



**National Board for Certification  
of Hospice and Palliative Nurses**

# ACHPN<sup>®</sup> Candidate Handbook

**Advanced Certified Hospice  
and Palliative Nurse (ACHPN<sup>®</sup>)  
Computer Based Examination**

2014

The National Board for Certification of Hospice and Palliative Nurses (NBCHPN®) provides specialty certification examinations for health care professionals: advanced practice registered nurses, registered nurses, pediatric registered nurses, licensed practical/vocational nurses, nursing assistants, perinatal loss care professionals and hospice and palliative care administrators. All information regarding the hospice and palliative advanced practice registered nurse examination, testing policies and procedures and an application form can be found in this Candidate Handbook. Candidate Handbooks for other NBCHPN® certification examinations are also available. All NBCHPN® certification exams are computer-based and offered at AMP Assessment Center locations. Deadlines are firm and strictly enforced.

All inquiries regarding the certification program should be addressed to NBCHPN®.

NBCHPN®  
One Penn Center West, Suite 425  
Pittsburgh, PA 15276-0109  
Telephone: 412-787-1057  
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Website: [www.nbchpn.org](http://www.nbchpn.org)

Applied Measurement Professionals, Inc. (AMP) is the professional testing company contracted by NBCHPN® to assist in the development, administration, scoring and analysis of the NBCHPN® certification examinations.

All inquiries regarding the application process, test administration and the reporting of scores should be addressed to AMP.

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Olathe, KS 66061-7543  
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Your signature on the application certifies that you have read all portions of this Candidate Handbook and application.



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## SECTION 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

### ABOUT THE NBCHPN®

The National Board for Certification of Hospice Nurses (NBCHN), now the National Board for Certification of Hospice and Palliative Nurses (NBCHPN®), was incorporated in 1993 to develop a program of certification for the specialty practice of hospice and palliative nursing. The NBCHPN® has been affiliated with the Hospice Nurses Association (HNA), now the Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association (HPNA), since its inception. The first Certification Examination for Hospice Nurses was given in 1994, and in 1998, initial certificants were required to renew their credential for the first time. NBCHPN® has expanded its mission and now provides specialty examinations for all levels of nursing: advanced practice registered nurses, registered nurses, pediatric registered nurses, licensed practical/vocational nurses, nursing assistants and administrators. Currently there are over 18,000 individuals certified by NBCHPN®.

The NBCHPN® Board of Directors oversees all aspects of the certification program. The composition of the Board includes a certified representative from each NBCHPN® certification program, a certified nurse from another specialty, and a non-nurse consumer member. NBCHPN® has the responsibility for development, administration and maintenance of the examinations in conjunction with a testing agency, Applied Measurement Professionals, Inc., (AMP).

### STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

The NBCHPN® does not discriminate among applicants on the basis of age, gender, race, religion, national origin, disability, sexual orientation or marital status.

### CERTIFICATION

The NBCHPN® endorses the concept of voluntary, periodic certification for all hospice and palliative advanced practice registered nurses, registered nurses, pediatric registered nurses, licensed practical/vocational nurses, nursing assistants, professionals in perinatal loss care and administrators. It focuses specifically on the individual and is an indication of current competence in a specialized area of practice. Certification in hospice and palliative care is highly valued and provides formal recognition of competence.

The purpose of certification is to *promote delivery of comprehensive palliative care through the certification of qualified hospice and palliative professionals by:*

1. Recognizing formally those individuals who meet the eligibility requirements for and pass an NBCHPN® certification examination or complete the recertification process.

2. Encouraging continuing personal and professional growth in the practice of hospice and palliative care.
3. Establishing and measuring the level of knowledge required for certification in hospice and palliative care.
4. Providing a national standard of requisite knowledge required for certification; thereby assisting the employer, public and members of the health professions in the assessment of hospice and palliative care.

### DEFINITION OF HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE CARE

Hospice and palliative care is the provision of care for the patient with life-limiting illness and their family with the emphasis on their physical, psychosocial, emotional and spiritual needs. This is accomplished in collaboration with an interdisciplinary team in a variety of settings which provide 24-hour nursing availability, pain and symptom management, and family support. The advanced practice registered nurse, registered nurse, pediatric registered nurse, licensed practical/vocational nurse, nursing assistant and administrator are integral to achieve a high standard of hospice and palliative care as members of this team.

### TESTING AGENCY

Applied Measurement Professionals, Inc., (AMP) is the professional testing agency contracted by the NBCHPN® to assist in the development, administration, scoring and analysis of the NBCHPN® certification examinations. AMP services also include the processing of examination applications and the reporting of scores to candidates who take the examinations. AMP is a research and development firm that conducts professional competency assessment research and provides examination services for a number of credentialing programs.

### NBCHPN® PROCESSING AGREEMENT

NBCHPN® agrees to process your application subject to your agreement to the following terms and conditions:

1. To be bound by and comply with NBCHPN® rules relating to eligibility, certification, renewal and recertification, including, but not limited to, payment of applicable fees, demonstration of educational and experiential requirements, satisfaction of annual maintenance and recertification requirements, compliance with the NBCHPN® Grounds for Sanctions and other standards, and compliance with all NBCHPN® documentation and reporting requirements, as may be revised from time to time.



- To hold NBCHPN® harmless and to waive, release and exonerate NBCHPN®, its officers, directors, employees, committee members, and agents from any claims that you may have against NBCHPN® arising out of NBCHPN®'s review of your application, or eligibility for certification, renewal, recertification or reinstatement, conduct of the examination, or issuance of a sanction or other decision.
- To authorize NBCHPN® to publish and/or release your contact information for NBCHPN® approved activities and to provide your certification or recertification status and any final or pending disciplinary decisions to state licensing boards or agencies, other healthcare organizations, professional associations, employers or the public.
- To only provide information in your application to NBCHPN® that is true and accurate to the best of your knowledge. You agree to revocation or other limitation of your certification, if granted, should any statement made on this application or hereafter supplied to NBCHPN® is found to be false or inaccurate or if you violate any of the standards, rules or regulations of NBCHPN®.

To apply for an NBCHPN® examination, complete the application online or mail the application included with this handbook to Applied Measurement Professionals, Inc. (AMP). All applications must be **RECEIVED** at AMP by the application deadline.

Advanced Practice Registered Nurses applying for initial certification **MUST apply by MAIL** using the paper application due to the additional required documentation. Transcripts **MUST** accompany the application.

## ASSESSMENT CENTER LOCATIONS

A current listing of approximately 200 Assessment Centers with specific address information can be viewed at <http://www.nbchpn.org/DisplayPage.aspx?Title=Test Site Locations>.

## APPLYING FOR AN EXAMINATION THE APPLICATION PROCESS

There are two ways to apply for the NBCHPN® Certification Examination. Candidates may access the application process through the NBCHPN® at [www.nbchpn.org](http://www.nbchpn.org). **FAXED APPLICATIONS ARE NOT ACCEPTED.**

- Online Application and Scheduling:** You may complete the application and scheduling process in one online session by visiting [www.nbchpn.org](http://www.nbchpn.org). The computer screens will guide you through the application/scheduling process. After the application information and payment using a credit card (VISA, MasterCard, AMEX, Discover) have been submitted, eligibility will be confirmed or denied and you will be prompted to schedule an examination appointment or supply additional eligibility information.

OR

- Paper Application and Scheduling:** Complete and mail to AMP the paper application included in this handbook and appropriate fee (credit card, personal check, cashier's check or money order). A paper application is considered complete only if all information requested is complete, legible and accurate; if the candidate is eligible for the examination; and if the appropriate fee accompanies the application. **A paper application that is incomplete or late will be returned, unprocessed.**

AMP will process the paper application and within approximately two weeks will send a confirmation notice including a website address and toll-free telephone number to contact AMP to schedule an examination appointment (see following table). If eligibility cannot be confirmed, notification why the application is incomplete will be sent. If a confirmation of eligibility notice is not received within 4 weeks, contact AMP at 888-519-9901.

## EXAMINATION ADMINISTRATION

The NBCHPN® Examination is delivered by computer at approximately 200 AMP Assessment Centers geographically located throughout the United States. The examination is administered by appointment only Monday through Friday at 9:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Evening and Saturday appointments may be scheduled based on availability. Candidates are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis. The examination is not offered on holidays during the four offered windows (Labor Day, Christmas Holiday (December 24-26) and New Year's Eve Day).

## EXAMINATION WINDOWS AND APPLICATION DEADLINES

Applications that are received before the application "Start Date" or after the application "Deadlines" as posted below will be returned to the applicant **unprocessed**.

Applications are processed for the corresponding testing window **ONLY** as indicated in the chart below.

TESTING WINDOW	Application Start Date	Paper Application Deadline	Online Application Deadline
March 1 – March 31	December 1	January 15	February 15
June 1 – June 30	March 1	April 15	May 15
September 1 – September 30	June 1	July 15	August 15
December 1 – December 31	September 1	October 15	November 15



If you contact AMP by 3:00 p.m. Central Time on...	Your examination may be scheduled as early as...
Monday	Wednesday
Tuesday	Thursday
Wednesday	Friday (Saturday if available)
Thursday	Monday
Friday	Tuesday

Be prepared to confirm a location and a preferred date and time for testing. You will be asked to provide your unique identification number that was provided on your confirmation notice. When you call to schedule an appointment for examination, you will be notified of the time to report to the Assessment Center. Please make a note of it because you will **NOT** receive an admission letter with appointment confirmation. If an email address is provided you will be sent an email confirmation notice.

You are allowed to take only the examination scheduled. **Unscheduled candidates (walk-ins) are not tested.**

## EXAMINATION APPOINTMENT CHANGES

You may reschedule an appointment for examination at no charge **once** by calling AMP at 888-519-9901 or rescheduling online at [www.goAMP.com](http://www.goAMP.com) **AT LEAST TWO BUSINESS DAYS** prior to the scheduled examination session (see following table). Appointments **MUST** be rescheduled within the **SAME TESTING WINDOW**.

If your Examination is scheduled on...	You must contact AMP by 3:00 p.m. Central Time to reschedule the Examination by the previous...
Monday	Wednesday
Tuesday	Thursday
Wednesday	Friday
Thursday	Monday
Friday	Tuesday
Saturday	Wednesday

## REQUESTS FOR SPECIAL EXAMINATION ACCOMMODATIONS

The NBCHPN® and AMP comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and are interested in ensuring that individuals with disabilities are not deprived of the opportunity to take the examination solely by reason of a disability, as required and defined by the relevant provisions of the law. Special testing arrangements may be made for these individuals, provided that an appropriate written application request for accommodation is received by AMP by the application deadline and the request is approved. Please complete the Request for Special Examination Accommodations form included in this handbook.

This form must be signed by an appropriate professional and submitted to AMP with this application.

## HPNA MEMBERSHIP BENEFIT

The Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association is a membership organization offering only individual memberships. Affiliated with NBCHPN®, HPNA is a nursing membership organization whose mission is to advance expert care in serious illness.

Persons applying for a certification examination who are current HPNA members **PRIOR** to applying for the NBCHPN® examination are entitled to the HPNA member discounted examination fee as a membership benefit. See “Examination Fees” section for the applicable examination. Candidates **MUST** include their HPNA membership number on their exam application in order to receive the discounted fee.

## FORFEITURE OF FEE

A candidate who:

1. does not schedule an examination appointment within the selected testing window;
2. fails to reschedule an examination within two business days prior to the scheduled testing session;
3. fails to report for an examination appointment;
4. arrives more than 15 minutes late for the examination appointment; or
5. fails to provide proper identification at the Assessment Center

will forfeit the examination fee and must reapply for the examination by submitting a new application, documentation and full examination fee, or request a transfer.

## TRANSFERS

Candidates who, for any reason, are unable to sit for the examination in the window for which they applied, may request a transfer. This transfer will allow the candidate to forward their application fee to the **next testing window only**. Extensions of transfers will not be permitted.

Request for this transfer must be made in writing using the Transfer of Application form at the back of this handbook, and sent to Applied Measurement Professionals, Inc. (AMP) via mail or facsimile along with a \$100 transfer fee. The request must be received no later than 30 days following the last day of the original testing window. Once the request is received and processed, the candidate will receive notification from AMP with instructions regarding scheduling their appointment when the next application window opens.

Telephone calls and/or electronic mail messages are not accepted as transfer requests. However, a phone call should be made to AMP (888-519-9901) to **cancel** the scheduled appointment.

Transfer requests made after the timeframe outlined on page 3 will not be honored.



**Note:** The acceptance of a transfer request DOES NOT extend the expiration date of an NBCHPN® credential. An individual holding an NBCHPN® credential who does not successfully renew during the year of expiration must stop using the credential after the expiration date and cannot resume using the credential until written confirmation of passing the examination is received.

## REFUNDS

Due to the nature of computer based testing and the ability to reschedule your appointment within the testing window, no refund requests will be honored. Candidate substitutions are not permitted.

## ON THE DAY OF YOUR EXAMINATION

On the day of your examination appointment, report to the Assessment Center no later than your scheduled testing time. Once you enter the Assessment Center, look for the signs indicating AMP Assessment Center check-in. **IF YOU ARRIVE MORE THAN 15 MINUTES AFTER THE SCHEDULED TESTING TIME YOU WILL NOT BE ADMITTED.**

To gain admission to the Assessment Center, you must present **two forms of identification**. The primary form must be government issued, current and include your photograph. You will also be required to sign a roster for verification of identity. No temporary IDs are allowed.

Examples of valid primary forms of identification are:

1. Driver's license with photograph
2. State identification card with photograph
3. Passport with photograph
4. Military identification card with photograph

Employment ID cards, student ID cards, social security cards and any type of temporary identification are **NOT** acceptable as primary identification, but may be used as secondary identification if they include your name and signature. Candidates are prohibited from misrepresenting their identities or falsifying information to obtain admission to the Assessment Center.

After your identification has been confirmed, you will be directed to a testing carrel. You will be prompted on-screen to enter your candidate identification number. Your photograph will be taken and it will remain on-screen throughout your examination session. This photograph will also print on your score report.

## SECURITY

AMP administration and security standards are designed to ensure all candidates are provided the same opportunity to demonstrate their abilities. The Assessment Center is continuously monitored by audio and video surveillance equipment for security purposes.

The following security procedures apply during the examination:

- Examinations are proprietary. No cameras, notes, tape recorders, Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs), pagers or cellular phones are allowed in the testing room. Possession of a cellular phone or other electronic devices is strictly prohibited and will result in dismissal from the examination.
- No calculators are allowed.
- No guests, visitors or family members are allowed in the testing room or reception areas.

## PERSONAL BELONGINGS

No personal items, valuables, or weapons should be brought to the Assessment Center. Only wallets and keys are permitted. Coats must be left outside the testing room. You will be provided a soft locker to store your wallet and/or keys with you in the testing room. You will not have access to these items until after the examination is completed. Please note the following items will not be allowed in the testing room except securely locked in the soft locker.

- watches
- hats
- wallets
- keys

Once you have placed everything into the soft locker, you will be asked to pull out your pockets to ensure they are empty. If all personal items will not fit in the soft locker you will not be able to test. The site will not store any personal belongings.

If any personal items are observed in the testing room after the examination is started, you will be dismissed and the administration will be forfeited.

## EXAMINATION RESTRICTIONS

- Pencils will be provided during check-in.
- You will be provided with one piece of scratch paper at a time to use during the examination, unless noted on the sign-in roster for a particular candidate. You must return the scratch paper to the supervisor at the completion of testing, or you will not receive your score report.
- No documents or notes of any kind may be removed from the Assessment Center.
- No questions concerning the content of the examination may be asked during the examination.
- Eating, drinking or smoking will not be permitted in the Assessment Center.



- You may take a break whenever you wish, but you will not be allowed additional time to make up for time lost during breaks.

## MISCONDUCT

If you engage in any of the following conduct during the examination you may be dismissed, your scores will not be reported and examination fees will not be refunded. Examples of misconduct are when you:

- create a disturbance, are abusive, or otherwise uncooperative;
- display and/or use electronic communications equipment such as pagers, cellular phones, PDAs;
- talk or participate in conversation with other examination candidates;
- give or receive help or are suspected of doing so;
- leave the Assessment Center during the administration;
- attempt to record examination questions or make notes;
- attempt to take the examination for someone else;
- are observed with personal belongings, or
- are observed with notes, books or other aids without it being noted on the roster.

## COPYRIGHTED EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

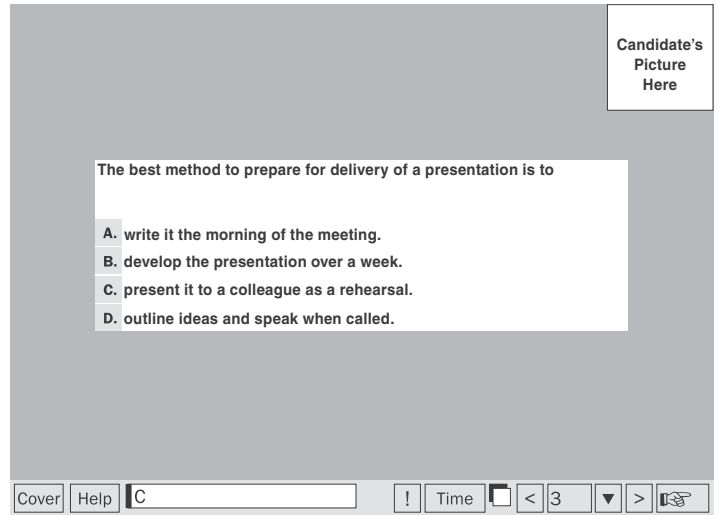
All examination questions are the copyrighted property of NBCHPN®. It is forbidden under federal copyright law to copy, reproduce, record, distribute or display these examination questions by any means, in whole or in part. Doing so may subject you to severe civil and criminal penalties.

## PRACTICE EXAMINATION

Prior to attempting the timed examination, you will be given the opportunity to practice taking an examination on the computer. The time you use for this practice examination is **NOT** counted as part of your examination time. When you are comfortable with the computer testing process, you may quit the practice session and begin the timed examination.

## TIMED EXAMINATION

Following the practice examination, you will begin the timed examination. Before beginning, instructions for taking the examination are provided on-screen. The following is a sample of what the computer screen will look like when you are attempting the examination.



The computer monitors the time you spend on the examination. The examination will terminate if you exceed the time limit. You may click on the "Time" button in the lower right portion of the screen to monitor your time. A digital clock indicates the time remaining for you to complete the examination. The time feature may also be turned off during the examination.

Only one examination question is presented at a time. The question number appears in the lower right portion of the screen. The entire examination question appears on-screen (i.e., stem and four options labeled – A, B, C and D). **Indicate your choice by either entering the letter of the option you think is correct (A, B, C or D) or clicking on the option using the mouse.** To change your answer, enter a different option by entering in the letter in the response box or by clicking on the option using the mouse. You may change your answer as many times as you wish during the examination time limit.

To move to the next question, click on the forward arrow (>) in the lower right portion of the screen. This action will move you forward through the examination question by question. If you wish to review any question or questions, click the backward arrow (<) or use the left arrow key to move backward through the examination.

The computer-based test (CBT) is set up in a linear format. In a linear format the candidate answers a predetermined number of questions. The examination questions do not become increasingly more difficult based on answers to previous questions. Answer selections may be changed as many times as necessary during the allotted time.

A question may be left unanswered for return later in the examination session. Questions may also be bookmarked for later review by clicking in the blank square to the right of the TIME button. Click on the hand icon to advance to the next unanswered or bookmarked question on the examination. To identify all unanswered and bookmarked questions, repeatedly click on the hand icon. When the examination is completed, the number of questions answered is reported. If not all questions





have been answered and there is time remaining, return to the examination and answer those questions. Be sure to answer each question before ending the examination. **There is no penalty for guessing.**

## CANDIDATE COMMENTS

You may provide comments for any examination question during the computerized examination **by clicking on the button displaying an exclamation point (!)** to the left of the TIME button. This opens a dialogue box to enter comments. Because of test security considerations, you will not receive individual replies about the content of examination questions, nor will you be permitted to review examination questions after completing the examination. At conclusion of the examination, you will also be asked to complete a brief survey about the examination administration conditions.

## INCLEMENT WEATHER OR EMERGENCY

In the event of inclement weather or unforeseen emergencies on the day of an examination, the NBCHPN® and AMP will determine whether circumstances warrant the cancellation, and subsequent rescheduling, of an examination. The examination will usually not be rescheduled if the Assessment Center personnel are able to open the Assessment Center.

You may visit AMP's website at [www.goAMP.com](http://www.goAMP.com) prior to the examination to determine if AMP has been advised that any Assessment Centers are closed. Every attempt is made to administer the examination as scheduled; however, should an examination be canceled at an Assessment Center, all scheduled candidates will receive notification following the examination regarding rescheduling or reapplication procedures.

If power to an Assessment Center is temporarily interrupted during an administration, your examination will be restarted. The responses provided up to the point of interruption will be intact, but for security reasons the questions will be scrambled.

## REPORT OF RESULTS

After completing the examination, you are asked to complete a short evaluation of your examination experience. Then, you are instructed to report to the examination proctor to receive your score report. Scores are reported in printed form only, in person or by U.S. mail. **Scores are not reported over the telephone, by electronic mail or by facsimile.**

Your score report will indicate a "pass" or "fail." Additional detail is provided in the form of raw scores by major content category. Test scores are reported as raw scores and scaled scores. A raw score is the number of correctly answered questions; a scaled score is statistically derived from the raw score. Your total score determines whether you pass or fail; it is reported as a scaled score ranging between 0 and 99.

The methodology used to set the minimum passing score for each examination is the Angoff method, applied during the performance of a Passing Point Study by a panel of content experts. The experts evaluated each question on the respective examination to determine how many correct answers are necessary to demonstrate the knowledge and skills required for the designation. The candidate's ability to pass the examination depends on the knowledge and skill displayed during the examination, not on the performance of other candidates.

The minimum scaled score needed to pass the examinations has been set at 75 scaled score units. The reason for reporting scaled scores is that different forms (or versions) of the examinations may vary in difficulty. As new forms of the examinations are introduced each year, a certain number of questions in each content area are replaced. These changes may cause one form of the examination to be slightly easier or harder than another form. To adjust for these differences in difficulty, a procedure called "equating" is used. The goal of equating is to ensure fairness to all candidates.

In the equating process, the minimum raw score (number of correctly answered questions) required to equal the scaled passing score of 75 is statistically adjusted (or equated). For instance, if an examination is determined to be more difficult than the previous form of the examination, then the minimum raw passing score required to pass will be slightly lower than the original raw passing score. If the examination is easier than the previous form of the examination, then the minimum raw score will be higher. Equating helps to assure that the scaled passing score of 75 represents the same level of competence no matter which form of an examination the candidate takes.

In addition to the candidate's total scaled score and scaled score required to pass, raw scores (the actual number of questions answered correctly) are reported for the major categories on the content outline. The number of questions answered correctly in each major category is compared to the total number of questions possible in that category on the score report (e.g., 15/20). Content categorical information is provided to assist candidates in identifying areas of relative strength and weakness; however, passing or failing the examination is based only on the candidate's total scaled score.

## DUPLICATE SCORE REPORT

You may purchase additional copies of your score report at a cost of \$25 per copy. Requests must be submitted to AMP, in writing, within twelve months after the examination. The request must include your name, mailing address, telephone number, date of examination and examination taken. Submit this information with the required fee payable to AMP. Duplicate score reports will be mailed within approximately five business days after receipt of the request and fee.



## CONFIDENTIALITY

Individual examination scores are released ONLY to the individual candidate. Results will not be given over the telephone, fax or email.

## RECOGNITION OF CERTIFICATION

Eligible candidates who pass an NBCHPN® certification examination are eligible to use the respective registered designation after their names and will receive certificates from the NBCHPN®.

- **Advanced Certified Hospice and Palliative Nurse Examination: ACHPN®**
- **Certified Hospice and Palliative Nurse Examination: CHPN®**
- **Certified Hospice and Palliative Pediatric Nurse Examination: CHPPN®**
- **Certified Hospice and Palliative LP/VN Examination: CHPLN®**
- **Certified Hospice and Palliative Nursing Assistant Examination: CHPNA®**
- **Certified Hospice and Palliative Care Administrator Examination: CHPCA®**
- **Certified in Perinatal Loss Care Examination: CPLC**

Each certification expires after a period of four years unless it is renewed by the individual (see "Renewal of Certification" section). A registry of certified hospice and palliative certificants will be maintained by the NBCHPN® and may be used for: 1) employer, accrediting body or public verification of an individual's credential; 2) publication; 3) special mailings or other activities.

## RENEWAL OF CERTIFICATION

Attaining certification is an indication of a well-defined body of knowledge. Renewal of the certification is required every four years to maintain certified status. Initial certification or renewal of certification is valid for four years.

It is the certificant's responsibility to apply for renewal by the required application deadline, posted at [www.nbchpn.org](http://www.nbchpn.org). NBCHPN® attempts to provide certificants with renewal notices, but failure to receive a notice does not relieve the certificant from the responsibility to apply for renewal by the application deadline.

***Individuals who do not renew before the expiration date of their credential will not be able to use the credential after that date. They will need to pay the same initial certification fee when they retake the examination as other applicants for initial certification.***

Please refer to section 2 of the handbook for specific information regarding renewal of certification.

## ETHICAL CODE

NBCHPN® has a responsibility to ensure the integrity of all processes and products of its certification programs to the public, the professionals, the employers and its certificants. Therefore, NBCHPN® considers the Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association (HPNA) Code of Ethics as the essential ethical framework for honoring human dignity and professional accountability for conduct. NBCHPN® upholds the high standards for credentialing agencies established by two national accreditation organizations, the Accreditation Board for Specialty Nursing Certification (ABSNC) and the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA).

## MISUSE OF CERTIFICATION CREDENTIALS

Please be advised that once certified, the designated credential may only be used by the certified individual during the four-year time period designated on the certificate. Failure to successfully recertify requires the individual nurse to **stop use of the credential immediately** after the credential has expired. Any other use, or use of the NBCHPN® Trademark without permission from the NBCHPN® Board of Directors, is fraudulent. It is the policy of the NBCHPN® to thoroughly investigate all reports of an individual or corporation fraudulently using the "ACHPN®", "CHPN®", "CHPPN®", "CHPLN®", "CHPNA®", "CHPCA®" or "CPLC" credentials or the NBCHPN® Trademark. If proof of fraudulent use is obtained, the NBCHPN® will notify the parties involved. Fraudulent use may be reported to employers, state nursing boards, and/or published for professional or consumer notification at the discretion of the NBCHPN® Board of Directors.

## GROUND FOR DISCIPLINARY ACTION

The following conditions or behaviors constitute grounds for disciplinary action by the NBCHPN®:

1. Ineligibility for certification, regardless of when the ineligibility is discovered.
2. Any violation of an NBCHPN® rule or procedure, as may be revised from time to time, and any failure to provide information required or requested by NBCHPN®, or to update (within thirty days) information previously provided to NBCHPN®, including but not limited to, any failure to report to NBCHPN® in a timely manner an action, complaint, or charge that relates to rules 6-8 of these grounds for disciplinary action.
3. Unauthorized possession of, use of, distribution of, or access to:
  - a. NBCHPN® examinations



- b. Certificates
  - c. Logo of NBCHPN®
  - d. Abbreviations related thereto
  - e. Any other NBCHPN® documents and materials, including but not limited to, misrepresentation of self, professional practice or NBCHPN® certification status, prior to or following the grant of certification by NBCHPN®, if any.
4. Any examination irregularity, including but not limited to, copying answers, permitting another to copy answers, disrupting the conduct of an examination, falsifying information or identification, education or credentials, providing and/or receiving unauthorized advice about examination content before, during, or following the examination. [Note: the NBCHPN® may refuse to release an examination score pending resolution of an examination irregularity.]
  5. Obtaining or attempting to obtain certification or renewal of certification for oneself or another by a false or misleading statement or failure to make a required statement, or fraud or deceit in any communication to NBCHPN®.
  6. Gross or repeated negligence, incompetence or malpractice in professional work, including, but not limited to, habitual use of alcohol or any drug or any substance, or any physical or mental condition that currently impairs competent professional performance or poses a substantial risk to patient health and safety.
  7. Limitation, sanction, revocation or suspension by a health care organization, professional organization, or other private or governmental body, relating to nursing practice, public health or safety, or nursing certification.
  8. Any conviction of a felony or misdemeanor directly relating to nursing practice and/or public health and safety. An individual convicted of a felony directly related to nursing practice and/or public health and safety shall be ineligible to apply for NBCHPN® certification or renewal of certification for a period of three (3) years from the exhaustion of appeals.

Any disciplinary complaint must be written in a letter to the NBCHPN® President, c/o Chief Executive Officer, NBCHPN®, One Penn Center West, Suite 229, Pittsburgh, PA 15276-0100.

## REVOCATION OF CERTIFICATION

Admittance to the examination will be denied or certification will be revoked for any of the following reasons:

1. Falsification of an application or documentation provided with the application.
2. Failure to pay the required fee.
3. Revocation or expiration of current nursing license.
4. Misrepresentation of certification status.

## QUESTIONS AND APPEALS

NBCHPN® provides an opportunity for candidates to question any aspect of the certification program. NBCHPN® will respond to any question as quickly as possible, generally within a few days. Candidates are invited to call 412-787-1057 or send an email message to [nbchpn@nbchpn.org](mailto:nbchpn@nbchpn.org) for any questions. In addition, NBCHPN® has an appeals policy to provide a review mechanism for challenging an adverse decision, such as denial of eligibility for the examination or revocation of certification. It is the responsibility of the individual to initiate the appeal process by written request to the NBCHPN® President, c/o Chief Executive Officer, NBCHPN®, One Penn Center West, Suite 229, Pittsburgh, PA 15276-0100 within 30 calendar days of the circumstance leading to the appeal.

## RE-EXAMINATION

Candidates who do not pass the NBCHPN® certification examination may reapply for the next testing window or any subsequent window by filing a new application and fee.

## STUDY ADVICE

Determine how you study best. Some individuals seem to learn faster by hearing the information, while others need to see it written or illustrated, and still others prefer to discuss material with colleagues. A combination of these alternatives can often produce the most effective study pattern. If you had success in lecture courses with little outside review, it may be that you need to hear information for best retention. You may wish to organize a study group or find a study partner. Once you decide on the method most effective and comfortable for you, focus on that preference and use the other techniques to complement it.

Plan your study schedule well in advance. Use learning techniques, such as reading or audio-visual aids. Be sure you find a quiet place to study where you will not be interrupted.

## TEST-TAKING ADVICE

The advice offered here is presented primarily to familiarize you with the examination directions.

1. Read all instructions carefully.
2. The actual examination will be timed. For best results, pace yourself by periodically checking your progress. This will allow you to make any necessary adjustments. Remember, the more questions you answer, the better your chances of achieving a passing score.
3. Book mark unanswered questions for return and review.

A list of suggested references is provided at the end of Section 2 in this candidate handbook.



## SECTION 2: CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION FOR HOSPICE AND PALLIATIVE ADVANCED PRACTICE REGISTERED NURSES

### ACCREDITATION OF THE CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION

The NBCHPN® Advanced Certified Hospice and Palliative Nurse (ACHPN®) exam has fulfilled the accreditation requirements of the Accreditation Board for Specialty Nursing Certification (ABSNC). ABSNC grants accreditation through a process of peer review and determination that a specialty nursing certification organization has the essential components and met the high standards established by ABSNC. More information about accreditation can be found at [www.nbchpn.org](http://www.nbchpn.org).

CMS (Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services) has added the National Board for Certification of Hospice and Palliative Nurses (NBCHPN®) to the list of recognized national certifying bodies for NPs and CNSs at the advanced practice level.

**Note:** Because of state to state variations, we advise APRN potential applicants to check with your state board of nursing and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to determine requirements for licensure and billing prior to exam application.

### EXAMINATION

The Certification Examination for the Hospice and Palliative Advanced Practice Registered Nurses consists of 175 multiple choice items, of which 150 have equal weight for scoring. The examination includes 25 non-scored “pretest” or “trial” items that are interspersed throughout the examination. Performance on the pretest questions does not affect your score. The examination presents each question with four response alternatives (A, B, C, D). One of those represents the best response. You will be permitted three and one-half hours to complete this examination. Candidates achieving a passing score on this examination will be awarded the **Advanced Certified Hospice and Palliative Nurse (ACHPN®) credential**.

The NBCHPN®, with the advice and assistance of AMP, prepares the examinations. Individuals with expertise in hospice and palliative advanced nursing practice write the questions and review them for relevancy, consistency, accuracy and appropriateness.

### ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for the ACHPN® Examination, an applicant must fulfill the following requirements by the application deadline.

1. Hold a current, unrestricted active registered nurse license in the United States, its territories or the equivalent in Canada;

2. Have graduated from a nursing program offered by an institution granting graduate-level academic credit for all of the course work, including both didactic and clinical components and which is accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) or the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) (formerly NLNAC).

3. **Hold one of the following:**

- a. Master’s or higher degree in nursing from an Advanced Practice Palliative Care accredited education program providing both a didactic component and a minimum of 500 hours of supervised advanced practice specifically in palliative care in the year prior to applying to take the examination, or
  - b. Post-master’s certificate in nursing with a minimum of 500 hours of supervised advanced clinical practice specifically in palliative care in the year prior to applying to take the examination, or
  - c. Master’s, post-master’s, or higher degree in nursing from an advanced practice program (APRN) as a Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) or Nurse Practitioner (NP) with 500 hours of post-master’s advanced practice in providing palliative care (direct and/or indirect) in the year prior to applying to take the examination.
4. Is functioning or will be functioning as a Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) or Nurse Practitioner (NP).

An official academic record/transcript and practice verification form(s) are **required** as part of the application process. Transcripts must demonstrate the key elements of APRN preparation which includes completion of the three core courses (advanced physical assessment, advanced pathophysiology, and advanced pharmacology) as well as a clinical practicum.

Transcripts for APRN applications **MUST BE RECEIVED WITH THE PAPER APPLICATION BY THE DEADLINE DATE.**

If a candidate has questions regarding eligibility requirements, please contact the NBCHPN® National Office at 412-787-1057 **PRIOR** to submission of application.

### RENEWAL OF CERTIFICATION

The Advanced Certified Hospice and Palliative Nurse certificant (Nurse Practitioner or Clinical Nurse Specialist) **must** submit the Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Hospice and Palliative Accrual for Recertification (APRN HPAR) application for renewal of certification. The APRN HPAR requires renewal of certification by fulfilling practice hour requirements and by accumulating required points through various professional development



activities. APRN HPAR applications must be received in the NBCHPN® National Office between January 1 and March 1 of the year your certification will expire.

If the candidate is unable to meet the practice hour requirements outlined in the APRN HPAR application, the APRN must renew certification using the APRN HPAR accumulated points AND sit for the examination. For more information, contact the National Office at 412-787-1057 or visit the website ([www.nbchpn.org](http://www.nbchpn.org)) for details and necessary forms.

## EXAMINATION FEES

### Applicants Applying for INITIAL Certification

HPNA members prior to submitting application	\$345*
Non-HPNA members	\$465

### Applicants Applying for RENEWAL of Certification (Renewal through APRN HPAR only)

HPNA members prior to submitting application	\$310
Non-HPNA members	\$430

\*See "HPNA Membership Benefit" on page 3.

Application fees may be paid by credit card (MasterCard, VISA, AMEX or Discover), personal check, cashier's check or money order (payable to NBCHPN®) in U.S. dollars. DO NOT SUBMIT CASH. All fees must be submitted with the application to be **RECEIVED** by AMP by the application deadline.

Insufficient funds checks returned to NBCHPN® or declined credit card transactions will be subject to a \$15 penalty. Repayment of an insufficient funds check or declined credit card must be made with a cashier's or certified check or money order.

## EXAMINATION CONTENT

To begin your preparation in an informed and organized manner, you should know what to expect from the actual examination in terms of the content. The content outline will give you a general impression of the examination and, with closer inspection, can give you specific study direction by revealing the relative importance given to each category on the examination.

The content of the examination is directly linked to a national job analysis that identified the activities performed by hospice and palliative advanced practice registered nurses. Only those activities that were judged by hospice and palliative advanced practice registered nurses to be important to practice for a nurse engaged in advanced practice palliative care are included on the examination content outline. Each question on the examination is linked to the examination content outline, and is also categorized according to the level of complexity, or the cognitive level that a candidate would likely use to respond.

1. Recall (RE): The ability to recall or recognize specific information is required. Approximately 20 percent of the examination requires recall on the part of the candidate.

2. Application (AP): The ability to comprehend, relate or apply knowledge to new or changing situations is required. Approximately 60 percent of the examination requires the candidate to apply knowledge.
3. Analysis (AN): The ability to analyze and synthesize information, determine solutions and/or to evaluate the usefulness of a solution is required. Approximately 20 percent of the examination requires analysis on the part of the candidate.

The NBCHPN® advanced practice registered nurse certification examination requires the ability to apply the nursing process (i.e., assess, plan, intervene and evaluate) at the advanced practice level in helping patients and their families (defined as including all persons identified by the patient) toward the goal of maintaining optimal functioning and quality of life within the limits of the disease process, while considering factors such as fear, communication barriers, economic issues and cultural issues. The examination includes questions distributed across five domains of practice as shown in the detailed content outline that follows.

## DETAILED CONTENT OUTLINE INFO

The Detailed Content Outline lists each task that **MAY** be tested by content area and performance level. Each and every task listed for a given content area is not tested on any one form of the examination. Rather, these tasks are representatively sampled such that the test specifications for performance levels are met (i.e., appropriate number of recall, application and analysis performance level items).

## DRUG NAMES

Generic drug names are used throughout the examination except in individual situations as determined by the examination development committee.



## DETAILED CONTENT OUTLINE

### 1. Clinical Judgment in Caring for Adult Patients and their Families 34%

#### A. Assessment

1. Prioritize data collection based on the patient's/family's immediate condition or needs
2. Collect data in collaboration with the patient/family from health care providers, and other sources
3. Use various assessment techniques and standardized instruments, as appropriate in data collection
4. Obtain a history of the patient's problem
5. Obtain patient and family medical/surgical history
6. Obtain social history
7. Obtain history of allergies and drug interactions
8. Obtain a history of pharmacologic and nonpharmacologic therapies
9. Obtain a history of complementary and alternative therapies
10. Conduct a comprehensive, problem-focused review of systems
11. Perform a comprehensive and/or focused physical examination, including a mental status evaluation
12. Determine patient/family functional status
13. Identify past and present goals of care as stated by patient, surrogate, or health care proxy, or documented through advance care planning
14. Identify health beliefs, values, and practices
15. Assess nutritional issues of patient within the context of advanced illness
16. Assess patient/family knowledge of and response to advanced illness
17. Assess emotional status of patients and families
18. Identify patient/family past/present coping patterns
19. Assess patient/family support systems
20. Assess environmental factors
21. Analyze risks/benefits/burdens related to treatment within the context of goals and care

22. Determine patient/family expectations
23. Include culture and/or ethnicity in assessment
24. Evaluate need for spiritual/pastoral care
25. Perform additional assessments based on patient/family unique needs (e.g., substance abuse, homelessness, cognitive impairment, elderly)
26. Identify individuals at risk for complicated grief

#### B. Diagnosis and Planning

1. Identify and document a problem list related to a diagnosis
2. Apply findings in developing the plan of care
3. Identify expected outcomes that are realistic in relation to patient/family goals of care, life expectancy, and the improvement of quality of life
4. Select interventions based on values, preferences, available resources and goals of the patient/family
5. Assist patient/family in evaluating appropriate and available resources
6. Consider the unique needs of special populations in developing the plan of care

#### C. Intervention and Evaluation

1. Participate in the development of the interdisciplinary plan of care to achieve patient/family desired outcomes
2. Facilitate self-care, health promotion and maintenance through health teaching within the context of the patient's illness trajectory
3. Recommend strategies to address emotional and spiritual health
4. Provide interventions either directly or indirectly to minimize care giver burden (i.e., families and professionals)
5. Implement pharmacologic therapies
6. Implement nonpharmacologic therapies
7. Identify the need for interventional analgesic techniques (e.g., epidural, intrathecal, nerve block)

8. Implement palliative sedation at the end of life
9. Discontinue medically administered nutrition and hydration
10. Address issues related to patient/family vulnerability
11. Assist patient/family in their search for meaning and hope
12. Implement a culturally and spiritually respectful plan of care
13. Evaluate and modify the plan of care based on changing patient status, patient outcomes, family issues, goals, and expected outcomes

### 2. Scientific Knowledge (biomedical, clinical, and psychosocial-behavioral) 23%

#### A. Differential Diagnoses

*Formulate and prioritize differential diagnoses based on analyses of multidimensional assessment data, actual or potential responses to alterations in health, or problems that may be resolved, diminished or prevented in relation to the following disease patterns and progression:*

1. Neoplastic conditions
2. Neurological conditions (e.g., ALS, CVA)
3. Dementia
4. Cardiac conditions (e.g., CHF)
5. Pulmonary conditions (e.g., COPD)
6. Renal conditions
7. Hepatic conditions (e.g., hepatic failure, cirrhosis)
8. Gastrointestinal conditions
9. Hematologic conditions (e.g., neutropenia, disseminated intravascular coagulopathy)
10. Acute injuries (e.g., traumatic brain injury, burns)
11. Symptoms related to pain (e.g., nociceptive, neuropathic, acute, chronic, breakthrough)

*Formulate and prioritize differential diagnoses based on analyses of multidimensional assessment data, actual or potential responses to alterations in health, or problems that may be resolved, diminished or prevented in relation to the following hospice and palliative care emergencies:*



- 12. Spinal cord compression
- 13. Hemorrhage
- 14. Seizures

*Formulate and prioritize differential diagnoses based on analyses of multidimensional assessment data, actual or potential responses to alterations in health, or problems that may be resolved, diminished or prevented in relation to the following non-pain symptoms:*

- 15. Cardiac (e.g., angina, edema, dysrhythmias)
- 16. Respiratory (e.g., dyspnea, cough, secretions, sleep apnea)
- 17. Gastrointestinal (e.g., constipation, diarrhea, ascites, hiccups, bowel obstruction, nausea, taste changes)
- 18. Genitourinary (e.g., bladder spasm, urinary retention, incontinence)
- 19. Musculoskeletal (e.g., pathological fractures, spasms)
- 20. Skin and mucus membranes (e.g., pruritis, mucositis, stomas, fistulas, fungating wounds, pressure ulcers, edema)
- 21. Neurological (e.g., seizure, myoclonus encephalopathy, impaired communication, dysphagia)
- 22. Psychiatric/psychological (e.g., anxiety, depression, delirium, fear, suicidal ideation, agitation/restlessness)
- 23. Spiritual/existential (e.g., distress, hopelessness, death anxiety, grief, suffering)
- 24. Nutrition and metabolic (e.g., anorexia/cachexia, dehydration, electrolyte imbalance)
- 25. Fatigue/asthenia
- 26. Insomnia
- 27. Lymphedema
- 28. Complications of therapy (e.g., drug reactions, radiation, chemotherapy, surgery)

**B. Diagnostic Tests and Procedures**

- 1. Recommend screening or diagnostic tests that are based on goals of care and risk/benefit/burden ratio
- 2. Interpret common diagnostic tests and procedures

- C. Prognosis
  - 1. Use results of evidence and holistic assessment to determine prognosis
- D. Responses to Illness, Loss, Grief, Bereavement

- 1. Distinguish among culture, ethnicity, and race
- 2. Identify the basic tenets of major religions and cultures in relation to death and dying
- 3. Address issues related to loss, bereavement, grief and mourning
- 4. Identify factors that influence the bereavement process

**3. Evidence Based Practice, Quality Improvement, and Research 11%**

**A. Evidence-Based Practice**

- 1. Use evidence-based practice and research-based guidelines
- 2. Formulate standards of care
- 3. Use standardized measures (e.g., pain scales, quality of life instruments, functional assessment scales) to evaluate expected outcomes

**B. Quality Improvement**

- 1. Participate in continuous quality improvement
- 2. Consistently provide cost-effective, quality care

**C. Research**

- 1. Incorporate ethical principles, advanced practice professional standards, and codes of ethics in hospice and palliative care research

**4. Education and Communication 16%**

**A. Education (Patients, Families, Health Care Communities)**

- 1. Apply adult learning principles when providing hospice and palliative care education
- 2. Establish a therapeutic environment for effective learning
- 3. Develop, implement, and evaluate formal and informal education
- 4. Select teaching methods tailored to the needs of the patient/family within special populations
- 5. Use information technology to prepare and deliver education
- 6. Develop educational and research initiatives to advance hospice and palliative care

- 7. Educate local, state, and national organizations, institutions, and individuals about hospice and palliative care (e.g., differentiate palliative care from hospice care)
- B. Communication**
  - 1. Communicate diagnoses with patient/family, team members, or other consultants
  - 2. Discuss progression of the disease and communicate expected prognosis
  - 3. Collaborate with other members of the interdisciplinary team to implement interventions
  - 4. Document diagnoses, plans and interventions using a format that is accessible to the interdisciplinary health care team
  - 5. Facilitate advance care planning
  - 6. Address issues related to patient/family care goals and treatment preferences
  - 7. Facilitate discussions related to resuscitation status
  - 8. Analyze own communication (verbal and nonverbal) and possible interpretations
  - 9. Provide counseling and psychological support
  - 10. Respect cultural differences when discussing hospice and palliative care
  - 11. Use culturally appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication
  - 12. Demonstrate knowledge of communication theory and principles within the context of hospice and palliative care
  - 13. Create an environment for effective communication
  - 14. Use appropriate principles and techniques to break bad news
  - 15. Develop strategies to overcome communication barriers
  - 16. Elicit questions, concerns, or suggestions from patients/family, and health care team members
  - 17. Initiate and facilitate patient/family conferences
  - 18. Assist in having appropriate team members available for input/consultation
  - 19. Facilitate conflict resolution for the patient/family and/or health team members
  - 20. Demonstrate therapeutic presence and communication



## 5. Professionalism 9%

### A. Ethics

1. Promote autonomy (e.g., decision making)
2. Promote beneficence
3. Promote veracity (e.g., truth telling)
4. Promote non-maleficence
5. Promote confidentiality
6. Promote justice
7. Address issues related to withholding or withdrawing treatment, and non-beneficial treatment
8. Address issues related to suicide, assisted suicide, or euthanasia
9. Address issues related to sedation

### B. Scope, Standards and Guidelines

1. Identify and resolve issues related to scope of practice
2. Incorporate standards into practice (e.g., NHPCO, Scope and Standards of Hospice and Palliative Nursing Practice, ANA standards)
3. Incorporate guidelines into practice (e.g., American Pain Society, National Consensus Project)
4. Differentiate the roles of advanced practice nursing (i.e., practice, education, consultation, research, and leadership)

### C. Self-Care and Collegial Support

1. Create a climate of trust and partnership with patient/family and interdisciplinary team members
2. Incorporate strategies for self-care and stress management into daily practice
3. Develop a relationship with the patient and family, which includes the recognition and maintenance of professional boundaries

### D. Leadership and Self-Development

1. Actively participate in professional nursing organizational activities
2. Share knowledge through publications, presentations, precepting, and mentoring
3. Create own professional development plan

## 6. Systems Based Practice 7%

### A. Resource Access and Utilization

1. Advocate for access to palliative, hospice, or other appropriate care and/or treatments
2. Refer patient/family for assistance with financial matters and other resources
3. Identify sources for referral

### B. Continuum of Care

1. Identify resources and potential barriers across health care settings
2. Implement strategies to initiate, develop, and foster hospice and palliative care services
3. Use appropriate business strategies to provide effective hospice and palliative care
4. Identify expected outcomes and resources that promote continuity of care across all care settings
5. Maintain current knowledge of trends in health care delivery and reimbursement as it impacts hospice and palliative care
6. Identify lapses in health care coverage related to hospice and palliative care

### C. Care Team Models

1. Facilitate team building
2. Facilitate collaborative relationships
3. Develop collaborative agreements and practice protocols



**SAMPLE QUESTIONS**

1. A patient has lung cancer with multiple sites of bone metastases. He has decided not to have any more treatment. He is not yet eligible for hospice but is seen by the palliative care service. He presents to the clinic today reporting that he has been hearing voices in the last twenty-four hours. An irregular heart rate is noticed during the physical exam that was not present at his clinic visit two weeks ago. Which lab test does the advanced practice nurse order?
  - A. albumin level
  - B. calcium level
  - C. phosphorus
  - D. platelet count
2. A patient's son tells the advanced practice registered nurse that he does not wish his mother to die in his home because of his 11-year-old daughter, who is very attached to her grandmother. The son tells the nurse that if his mother must come to his home he will have to send his young daughter to live with relatives so she won't be traumatized by the death. What is the nurse's best initial response to the son?
  - A. Explore what the granddaughter knows about the patient's condition and their fears about home death.
  - B. Encourage the son to get grief counseling for his daughter.
  - C. Counsel the son about children and grief behaviors.
  - D. Talk with the patient about where she would like to go and follow her wishes.
3. A patient with a history of small cell lung cancer reports inability to move his right arm without experiencing deep, aching, shooting pain. The patient could not tolerate a physical examination of his neck, right supraclavicular area, right shoulder, or right axilla. His right hand showed muscle atrophy typical of the C7-T1 distribution. The diagnosis is
  - A. vertebral lesions.
  - B. radiation fibrosis.
  - C. post-thoracotomy pain syndrome.
  - D. brachial plexus infiltration of tumor.
4. A Mexican American patient has a prognosis of less than 6 months to live. The staff nurse seeks help from the advanced practice registered nurse because the family is refusing to allow the staff to tell the patient his prognosis. The advanced practice registered nurse's most appropriate action is to
  - A. conduct a patient and family conference to explore the patient's preferences.
  - B. consult a social worker to help the family come to terms with sharing the news with the patient.
  - C. encourage the nursing staff to honor the family's wishes not to tell the patient his prognosis.
  - D. recognize the ethical principle of autonomy and tell the patient his prognosis.
5. What symptom complex needs to be present for a patient with Alzheimer's disease to be considered to have a life expectancy of less than 6 months?
  - A. new onset of fever
  - B. needs help with dressing
  - C. disoriented to time, place and person
  - D. bedbound and incontinent
6. A palliative care study involving the subjective nature of terminal illness and existential experiences of dying is best conducted using which research methodology?
  - A. benchmarking
  - B. longitudinal
  - C. qualitative
  - D. quantitative
7. A patient with Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is requesting hospice care. Which diagnostic test result supports the appropriateness of hospice care?
  - A. CD4 count below 25 cells/mcL during a period free of acute illness
  - B. Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) viral load of <10,000 copies/ml
  - C. persistent serum albumin <5.0 gm/dL
  - D. serum creatinine level of 1.5 mg/dL
8. Which of the following is the most frequent source of situational anxiety in a patient with a life-threatening illness?
  - A. concerns about pain, isolation, shortness of breath or dependence
  - B. functional decline and imminent death
  - C. phobias or panic disorders
  - D. thoughts of the future or a wasted past
9. A patient whose pain is well controlled with sustained release oxycodone 20 mg by mouth every 12 hours presents with new onset confusion. The advanced practice registered nurse recognizes that
  - A. an intraspinal infusion of opioids is warranted.
  - B. confusion attributable to opioids alone is uncommon.
  - C. the opioid dosage should be lowered.
  - D. opioid rotation is recommended.
10. A 65-year-old patient with endstage gastric cancer repeatedly verbalizes her desire to stop her tube feedings. Her physician's refusal to comply with her decision is
  - A. a violation of the patient's autonomy.
  - B. an example of beneficence.
  - C. mandated by the law.
  - D. surrogate decision-making.



**ANSWER KEY**

Question	Answer	Content Area	Cognitive Level
1.	B	2B1	AN
2.	A	4B16	AN
3.	D	2A11	AP
4.	A	4B10	AP
5.	D	2A3	RE
6.	C	3A1	RE
7.	A	2B2	AP
8.	A	2A22	RE
9.	B	1C5	AP
10.	A	5A1	AP

**SUGGESTED REFERENCES**

The NBCHPN® has prepared a list of references that may be helpful in preparing for the Certification Examination for Hospice and Palliative Advanced Practice Registered Nurses. This reference list contains journals and textbooks that include information of significance to hospice and palliative nursing practice. Inclusion of certain journals and textbooks on this list does not constitute an endorsement by the NBCHPN® of specific professional literature which, if used, will guarantee candidates successful passing of the certification examination.

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#### Journals:

*American Journal of Hospice and Palliative Medicine*  
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*Clinical Journal of Oncology Nursing*  
*Gerontologist*  
*International Journal of Palliative Nursing*  
*Journal of Hospice and Palliative Nursing*  
*Journal of Pain and Symptom Management*  
*Journal of Palliative Medicine*  
*Journal of Supportive Oncology*  
*Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*  
*Oncology Nursing Forum*  
*Pain Management Nursing*



# 2014 NBCHPN® EXAMINATION APPLICATION

To apply online, visit [www.nbchpn.org](http://www.nbchpn.org).

To apply using this form, provide the requested information and mail it to be **RECEIVED** by AMP by the paper application deadline. Applications received after the deadline or postmarked on the deadline will be returned unprocessed. **FAXED APPLICATIONS ARE NOT ACCEPTED.** Read the Candidate Handbook before completing this application. Mail the completed application and payment made by credit card, personal check, cashier's check or money order payable to NBCHPN® to: NBCHPN® Certification Examination, AMP, 18000 W. 105th St., Olathe, KS 66061-7543.

## 1. Personal Information (please print using blue or black ink)

Last Name:

First Name:  Middle Initial:

Former Name (if applicable):

Credentials:

Date of Birth (xx/xx/xxxx):

Email Address:

## Your HOME Information

Address Line 1:

Address Line 2:

City:

State/Province:  Zip/Postal Code:

Country:

Home Phone:  Cell Phone:

## 2. I am a:

- New Applicant (not currently certified at this level)
- Reapplicant
- Applicant for Renewal
- I am including a Special Examination Accommodations Request. Please include completed form at end of handbook.

## 3. Eligibility and Examination Fees

Persons applying for a certification examination who are current HPNA members **PRIOR** to applying for the Certification Examination are entitled to the HPNA member discounted examination fee as a membership benefit. Must include HPNA membership to receive discount.

HPNA membership number \_\_\_\_\_.

NBCHPN® certification number (for renewal) \_\_\_\_\_.

	Initial Certification		Renewal of Certification	
	HPNA Member	Non-HPNA Member	HPNA Member	Non-HPNA Member
Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Examination	<input type="checkbox"/> \$345	<input type="checkbox"/> \$465	Refer to Page 9	Refer to Page 9
Registered Nurse Examination	<input type="checkbox"/> \$295	<input type="checkbox"/> \$415	<input type="checkbox"/> \$260	<input type="checkbox"/> \$380
Pediatric Registered Nurse Examination	<input type="checkbox"/> \$295	<input type="checkbox"/> \$415		
Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurse Examination	<input type="checkbox"/> \$205	<input type="checkbox"/> \$300	<input type="checkbox"/> \$180	<input type="checkbox"/> \$275
Nursing Assistant Examination	<input type="checkbox"/> \$185	<input type="checkbox"/> \$225	<input type="checkbox"/> \$170	<input type="checkbox"/> \$200
Administrator Examination	<input type="checkbox"/> \$345	<input type="checkbox"/> \$465	<input type="checkbox"/> \$310	<input type="checkbox"/> \$430
Perinatal Loss Care Examination	<input type="checkbox"/> \$295	<input type="checkbox"/> \$415		

## Payment Information: Please indicate your method of payment.

- Check or money order (personal or cashier's check payable to NBCHPN®)
- Credit card: If payment is made by credit card, please provide the following information.
- MasterCard    VISA    AMEX    Discover

Account Number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date (MO/YR) \_\_\_\_\_ Security Code \_\_\_\_\_

**Audits of NBCHPN® Applications** – To ensure the integrity of eligibility requirements, NBCHPN® will audit a percentage of randomly selected applications each year. Candidates whose applications are selected for audit will be notified and required to provide documentation of their nursing license, nursing assistant verification of experience, or administrator verification of experience.

**Demographic Information** – Please complete the following demographic questions. Select only one response for each question, unless directed otherwise.

- |   |   |  |  |
|---|---|--|--|
| <p>1. Which of these best describes the nature of your practice?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 1 Hospice care</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2 Palliative care</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 3 Both</p>  | <p><input type="checkbox"/> 5 College or university</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 6 Self (private practice)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 7 Private physician practice</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 8 Ambulatory care facility</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 9 Correctional facility</p>   | <p>8. Primary age group served</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 1 Adult</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2 Pediatric</p>   | <p>OPTIONAL INFORMATION</p>  |
| <p>2. Total number of years in your profession?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 1 0-2 years</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2 3-5 years</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 3 6-10 years</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 4 11-15 years</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 5 16-20 years</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 6 21-25 years</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 7 26-30 years</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 8 More than 30 years</p>             | <p>5. What is your primary practice setting? (check <u>one</u>)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 1 Private home</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2 Nursing home, assisted living or extended care facility</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 3 Hospital: palliative care unit</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 4 Hospital: hospice unit</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 5 Hospital: other unit or scattered beds</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 6 Freestanding residential or inpatient hospice</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 7 Any setting in which patient resides</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 8 Clinic</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 9 Prison</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 10 I do not routinely see patients</p> | <p>9. What is your primary role?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 1 Staff nursing assistant</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2 Staff nurse (RN, LPN/LVN)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 3 Clinical supervisor/patient care coordinator</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 4 Manager/administrator</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 5 Clinical educator (including staff development)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 6 Advanced practitioner (i.e., CNS, NP)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 7 Consultant for hospice/palliative care team</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 8 Faculty/researcher</p>   | <p>11. Gender</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> M Male</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> F Female</p>  |
| <p>3. Total number of years in hospice and palliative care?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 1 0-2 years</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2 3-5 years</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 3 6-10 years</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 4 11-15 years</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 5 16-20 years</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 6 21-25 years</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 7 26-30 years</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 8 More than 30 years</p> | <p>6. What is the location of your primary practice facility?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 1 Urban</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2 Rural</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 3 Suburban</p>  | <p>10. What is the highest academic level you have attained?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 1 High school diploma</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2 CNA-state</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 3 Associate degree in nursing</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 4 Diploma in nursing</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 5 Bachelor's degree (non-nursing)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 6 Bachelor's degree (nursing)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 7 Master's degree (non-nursing)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 8 Master's degree (nursing)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 9 Doctoral degree (nursing)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 10 Doctoral degree (non-nursing)</p> | <p>12. Race</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 1 African American/Black</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2 Asian/Asian American/Pacific Islander</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 3 Caucasian</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 4 Hispanic</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 5 Native American/Alaskan Native</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 6 Multiracial</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 7 Other</p> |
| <p>4. Which of the following is your primary employer? (check <u>one</u>)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 1 Hospice agency</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2 Home health agency</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 3 Hospital or healthcare system</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 4 Long-term care facility</p> <p>(options continued next column)</p>  | <p>7. Type of practice</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 1 Clinical</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2 Educational</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 3 Administrative</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 4 Research</p>   |  |  |

**Signature (Sign and date in ink the statement below.)**

I certify that I have read all portions of the Candidate Handbook and application, and I agree to all terms of the NBCHPN® processing agreement. I certify that the information I have submitted in this application and the documents I have enclosed are complete and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. I understand that, if the information I have submitted is found to be incomplete or inaccurate, my application may be rejected or my examination results may be delayed or voided, not released or invalidated by NBCHPN®.

Please check below to confirm you meet the eligibility requirements for the examination you are registering for:

**Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Examination**

- I am currently licensed as a registered nurse in the United States, its territories or the equivalent in Canada.

**Registered Nurse Examination**

- I am currently licensed as a registered nurse in the United States, its territories or the equivalent in Canada.

**Pediatric Registered Nurse Examination**

- I am currently licensed as a registered nurse in the United States, its territories or the equivalent in Canada.

**Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurse Examination**

- I am currently licensed as a LP/VN in the United States or its territories.

**Nursing Assistant Examination**

- My direct supervisor confirms that I have fulfilled the eligibility requirement of 2,000 practice hours under the supervision of a registered nurse in the past two years.

**Administrator Examination****Verification of Experience (required)**

- My direct supervisor confirms that I have fulfilled the eligibility requirement of the equivalent of two years of full time hospice and palliative administrative work in the past three years that encompasses the content in the Administrator test content outline.
- I am a CEO and self-verifying my experience.

**Perinatal Loss Care Examination**

- I hold a professional degree and I am currently licensed in the United States or its territories as
- Registered Nurse  Physician  Psychologist  Counselor  Child Life Specialist  Social Worker  Chaplain
- My direct supervisor confirms that I have fulfilled the eligibility requirement working in my profession and the area of perinatal loss and/or bereavement support for a minimum of two years within the past three years.

Within the last five (5) years:

Yes No

- Have you ever been sued by a patient?
- Have you ever been found to have committed negligence or malpractice in your professional work?
- Have you ever had a complaint filed against you before a governmental regulatory board or professional organization?
- Have you ever been subject to discipline, certificate or license revocation, or other sanction by a governmental regulatory board or professional organization?
- Have you ever been the subject of an investigation by law enforcement?
- Have you ever been convicted of, pled guilty to, or pled nolo contendere to a felony or misdemeanor, or are any such charges pending against you?

I further affirm that no nursing licensing authority has taken any disciplinary action in relation to my license to practice nursing in the aforementioned or any other state, and that my license to practice nursing has not been suspended or revoked by any state or jurisdiction.

Name (Please Print)

Signature

Date

NBCHPN® reserves the right to contact you for further information as deemed necessary.

**Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Examination**

I am currently licensed as a registered nurse in the United States, its territories or the equivalent in Canada.

I am a  Clinical Nurse Specialist

I am a  Nurse Practitioner

I have achieved graduate-level nursing education with both didactic and clinical components and hold **one** of the following:

Master's or higher degree in nursing from an Advanced Practice Palliative Care accredited education program providing both a didactic component and a minimum of 500 hours of supervised practice specifically in palliative care,  
**or**

Post-master's certificate in nursing with a minimum of 500 hours of supervised clinical practice specifically in palliative care,  
**or**

Master's, post-master's, or higher degree in nursing from an advanced practice program (APRN) as a Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) or Nurse Practitioner (NP) with 500 hours of post-master's practice in providing palliative care (direct and/or indirect) in the year prior to applying to take the examination.

I am submitting the following **required** documents:

- Official academic record/transcript with the date of the advanced degree, **and**
- Official academic record/transcript with the date of the certificate program (if applicable), **and**
- **Part A form:** Supervised practice hours verification form. Please include completed form(s) (page 21), **and/or**
- **Part B form:** Practice hours verification form. Please include completed form (page 21).

Student and unofficial copies of a transcript **are not** acceptable. The academic record/transcript must include the **names of the courses** completed. It is the responsibility of the applicant to insure that all official documents arrive **prior** to the deadline.

# SUPERVISED PALLIATIVE CARE PRACTICE HOURS

The applicant must provide verification of a minimum of 500 total hours of supervised practice as an advanced palliative care practitioner within the past year (complete Part A **or** Part B **or** both). Photocopy this form if verification is needed from more than one individual in either section.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Last Name (Applicant) First Name MI  
 Applicant Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## PART A: SUPERVISED PALLIATIVE CARE PRACTICE HOURS WITHIN AN ADVANCED PRACTICE PALLIATIVE NURSING EDUCATION PROGRAM

I, the undersigned, verify that the individual named above has completed \_\_\_\_\_ hours of supervised clinical practice in **advanced** practice palliative care within the educational program.

Please indicate your role:

- Physician Preceptor       Clinical Nurse Specialist Preceptor       Other \_\_\_\_\_  
 Nurse Practitioner Preceptor       Faculty Member

The individual named above  has completed in (month/day/year) \_\_\_\_\_ or  will complete in (month/day/year) \_\_\_\_\_ a formal Advanced Practice Palliative Care  Nursing Master's Program or  Nursing Post-Master's Program.

The individual is or will be functioning as a  Clinical Nurse Specialist or  Nurse Practitioner.

## PART B: SUPERVISED PALLIATIVE CARE PRACTICE HOURS AFTER GRADUATION FROM AN ADVANCED PRACTICE NURSING EDUCATION PROGRAM

I, the undersigned, verify that the individual named above has completed \_\_\_\_\_ hours of practice in **advanced** practice palliative care as a  Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) or a  Nurse Practitioner (NP) that I have observed and/or supervised.

Please indicate your role:

- Supervisor       Collaborating Advanced Practice Nurse       Other \_\_\_\_\_  
 Collaborating Physician       Collaborating Clinical Nurse Specialist

Brief description of duties/responsibilities of applicant practicing on an **advanced** level in the specialty of hospice and palliative care: (Reference to job description or other documents **not** acceptable.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

### REQUIRED

Name (print name) \_\_\_\_\_

Title and Credentials \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone Number (with area code) \_\_\_\_\_ Fax Number \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Facility or Organization \_\_\_\_\_  
 (where supervised practice took place)

Clinical Setting (clinic, inpatient unit, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_











# REQUEST FOR SPECIAL EXAMINATION ACCOMMODATIONS

If you have a disability covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act, **please complete this form and the Documentation of Disability-Related Needs on the reverse side and submit it with your application at least 45 days prior to your requested examination date.** The information you provide and any documentation regarding your disability and your need for accommodation in testing will be treated with strict confidentiality.

## Applicant Information

---

Last Name (Last, First, Middle)

---

Mailing Address

---



---

City State Zip Code

---

Daytime Telephone Number

## Special Accommodations

I request special accommodations for the examination below:

- Advanced Practice Nurse
- Registered Nurse
- Pediatric Registered Nurse
- Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurse
- Nursing Assistant
- Administrator
- Perinatal Loss

Please provide (check all that apply):

- Reader
- Extended examination time (time and a half)
- Reduced distraction environment
- Please specify below if other special accommodations are needed.

---



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Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

---



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### PLEASE READ AND SIGN:

I give my permission for my diagnosing professional to discuss with AMP staff my records and history as they relate to the requested accommodation.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Return this form to:**  
**Examination Services, AMP, 18000 W. 105th St., Olathe, KS 66061-7543, Fax 913-895-4650.**  
**If you have questions, call the Candidate Support Center at 888-519-9901.**



## DOCUMENTATION OF DISABILITY-RELATED NEEDS

Please have this section completed by an appropriate professional (education professional, doctor, psychologist, psychiatrist) to ensure that AMP is able to provide the required examination accommodations.

### Professional Documentation

I have known \_\_\_\_\_ since \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ in my capacity as a  
Candidate Name Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Professional Title

The applicant discussed with me the nature of the test to be administered. It is my opinion that because of this applicant's disability described below, he/she should be accommodated by providing the special arrangements listed on the reverse side.

Description of Disability: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ License # (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Return this form to:  
Examination Services, AMP, 18000 W. 105th St., Olathe, KS 66061-7543, Fax 913-895-4650.  
If you have questions, call the Candidate Support Center at 888-519-9901.