The program should provide supervised clinical and preceptorship experience that is based on the curriculum guidelines.