

Will the PNCB require an earned DNP as an exam eligibility requirement for CPNP® certification in 2015?



**PEDIATRIC NURSING
CERTIFICATION BOARD**

Pediatric Nurse Practitioner Certification and the Doctorate of Nursing Practice

There is no reason for CPNPs® to fear that a movement toward the DNP will affect their ability to retain their PNCB certification.

Many national nursing education organizations have recommended that the DNP become the academic degree for all nurse practitioners by the year 2015. During the past thirty-five years, nurse practitioner education has evolved from non-degree, certificate-based training programs to become installed within accredited graduate nursing programs. The move to graduate nursing education was achieved in the 1980s based upon the recommendation of many national nursing organizations. From the late 1980s through the 1990s, PNP education became fully established within graduate (master's minimum) nursing programs. As PNP education has evolved, PNP certification has followed.

The purpose of PNP certification is to validate the knowledge and entry-level clinical skills achieved through completion of a recognized/

accredited PNP education program. Certification exams reflect the knowledge and skills that are linked to safe and competent PNP practice. Certification does not establish new standards or guidelines, but reflects the integration of educational standards in day-to-day clinical practice. As the need for validation of entry-level competencies has become an important regulatory/licensing issue for nurse practitioners, the PNCB's PNP certification exams have played a critical role in validating entry-level PNP competency. For the past twenty years, the PNCB has conducted periodic national role delineation or "practice analysis" research to identify the knowledge and critical tasks recognized for competent PNP practice. This important research provides the critical foundation for the PNCB's national PNP certification exams.

As PNP education transitioned from non-degree certificate programs of varying lengths to accredited graduate nursing programs, more PNPs with earned master's degrees entered practice. As a result, the PNCB's periodic role delineation research



Dedicated. Experienced. PNCB Certified.
www.pncb.org



The PNCB will never require you to obtain additional degrees to keep your current CPNP® certification.

However, CPNPs® who allow their certification to lapse would need to meet any new eligibility requirements to take the exam again. In the future, this could include the DNP.

revealed changes in PNP practice reflecting the influence of graduate educational standards. In 1992, as graduate-educated PNP began to influence PNP practice, the PNCB Board of Directors determined the need to require that all PNP exam candidates document completion of an approved/accredited graduate PNP program. Prior to 1992, eligibility for PNP certification was simply based upon successful completion of an approved or accredited PNP training program. No special graduate or other academic degree was required.

For the past several years, the PNCB has participated in national discussions describing the development of DNP educational standards for nurse practitioner programs. As an organization committed to excellence in education and clinical practice for PNPs, the PNCB has monitored the development of the DNP Essentials and other educational standards for DNP programs. The PNCB has also helped develop guidelines for nurse practitioner education as noted in the National Task Force on Quality Nurse Practitioner

Education's Criteria for Evaluation of Nurse Practitioner Programs. While many graduate PNP programs are moving to establish DNP

programs, the majority of the 110+ graduate PNP programs from around the country currently remain established in master's level graduate nursing programs.

In the next ten to fifteen years as the DNP eventually becomes established as the majority framework for PNP education, the PNCB will continue to conduct its national role delineation research to determine the influence of DNP education on the changing nature of PNP clinical practice. When our national PNP practice analysis research reveals that DNP education has influenced the knowledge and skills linked to PNP practice, then the PNCB will remodel its national eligibility requirements to require documentation of an earned DNP as an exam eligibility requirement. This would apply to new graduates taking the exam for the first time. The PNCB will never require you to obtain additional degrees to keep your current certification. However, if you allow your certification to lapse, you would need to meet any new exam eligibility requirements. In the future, this could include the DNP.

Will the DNP impact your ability to practice as determined by state regulators? We believe this is unlikely, but we will certainly keep you up to date on this matter. We also encourage you to contact your board of nursing for information specific to your state.

