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## **FAQ and ANSWERS**

### ***Q1: What is Holistic Nursing practice?***

A: Holistic nursing practice is based on the nurses' ability to practice within the context of AHNA's Standards of Practice, Code of Ethics and Nursing Theories consistent with Holistic Nursing Philosophy. A holistic nurse and her/his client mutually plan goals that facilitate wellness, health, healing, and client well-being. Holistic Nurses practice in any place or space where they have a nurse-client relation. That is, they practice in community health, hospice, ICU, ER, hospitals, schools, etc. Although many Holistic Nurses use modalities or alternative therapies in their practice, Holistic Nursing is not dependent on one's ability to use modalities or alternative therapies. The best source of information about Holistic Nursing is provided in AHNA's booklet, *Holistic Nursing: The Scope and Standards for Practice*.

### ***Q2: Where can I get a copy of the Scope and Standards of Holistic Nursing Practice?***

A: To obtain a copy of the Standards please contact the American Holistic Nurses Association at 1-800-278-AHNA or <http://www.ahna.org> and related Standards of Holistic Nursing are presented on pages 81-117. This document also describes how the Holistic Nurse interfaces with the ANA Standards of Nursing. For more information regarding Holistic Nursing, please visit <http://www.ahncc.org>, click the link to Holistic Nursing and then read the sections about Holistic Nursing and Holistic Nursing as a Specialty.

### ***Q3: I'm new at this; what are my options for certification in Holistic Nursing?***

A: Currently there are three levels of certification for Holistic Nurses: the Non-Baccalaureate, Baccalaureate and Advanced levels. You can go to our website at [www.ahncc.org](http://www.ahncc.org) to download the application. If you have any questions please feel free to contact us at [ahncc@flash.net](mailto:ahncc@flash.net).

### ***Q4: What are the credentials of the Non-Baccalaureate Holistic Nurse Certified?***

A: The three credentials that are currently awarded are the Holistic Nurse, Board Certified (i.e. HN-BC); the Holistic Nurse Baccalaureate, Board Certified (i.e. HNB-BC); and the Advanced Holistic Nurse (i.e. AHNBC). The HN-BC is for all registered nurses who do not have a Baccalaureate degree in nursing, including those who take the new examination for Non-Baccalaureate Holistic Nurses. Nurses who currently hold the HN-BC and have a Baccalaureate degree in nursing will automatically become a HNB-BC. If you are one of those nurses, you can begin to use this acronym immediately. When you recertify, your next certificate will identify you as an HNB-BC. If you wish to have a certificate with the new acronym prior to that time, you can request that one be prepared for you at the cost of \$5.00. Contact AHNCC at [ahncc@flash.net](mailto:ahncc@flash.net) for assistance.

### ***Q5: Why did the AHNCC Board decide to provide a Certification Process for the Non-Baccalaureate Holistic Nurse?***

The AHNCC Board believes that there are many wonderful Holistic Nurses practicing in our healthcare agencies everyday that are not currently eligible for certification. We also believe that it is our responsibility to validate their knowledge and skills and to assure the public that they are indeed, Holistic Nurses, practicing at the beginning level of professional nursing. Just as there is a difference in the knowledge and skills of the graduate prepared nurse when compared to the baccalaureate nurse, so is there a difference in the baccalaureate and non-baccalaureate. Each has a unique role in the whole of the health care system; each should be validated and encouraged to continue to grow and be proactive participants. Therefore, we decided to initiate a third Certification Process for the Non-Baccalaureate Nurse.

### ***Q6: The American Nurse's Credentialing Center (ANCC) does not distinguish between the non-baccalaureate and baccalaureate nurses for certification purposes. Why does AHNCC?***

A: ANCC made the decision to certify the ADN and Baccalaureate at the same level because their Role-Delineation Study (RDS) *focused on the tasks performed* by nurses; they concluded that there were no significant differences in the tasks performed by the two groups. A focus on the tasks performed emphasizes the technical aspect of *caring* but does not consider the *interpersonal relationship between nurse and client, nor the holistic nurses' focus on the client's well-being*. In all nursing activities there are two considerations: what the nurse does and how the nurse thinks about what he/she is doing. AHNCC Board believes that certification should be based on *how nurses think*

about their professional responsibilities. As one colleague has repeatedly said, “Almost anyone can learn to do IV sticks, just look at those people living down there under the bridge”. All nurses learn how to do the “tasks” of nursing, but not all learn how to think about why they are doing them. Nor do all learn to think about the unique person that is the recipient of their care. All holistic nurses share the common goal of improving health care; all focus their care on the well-being of the individual, group, or system. However, their ability to plan and implement strategies varies. The key factor that effects such variance is the knowledge derived through the educational process. The AHNCC Board believes that the knowledge and skills acquired through formal education enriches nurses as human beings. It alters their world-views, enhancing their ability to make clinical judgments, use and critique theory and research, and to provide leadership in nursing.

***Q7: Why do people obtain the HN-BC, HNB-BC, or AHN-BC Certification?***

A: People obtain Certification for personal and professional reasons. Some people work for organizations that require Certification. Most agencies increase the salaries of nurses once they are certified. Other nurses believe that credentials legitimize their independent practice. Specifically, the nurse who is HN-BC, HNB-BC, or AHN-BC certified has demonstrated expertise in knowledge and practice that provides the context for Holistic Nursing. Other nurses become certified because they want to be a part of a unique network of nurses—those who boldly say to the public that they are holistic nursing by becoming certified.

***Q8: How can I get certified in Holistic Nursing?***

A: Individuals must complete the Certification Process. This includes an Application with a Self-Reflective Assessment, and a Quantitative Examination. During the Application phase, the nurses license, practice, continuing education, and visibility as a Holistic Nurse will be verified. The only exception is for the graduates of Endorsed Programs. They are not required to complete a one year of practice nor the continuing education practice; these are incorporated in their academic program. For more information, go to <http://www.ahncc.org>, click on the Certification link for limitations and details

***Q9: If I want to sit for the exam what is a good timeline for me to have in mind?***

A: A reasonable timeline is as follows:

1. Two-four months before the examination- Download the application from website.
2. Compile documents needed for application. Prepare application and send it to AHNCC at the address identified on the application. Once it is received and processed you will receive your notification by email that you can sit for the Quantitative Examination (QE).
3. Continue preparation for QE by reading, evaluating self, and networking with other Holistic Nurses.
4. **Send the exam application to the Professional Testing Corporation (PTC) in New York City no later than Jan 15<sup>th</sup> for the March examination session or September 1<sup>st</sup> for the October examination session.**

***Q10: What can I use to prepare for Certification?***

A: There are four phases in preparing for Certification. The first occurs prior to your submission of your application. During this phase you need to explore your believes, review the Core Values and Standards of Nursing, and decide how your own philosophy relates to these. Once you conclude that they do, then you need to acquire sufficient knowledge to prepare you to practice as a Holistic Nurse, and you need to practice what you’ve learned. One source of readings can be found in our Handbook, page 36. You can find it by going to <http://www.ahncc.org>, clicking on the Certification link, and then the Handbook link. You can also find it in the Document Library as References. As soon as you’ve completed this phase, you are ready to enter the Certification Process. First you need to carefully complete your application and submit it for approval to proceed. You can find the application in the Handbook, pages 25-33. Remember to include a copy of your transcript. If you graduated from an endorsed school, it must be an official copy. Your application will be reviewed, and you will be notified that you are ready to proceed to the next step. As soon as you have been approved to proceed, you will receive a set of questions, i.e. the Qualitative Assessment (QA) questions. There is no right or wrong answers. Instead, this is an opportunity for you to explore your own growth and to describe how you have

incorporated the Core Values and Holistic Nursing Standards into your life, both personally and professionally. After your Application is processed, you will receive an form to sit for the Quantitative Examination. You will send this to the testing organization where the staff will confirm your appointment to take the examination. On the date of the examination, you will present your confirmation, personal identification, and will then be given instructions needed to take the examination on the computer.

***Q11: Can I apply for Certification before I graduate from nursing school?***

A: That depends. If you don't have a current, unrestricted US license in nursing, you need to complete that first. If you already have your license, you can apply before you graduate, but you will not be approved to sit for the examination until you are able to document that you have met all the criteria, including your academic degree. The requirements for continued education and practice are waived for graduates from AHNCC Endorsed Programs.

***Q12: Where can I find the Application to apply for Certification?***

A: You can go to the AHNCC website <http://www.ahncc.org>. You can go to either the About AHNCC page, the Certification page, or the Documents page. At the bottom of the first two pages you will find a Document Library. Here you can download the Application. Remember to download the Handbook, too. All certified holistic nurses are responsible for all information in the Handbook.

***Q13: Is it necessary for me to purchase the Handbook or can I simply download it from online?***

A: AHNCC is going "Green". We invite you to go to the website and download the handbook for free by clicking here. As a certified Holistic Nursing, you are responsible for the information in this Handbook, therefore it is wiser to download the entire Handbook than just sections. If you want a hardcopy of the Handbook and do not want to download it, you can purchase a copy for \$25.00 by contacting AHNCC at [ahncc@flash.com](mailto:ahncc@flash.com).

***Q14: How long does the Certification process take?***

A: Most people require approximately six months to complete the process. Others complete it in a few months and others take as long as a year. Please see Anticipated Timeline above for more details.

***Q15: Do I have to be a nurse to apply for Holistic Nursing Certification?***

A: Yes, a US, unrestricted registered nurse license is required for AHNCC Certification. Applicants for the Baccalaureate Holistic Nurse Certified (HNB-BC) must also have a baccalaureate degree and applicants for the Advanced Holistic Nurse Certification must have a graduate degree in nursing.

***Q16: Does the baccalaureate degree have to be in nursing?***

A: If you are applying for the examination for the Non-Baccalaureate Holistic Nurse (HN-BC) you must have a US license to practice nursing and be from an accredited school of nursing but your baccalaureate degree can be in a different field. If you are applying for the Baccalaureate (HNB-BC) level examination you must have a baccalaureate degree in nursing. If you are applying for the Advanced Holistic Nursing examination, you must have either a master's or doctoral degree in Nursing.

***Q17: What continuing education courses can I use to count towards the continuing education requirement to apply for HN-BC, HNB-BC, or AHN-BC Certification or Recertification?***

Any courses that address the Holistic Nursing Standards of Practice and related Core Values are accepted for this requirement. Courses that are medically oriented such as ACLS, pharmacology, symptoms management, disease oriented courses will not be accepted unless the applicant can explain how they directly relate to the practice of Holistic Nursing. For example: A course that addresses the client with cardiac dysfunction and focuses on the psychosocial, cognitive, physiological and spiritual needs of the client would not be automatically accepted, but might be if the applicant can explain the relationship. A course that focuses on the pathophysiology, medical management of a disease or symptoms and the pharmacology would not be acceptable. For Recertification: One hundred Continuing Education Units are required. Twenty of the 100 hours must directly relate to *recognized Holistic Nursing theories* (e.g., Erickson, Tomlin, & Swain; Newman; Nightingale; Leininger; Parse; Paterson & Zderd; Rogers; and Watson), *concepts* (such as spirituality, connectedness, presence, intuition, mind body- spirit

integration, healing, etc), or *Holistic Nursing research*. Courses that are modality based can only be used towards the 20 hours that directly relate to Holistic Nursing if they focus on the person and are not technique oriented. The remaining 80 hours can be related to Holistic Nursing; the candidate must explain these relationships if they are not obvious. AHNCC staff will be happy to review any questions you have regarding Continuing Education courses.

***Q18: How long is my Certification good for?***

A: Individuals are HN-BC, HNB-BC, or AHN-BC Certified for a five year period.

***Q19: Are AHNCC and AHNA the same organization?***

A: No. AHNCC and AHNA are two different organizations. AHNCC is the only national certifying corporation for Holistic Nursing. AHNCC does not offer courses, continuing education endorsement, or membership opportunities. AHNCC helps people apply for HN-BC or AHN-BC Certification, recertify their credentials, and assists schools in getting their nursing programs endorsed. AHNA is an education and membership organization. They offer educational opportunities, membership, annual conferences, and endorse educational programs. Although the two organizations are both focused on facilitating the growth of Holistic Nursing the purpose of both organizations is very different. Since AHNA is the professional organization linked to AHNCC, AHNA members are offered a discount fee. For more information regarding Fees, please go to the AHNCC website <http://www.ahncc.org>.

***Q20: Do I have to change my address at both AHNA and AHNCC?***

A: Yes. It your responsibility to notify AHNA and AHNCC of any addresses changes. Since they are different organizations they do not have a shared data base. If you only notify AHNA that you have moved, AHNCC will be unable to contact you when they need to send you information such as your Recertification application. If you do not recertify in the required time period you will be required to pay an additional fine and/or need to take the examination to become certified again. To email us your change of address, click here.

***Q21: Does AHNCC offer courses on Holistic Nursing or related topics?***

A: AHNCC does not offer any continuing education courses. Applicants studying for the examination are provided with a suggested reading list in the AHNCC Handbook or it can be found on our website [www.ahncc.org](http://www.ahncc.org) on the "Documents" page. Courses are also available through AHNA and other organizations as well as several correspondence programs.

***Q22: Does AHNCC endorse continuing education programs?***

A: No, AHNCC does not endorse continuing educational programs. For information regarding continuing education program endorsement you can contact the American Holistic Nurses' Association at 1-800-278-AHNA or [ahna.org](http://ahna.org).

***Q23: Do continuing education programs have to be endorsed or approved of by AHNA to count toward the Certification or Recertification continuing education requirement?***

A: No, continuing education hours in holistic nursing that are obtained from any licensed individual, organization, or institution is acceptable. A program does not need to be endorsed or approved by AHNA. However, some of the best continuing education courses are available through AHNA.

***Q24: How often are the HN-BC, HNB-BC and AHN-BC examinations offered?***

A: Examinations are offered twice a year in March and October at hundreds of locations through out the country. Examinations are computer based and are offered over a two week period of time. Once the Applicant has been approved by AHNCC for the Quantitative Exam, he/she can send in the test application. PTC will then send them the necessary information needed to schedule the examination. Appointments will be based on the Applicant's schedule and times available during the two-week testing period. As indicated above, for more information please see our website.

***Q25: Does AHNCC offer Certification in Advanced Holistic Nursing?***

A: Yes, AHNCC does offer Certification in Advanced Holistic Nursing but this is not the same as an APRN.

**Q26: Can a person be certified as a Holistic Nurse (HN-BC), Holistic Nurse Baccalaureate (HNB-BC) and Advanced Holistic Nurse (AHN-BC) at the same time?**

A: No, you are either certified at the HN-BC, HNB-BC or the AHN-BC level.

**Q27: If I have questions concerning the test administration, who should I contact?**

A: The Professional Testing Corporation out of New York City handles all questions regarding the administration of the examinations. You can reach them at [www.pteny.com](http://www.pteny.com) or call them at 212-356-0660.

**Q28: I am ready to take the test when and where can I take it?**

A: The tests are offered twice a year in March and October. During each month there is a designated two week window in which you can take the exam. When you have been granted approval by the Professional Testing Corporation (PTC), to sit for the exam you will have the opportunity to contact Laser Grade, the computer based testing administrator to schedule a date and time convenient for you.

**Q29: Can I mail my request for a handbook, my application or my recertification application to the American Holistic Nurses Association?**

A: No. All correspondence regarding holistic nursing certification and recertification must be mailed to AHNCC at: 811 Linden Loop, Cedar Park TX 78613.

**Q30: How does a nursing program seek AHNCC endorsement?**

Faculty can submit an Application for Endorsement whenever they perceive that their Curricula meet endorsement Criteria. For further information please see our website on the AHNCC Endorsement link.

**Q 31: If I complete the entire application process except for the examination when does my application expire?"**

Applications will be held 2 years from the date they are approved. If the candidate has not completed the process at that time they will need to reapply and start the entire process over again.

**Q 32: If I register for the examination and am unable to take it what are my options?**

If you miss your examination date and you contact Laser grade no later than noon, EST, of the second business day Prior to your scheduled appointment, you may schedule a new date **within** that same 2 week testing period for no additional charge. Therefore, if possible it is best to schedule your test at the beginning of the 2 week testing session. On the other hand, if you are unable to reschedule your testing session you may reapply for the next examination period. However, the test application **fees are not transferable to the next session** nor are they refunded. You will have to repay those fees.

**Q 33: How do I know if my school is AHNCC endorsed?**

You can go to the link called "Endorsement", click on it, and then check for your school under "Currently Endorsed Schools". If your school is identified in the list, *and* you graduated during the period of time that it was endorsed, then you are eligible for the modified certification program for graduates of endorsed schools. Specifically, this means that you will not need to provide documentation that you have practiced for one year, submit continuing education contact hours, or complete Step 2, the Qualitative Assessment. You are eligible to apply for certification and then after approval, proceed directly to Step 3, the Quantitative Exam. Please remember that an official transcript from the endorsed school **must** accompany your application. If your school is not identified in the list, it is not currently AHNCC Endorsed. You will need to go through the regular application process.