**WHY CERTIFY?**

**CERTIFIED OSTOMY CARE NURSE (COCN) CERTIFICATION**

Ostomy care nursing is a distinct and well-defined field of nursing practice that is international in scope and based on a tested body of specialty-related, evidence-based practice. Ostomy care nursing is practiced across the spectrum of health care settings, including ostomy clinics, urgent care clinics, inpatient care, outpatient care, long-term care, and home health.

The Certified Ostomy Care Nurse (COCN) certification program is targeted at RNs who are interested in moving from general nursing practice to the specialized field of ostomy care. The ostomy nurse will care for patients who may have fecal or urinary diversions, fistulas, or percutaneous tubes/drains, and need post-surgical ostomy care due to a variety of disorders such as inflammatory bowel disease, cancer, birth defects, etc. An ostomy (or WOC) nurse is needed to provide long-term support and follow-up care. By completing the necessary educational and clinical patient contact hours to become a COCN, RNs will acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to identify, assess, and treat patients across practice settings.

**WOUND OSTOMY AND CONTINENCE NURSING**

While ostomy care nursing is a distinct specialty, it is also encompassed by the Wound, Ostomy and Continence (WOC) nursing specialty, which provides acute and rehabilitative care for people with selected disorders of the gastrointestinal, genitourinary, and integumentary systems. The WOC nurse provides direct care to people with abdominal stomas, fistulas, drains, wounds, pressure ulcers and continence disorders and participates in assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation of patients with wound, ostomy and continence care needs. As an educator, consultant, researcher and administrator, the WOC nurse plays a pivotal role in the guidance of optimal patient care in multiple healthcare settings.

WOCNCB provides a unique set of certifications. The tri-specialty scope includes the Certified Wound Care Nurse (CWCN), Certified Ostomy Care Nurse (COCN), and Certified Continence Care Nurse (CCCN) with over lapping knowledge and skills requirements. We allow nurses to take one, two, or all three specialty exams as they choose resulting in dual (Certified Wound Ostomy Nurse (CWON)) or tri (Certified Wound Ostomy Continence Nurse (CWOCN)) certification.

**WOUND OSTOMY AND CONTINENCE NURSING CERTIFICATION BOARD: CREDENTIALING**

The Wound, Ostomy and Continence Nursing Certification Board (WOCNCB) is a professional organization dedicated to promoting the highest standard of consumer care and safety by providing credentialing in the areas of wound, ostomy, and continence nursing. The purposes of a credentialing program are to protect the public by establishing standards for professional practice and to assess individual nurses’ knowledge and skills related to practice. This assures consumers that the certified professionals have met standards of practice.

The WOCNCB certification is voluntary; nurses who hold WOCNCB credentials have demonstrated their commitment to and knowledge of WOC nursing practice by meeting stringent, predetermined standards, and passing a rigorous comprehensive wound, ostomy, or continence examination(s). WOCNCB credentialing provides formal recognition of this commitment to high standards in wound, ostomy, and continence nursing. Certification provides formal recognition of knowledge as a wound, ostomy, or continence care nurse beyond that gained from traditional nursing education programs.

**ELIGIBILITY FOR COCN CERTIFICATION**

The WOCNCB’s predetermined eligibility requirements for the COCN program must be met before a candidate is permitted to take the initial examination. Eligibility requirements include current licensure as a registered nurse with a baccalaureate degree. Additionally, the nurse must document completion of one of the following educational options:

* Graduation from a WOCN Society accredited Wound Ostomy Continence Nursing Education Program. A specialty course provides at least 100 hours of student contact that includes at least 40 hours of didactic instruction, 40 hours of clinical patient care, and 20 additional hours distributed according to the student’s learning needs per specialty area (wound, ostomy and/or continence management).
* Completion of 1,500 hours of clinical practice in ostomy care nursing and 50 continuing education contact hours or graduate level course work in ostomy care nursing, within the last five years (375 of the clinical hours must be within the past year). The clinical practice hours and continuing education contact hours /course work must be directly related to the specialty for which certification is sought.

Demonstrating eligibility for certification by the WOCNCB through documented evidence of intensive education and clinical experience, beyond what can be attained in a short course that does not include focused clinical practice, helps ensure that the nurse who attempts the examination is prepared to deliver comprehensive patient care.

**CREDENTIALS**

The following WOCNCB credentials are registered trademarks and are awarded the COCN credential on its own or combined into a dual or tri-certification based on the successful completion of the examination(s) or the portfolio process.

COCN® Certified Ostomy Care Nurse

CWON™ Certified Wound Ostomy Nurse

CWOCN® Certified Wound Ostomy Continence Nurse