



ABN E-NEWS

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Alabama Board of Nursing
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Getting Ready for RN Renewal

Honor L. Ingels
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The annual renewal period for all Alabama-licensed Registered Nurses (RNs) runs from September 1 through November 30, 2014, with late renewal until December 31, so now is the time to address any issues that may interfere with renewing your license. A few things to be on the lookout for:

Continuing Education (CE) Credits: With the exception of new licensees, all nurses are required to obtain no fewer than 24 credit hours of CE within each two-year license period. CE credit hours are prorated for nurses licensed by examination, endorsement, or reinstatement within the current two-year license period. You can verify your CE credits through your Individual CE Record and/or consult the proration chart on the ABN website, www.abn.alabama.gov, under the "Continuing Education" tab.

(A reminder to new examination licensees: if you obtained your license by examination since January 1, 2012, you must complete the mandatory 4-hour online CE course prior to your first renewal. The course is available at www.abn.alabama.gov, under "CE Online Course Offerings.")

Citizenship/Legal Presence Verification: Alabama Act No. 2011-535 requires ABN to verify each applicant's citizenship or legal presence prior to issuing or renewing a license. Unfortunately, many of our RNs still haven't submitted the proper documentation for verification. **IF WE DO NOT RECEIVE YOUR DOCUMENTS, WE CANNOT RENEW YOUR LICENSE.** Please visit the ABN homepage and fill out the appropriate verification checklist, then send us the required documentation as soon as possible.

Unpaid Fines or Fees: If you are subject to a fine or have used a service of ABN's that requires payment of a fee, you must be paid up or you will not be able to renew. Please check your records and make sure you are ready for renewal.

Finally, you should avoid late renewal if at all possible. The standard license fee for on-time renewal is \$75.00 (plus a \$3.50 transaction fee). If you do not renew by November 30, you will automatically incur a \$125.00 late fee, bringing your total to \$203.50. We strongly encourage you to avoid this needless expense and renew your license during ordinary renewal.

Please note that ABN will be sending renewal notices electronically. No more notices will be sent via regular mail. Please check your contact information at www.abn.alabama.gov and make certain that we have a current and correct email address for you.

APN Corner

Advanced Practice Nursing Update and Tips

Specialty Certification Required for APN Approval

Charlene B. Cotton, MSN, RN
AP Nurse Consultant

The renewal application flows smoothly from RN renewal to the APN section if your APN status is Active and the Board of Nursing has your APN national certification on file.

The Board requires primary source verification directly from the certifying organization. Your national organization determines the recertification cycle and the procedure for sending a Verification Report to ABN. Several national APN organizations charge a fee and wait for your request before sending a Verification Report. It is your responsibility to ensure the Alabama Board of Nursing receives your Verification Report.

Question: *"I recertified my APN specialty with National last month. Has the Board of Nursing received Verification from National?"*

Answer: Go to **License Lookup** on the ABN Home page www.abn.alabama.gov to check your RN and APN expiration dates. If your APN is **Active** but expires before 12/31/2014, the Board has **not received** primary source verification of your recent recertification from your national organization. You cannot work as an Advanced Practice Nurse in Alabama after the date displayed on **License Lookup**.

(continued on Page 3)

Truthful Responses Save Time and Trouble

Patrick Samuelson
Assistant General Counsel

As an applicant for licensure as a nurse, you will be required to answer multiple regulatory questions to determine your eligibility for licensure. It is imperative that you respond to these questions truthfully. This does not mean what you think happened, but rather what did happen.

Too often we see applicants that answer incorrectly because they thought that a previous arrest or conviction was expunged or dismissed. Repeatedly we hear explanations that an attorney told the applicant that he or she didn't have to answer "yes" to that question, but the application required the applicant to give a "yes" answer. In situations like these, it's often the failure to fully disclose, not the conduct itself, which leads to discipline with the Board. By answering the question truthfully, the applicant could have avoided both the discipline and the resulting delay in obtaining a license.

Another cause for delay in the application process comes from an applicant failing to communicate with Board staff after an investigation is opened. Shortly after an investigation is opened, an investigator from the Board will attempt to contact the applicant. If the Board has accurate contact information and the applicant is able to quickly answer all questions and provide all documents in a timely manner, then an investigation may be resolved quickly and a disposition on the case can be reached sooner. So remember, always make sure the Board has your most current contact information so the process can move as quickly as possible.

A couple of points to remember:

- If the question asks if the applicant has ever been arrested, this does not mean only arrests that lead to a conviction, but rather all arrests.
- If the question asks if the applicant has ever been investigated or disciplined in another state, this means every instance in which the applicant was investigated or disciplined, even if the discipline is complete, it should be disclosed to the Board.

Making assumptions that it is not necessary to disclose information to the Board when in fact it should have been disclosed is an easily avoidable mistake. Please take care to answer as fully and honestly as possible in order to ensure that the licensure process is as smooth and painless as possible.

APN Corner

Advanced Practice Nursing Update and Tips

(continued from Page 2)

Check your Certification and Collaboration Details on the ABN Advanced Practice page, under **APN On-line Profile**.

Question: "My certification expires (between September 1 and December 31, 2014). Which should I renew first, the national certification or the Alabama RN and APN?"

Answer: Submit your national recertification application now. Request your organization to send Verification of Recertification to the ABN as soon as possible so you may complete your renewal before November 30. Renewal between December 1 and December 31 incurs an additional fee of \$125.

Renewal of your Advanced Practice Nursing approval for 2015-2016 requires:

- Renewal of your RN license (CE requirements and renewal fee, \$75.00 and processing fee \$3.50)
- Documentation of 6 Pharmacology CE credits for CRNA, CRNP or CNM
- **Advanced Practice National Specialty Certification**
- Payment of the APN renewal fee (\$50.00)

ABN Departmental Focus

ABN Focus is a multi-part series covering the structure and various functions of the Alabama Board of Nursing. In this issue, we offer an overview of the Licensure and Information Technology (IT) Division.

Licensure and IT are two separate sections within ABN under the management of one Division Director. Both sections are vital to the day-to-day operations of the agency and must perform at a consistently high level.

Nurses obtain licensure in the state through either examination [taking the National Council of State Boards of Nursing Licensing Exam (NCLEX)] or endorsement (nurses who are already licensed in another state may apply for an Alabama license if they meet all other requirements for Alabama licensure). The Division Director supervises six staff members who each specialize in the various aspects of the licensure process, including:

- Examinations—nurses seeking initial licensure upon completion of nursing school
- Endorsement—nurses who already have a license in another state seeking licensure in Alabama
- Reinstatement/Name or Address Changes—previously or currently licensed nurses seeking either reinstatement of a license or to make substantive changes to their licensure record with ABN
- Advanced Practice—Certified Registered Nurse Practitioners, Certified Nurse Midwives, Clinical Nurse Specialists, and Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists
- Citizenship Verification—Alabama law requires any professional seeking licensure in the state to verify their US citizenship or legal presence in the state
- Verification of Licensure—Alabama-licensed nurses who require verification of their license status to obtain a license in another state or to enroll in advanced education

The IT section is relatively advanced compared to many other state agencies and employs three IT Systems Specialists and one Programmer Analyst. ABN focuses heavily on IT, as systems development and maintenance are central to our ongoing efforts to move from paper-based to web-based processes. These efforts have been largely successful, as all licensure is currently accomplished via the internet.

Contact Info Reminder

Please visit

www.abn.alabama.gov and verify your contact information. A current email address must be on file with us to ensure that you receive your renewal notification.

Nursing Practice: Q&A

What can a nursing graduate do in a facility/agency until he/she receives a temporary permit?

A first-time applicant for licensure in Alabama may request a nonrenewable temporary permit to practice nursing. Prior to receipt of the temporary permit, the nursing applicant cannot work in an employment classification that requires a nursing license, including participation in nursing orientation. The non-renewable temporary permit allows the graduate to practice as a Nursing Graduate-PN Program (NG-PNP) or Nursing Graduate-RN Program (NG-RNP) with stipulations.

A graduate without a temporary permit or license is classified as unlicensed and must follow the policies and procedures for unlicensed personnel in the agency/facility. Nursing procedures and activities that are permitted in the nursing education program under the direct supervision of nursing faculty are not allowed in the workplace.

Navigating Education in the 21st Century

Catherine Russell, PhD, NE-BC, ACNS-BC, RN
Education Nurse Consultant

More and more students, especially those of the net generation, prefer online classes to traditional face-to-face classroom settings. Web-based learning/distance education appeals to students of all ages who wish to work full time while taking classes in an asynchronous environment. Online nursing education is not a panacea. According to the ABN Administrative Code, Rule 610-X-3-.02(10)(e)(v), "the curriculum content of a nursing education program shall include theory and clinical learning experiences in the areas of adult, medical-surgical, maternal/child health, pediatrics, and psychiatric/mental health nursing and includes any form of simulation, laboratory time and direct patient care."

Therefore, in Alabama, an unencumbered licensed PN nurse enrolled in a LPN-RN program must have supervised clinical experiences in the above mentioned content areas or they will not be able to write the NCLEX® exam. Students attending programs that offer competency testing in lieu of supervised clinical experiences do not comply with the standard. In addition, students without evidence of previous supervised clinical experiences in the required content areas will not be allowed to write the NCLEX® exam.

Due to the limited number of programs within the state that offer online LPN-RN Programs, many students are exploring out of state distance learning options. Students interested in attending an out of state distance program need to ensure that the program that they are interested in attending is authorized by the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE) and the Department of Post-Secondary Education (DPE) to offer courses to Alabama residents.

Deciding where to pursue your nursing career is very complex and necessitates a thorough review of programs by the prospective student. Spending the time to weigh the pros and cons up-front may eliminate some frustrations once you have been admitted. As students strive to make decisions about the type of program that best accommodates their needs, an increasing number of new programs provide a "no wait" option for students. Although students may not have to wait, most of these programs are provisionally approved and do not have specialty accreditation. Students need to understand that many facilities will not employ graduates of provisionally approved and/or non-accredited programs.

It is important to invest the time up-front, be fully aware of what each program requires, and determine whether that program meets the requirements of the Alabama Board of Nursing for content and clinical experiences so that you meet all the eligibility requirements for licensure when you graduate.