



Department of Health

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Dear Colleagues,

It is with great pleasure, I am announcing that our new Rules and Regulations for the Licensing of Nurses and Standards for the Approval of Basic Nursing Education Programs were filed with the Rhode Island Secretary of State and took effect on October 23, 2014. These regulations reflect the changes to our Nurse Practice Act made by the State Legislature last year bringing us closer to implementation of the Consensus Model for APRN Regulation, Licensure, Accreditation, Certification and Education. I would like to review some of the changes to licensing that will be pertinent to Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRN's). Please refer to the following information taken directly from the Rules and Regulations.

Definitions:

1.3 "**Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN)**" is the title given to an individual licensed to practice advanced practice registered nursing within one of the following roles: certified nurse practitioner (CNP), certified registered nurse anesthetist (CRNA) as defined in RIGL Chapter 5-34.2, or certified clinical nurse specialist (CNS), and who functions in a population focus. An APRN may serve as a primary or acute care provider of record.

1.4 "**Advanced practice registered nursing**" means an independent and expanded scope of nursing in a role and population focus approved by the Board that includes the registered nurse scope of practice and may include, but is not limited to, performing acts of advanced assessment, diagnosing, prescribing and ordering. Each APRN is accountable to patients, the nursing profession and the Board for complying with the requirements of the Act and the quality of advanced nursing care rendered; recognizing limits of knowledge and experience; planning for the management of situations beyond the APRN's expertise; and for consulting with or referring patients to other health care providers as appropriate.

1.37 "**Population foci**" means focus of the patient population. Population foci shall include: Family/Individual across the lifespan; Adult-gerontology; Neonatal; Pediatrics; Women's health/gender-related; and Psychiatric/mental health.

Qualifications of Licensure:

3.2 **Advanced Practice Registered Nurse.** An applicant seeking initial licensure to practice as an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) in the State of Rhode Island shall:

(a) Be of good moral character;

- (b) Hold a current Rhode Island license as a registered nurse or privilege to practice and shall not hold an encumbered license or privilege to practice as an RN in any state or territory;
- (c) Graduation from an APRN graduate or post-graduate program, as evidenced by official documentation received directly from an APRN program accredited by a nursing accrediting body that is recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and/or the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), or its successor organization, as acceptable by the Board.
- (d) Be currently certified by a national certifying body recognized by the Board in the APRN role and population focus appropriate to educational preparation.
- (e) Report any criminal conviction, nolo contendere plea, Alford plea or other plea arrangement in lieu of conviction;
- (f) Have committed no acts or omissions that are grounds for disciplinary action as set forth in the Act and these Regulations; and
- (g) Provide other evidence as required by these Regulations.

3.2.1 Notwithstanding the provisions of § 3.2 of these Regulations, prior to 1 January 2015, the Board may issue an initial APRN license to a clinical nurse specialist without a certification exam when:

- (a) A national certification exam does not exist for the current population foci; and
- (b) The applicant has submitted a portfolio to the Board that includes proof of graduation, course descriptions, an official transcript that includes courses in pharmacology, pathophysiology and physical assessment, and letters of recommendation from his/her employer attesting to the CNS's practice at the advanced practice level.

3.2.2 After 1 January 2015, all clinical nurse specialists seeking initial licensure as an APRN in the State of Rhode Island must meet all the criteria as stated in the Act and these Regulations including national certification in a role and population focus recognized by the Board.

3.2.3 Status of Current Licensees. Any person holding a license to practice nursing in the State of Rhode Island as a certified nurse practitioner, psychiatric clinical nurse specialist or certified registered nurse anesthetist, as defined in the Act, RIGL Chapter 5-34 and RIGL Chapter 5-34.2, that was valid as of 17 June 2013 shall be deemed to be licensed as an APRN, with his or her current privileges and shall be eligible for renewal of such license as defined under the provisions of the Act and these Regulations.

Important considerations:

APRN's must choose a population focus.

CNS's must apply before January 1, 2015 for licensing with the portfolio option.

APRN's to be grandfathered must not allow his/her license to expire.

Attached please find the Final version of the Rules and Regulations for the Licensing of Nurses and Standards for the Approval of Basic Nursing Education Programs, which were promulgated on October 23, 2014.

Also, please find the new application for the APRN CNS license for the portfolio option. This is being provided here and on the licensing page for convenience since it must be completed and received by the Board of Nursing before January 1, 2015.

The new APRN license application will be found on the licensing page of the Department of Health.

Please contact licensing aide michele.Monroe@health.ri.gov or myself at twila.mcinnis@health.ri.gov for any questions.

Best regards,
Twila McInnis, MPA, MS, RN
Director of the Board of Nurse Registration and Nursing Education.