

**From:** NCCPA <[nccpa@nccpa.net](mailto:nccpa@nccpa.net)>

**Date:** September 9, 2016 at 5:25:41 PM EDT

**Subject: Update on Potential Changes to the Recertification Exam Process NCCPA ID: 1006871**



## ***IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT!***

### Update on Potential Changes to the Recertification Exam Process

Earlier this week, NCCPA hosted a meeting attended by leaders from AAPA, PAEA and ARC-PA during which participants shared their perspectives on potential changes to the PA recertification process and discussed the current state of affairs among these key national organizations. All agreed the meeting was positive, productive and useful. The organization leaders confirmed their commitment to both the PA profession and a continuing dialogue.

During that meeting, NCCPA leaders shared an important update on what was gleaned from the public comment period and how that has shaped the options NCCPA is now considering.

### Key Feedback from the Public Comment Period

PA feedback on the proposed PANRE model that NCCPA published for public comment in November was mixed. Although 62% of the 30,000+ PAs who responded to the NCCPA survey preferred the proposed published model to the current PANRE model, two key points of concern emerged from PA organizations and PAs:

- PAs are very concerned about maintaining their professional flexibility (ability to change specialties throughout their careers) and do not want to see that threatened.
- PAs are very concerned about the cost, time and steps required to maintain certification (considering both CME and exam requirements).

Also, feedback from the public and state licensing boards makes clear that those stakeholders regard exams as credible and important components of the PA recertification process. (We will publish more about those surveys and their results next month.)

### NCCPA Response to Feedback So Far:

1. As announced last month, NCCPA analyzed the availability and cost of self-assessment and PI-CME, found the options lacking, and eliminated those requirements, incentivizing voluntary participation through a new weighting process.
2. We launched an effort to define “core medical knowledge” so we can increase PANRE’s focus on assessing core knowledge that is foundational to all PA practice. Over time, that means the content covered by PANRE will narrow to the essential, foundational knowledge and cognitive skills all PAs should maintain, regardless of the area in which they practice. That work began in June and will continue over several years. Changes to

PANRE content and the PANRE exam blueprint will be gradual but steady.

3. To help ensure that the PA-C credential continues to be viewed as and relied on as a generalist credential:
  - We are considering a “core medical knowledge” exam as the capstone event of the 10-year recertification cycle rather than the “specialty-related” exam that was previously proposed as part of the published model.
  - We are exploring other ways to integrate “practice-related” elements into the recertification process. As simply and cost-effectively as we can, we want to integrate meaningful mechanisms through which PAs can document current knowledge of their practice area. These elements would provide PAs choice over the practice-related areas on which they focus during the period between PANRE assessments, while ensuring that the PA-C remains an important generalist certification.

### Next Steps

As an independent certification body committed not only to PAs but also to protecting the public interest in safe and high quality health care, NCCPA is committed to maintaining the credibility of and trust in the PA profession.

We will continue to consider a broad evidence base as well as the practical implications of any potential changes. We want to avoid overly burdensome demands on PAs’ time and personal budgets. Later this month, we will ask PAs for input on a short survey on ways we might integrate practice-related elements into a new recertification process.

NCCPA has shared the new concepts under consideration with AAPA, PAEA and ARC-PA and invited their feedback, and we are inviting input from state and specialty PA organizations as well.

We take these many steps because we respect the knowledge, insight and ideas of our colleagues – just as we value the perspective from practicing PAs.

Ultimately, the NCCPA Board’s decision about the future format and content of PANRE will reflect our best judgment about how we can be responsive to those we certify while also serving the public’s interest and providing a recertification exam process that supports the delivery of high quality, affordable, safe, and accessible health care.

---

NCCPA  
12000 Findley Road, Suite 100  
Johns Creek, GA 30097-1409  
P: 678.417.8100 | F: 678.417.8135  
[nccpa@nccpa.net](mailto:nccpa@nccpa.net) | [www.nccpa.net](http://www.nccpa.net)

The National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants is dedicated to serving the interest of the public. We do so with a passionate belief that certified physician assistants are essential members of the health care delivery team who provide millions access to more affordable, high quality health care.