

HIV/AIDS Nursing Certification: AIDS Certified Registered Nurse (ACRN)

CANAC/CNA Certification Update

A long-term objective of CANAC is to establish HIV/AIDS Nursing as an official [Specialty under the CNA](http://www.cna-nurses.ca/pages/certification/certification_frame.html) (www.cna-nurses.ca/pages/certification/certification_frame.html). The Association is well embarked on the arduous process of acquiring full CNA specialty status, including a Canadian HIV/AIDS nursing specialty certification exam to be offered in both official languages.

Once fully established, these CNA/CANAC standardized credentials will serve as an officially endorsed designation of excellence in HIV/AIDS Nursing for nurses in Canada who meet these defined standards and criteria. Until then, CANAC supports the principle of nursing certification through the US-based HIV/AIDS Nursing Certification Board (HANCB).

HANCB has established a Board Position for Canadian ACRN representation in order to ensure that the exam is equally relevant and reflective of HIV/AIDS trends and care standards within the Canadian nursing context.

ACRN Certification

The AIDS Certified Registered Nurse (ACRN) certification program is sponsored by the [HIV/AIDS Nursing Certification Board](http://www.anacnet.org/certification/hancb/index.html) (www.anacnet.org/certification/hancb/index.html).

The next certification exam for registered nurses involved in HIV/AIDS care will be administered **October 25, 2003 through November 15, 2003**, in a city near you.

Deadline to register is October 1, 2003. Click here to see [Testing Centers](http://www.lasergrade.com/cgi/completew.cgi) (www.lasergrade.com/cgi/completew.cgi).

Interested in taking the exam? Get your [Exam Handbook and Application Package NOW by clicking here](http://www.ptcny.com/PDF/HANCB2003.pdf) (www.ptcny.com/PDF/HANCB2003.pdf). Please direct questions about the exam and registration to Michele Pantea at (800) 260-6780.

As this is an American exam, we regret that it is not yet offered in French.

What is an ACRN?

ACRN stands for “*AIDS Certified Registered Nurse*”, and is a credential you may obtain by taking a test and passing it within the criteria specified.

The [Association of Nurses in AIDS Care](http://www.anacnet.org) (ANAC), the [Canadian Association of Nurses in AIDS Care](http://www.cna-nurses.ca) (CANAC) and the [HIV/AIDS Nursing Certification Board](http://www.lasergrade.com) (HANCB) endorse the concept of voluntary, periodic certification by examination for all nurses in HIV/AIDS nursing.

Certification is one part of a process called credentialing. It focuses specifically on the individual and is an indication of current competence in a specialized area of practice. Board certification in HIV/AIDS nursing is highly

valued and provides formal recognition of HIV/AIDS nursing knowledge in the US and many institutions in Canada and internationally.

Why Certify?

To promote comprehensive HIV/AIDS nursing care through the certification of qualified nurses by:

1. Encouraging continued personal and professional growth in the practice of HIV/AIDS nursing.
2. Establishing and measuring the level of knowledge required for certification in HIV/AIDS nursing.
3. Providing a national standard of requisite knowledge for certification; thereby assisting the employer, public, and members of the health professions in the assessment of the HIV/AIDS nursing practice.
4. Recognizing formally through certification those individuals who meet the eligibility requirements and standards set by the HANCB.

Eligibility Requirements [\(Click here for more info\)](#)

(www.anacnet.org/certification/hancb/index.html)

The following requirements must be met by the application deadline:

1. Currently licensed as a registered nurse in the United States, Canada, or the international equivalent. At the time of application, the RN license must be in good standing and not suspended, revoked or under review by any state, provincial or district nursing regulatory body.
2. At least two years of experience in clinical practice, education, management, or research related to HIV/AIDS nursing is recommended.
3. Completion and filing of an application for the certification examination in HIV/AIDS nursing.
4. Payment of required fee.

Administration

The certification program is sponsored by HANCB and the certification examination is administered by the Professional Testing Corporation (PTC), 1350 Broadway-17th Floor, New York, New York 10018, (212) 356-0660, www.ptcny.com. Questions concerning the examination should be referred to PTC.

Attainment of Certification and Recertification

Eligible candidates who pass the certification examination in HIV/AIDS nursing are eligible to use the registered designation "ACRN" after their names and will receive certificate from HANCB. A registry of nurses certified in HIV/AIDS nursing will be maintained by HANCB and may be reported in its or ANAC's publications.

Certification in HIV/AIDS nursing is **recognized for a period of four years** at which time the candidate must **retake and pass the current certification examination** in HIV/AIDS nursing,

OR,

For previous ACRN nurses attending **continuing education (CE)** accredited educational activities in the US or Canada (**CANADIAN CANDIDATES** should check with ANAC regarding each educational activity in Canada to verify if it is CE accredited), recertify by completion of 70 CE credits. The process for recertification by CEs is:

1. A total of 70 continuing education (CE) credits is required for recertification every four years.
2. At least 50% of the CEs must be in HIV/AIDS nursing care. The remaining 50% can be earned in allied health (medicine, pharmacy, social work) continuing education directly related to HIV/AIDS, academic coursework related to HIV/AIDS nursing, completion of practicums at an AIDS Education and Training center, other nursing continuing education programs, and/or professional activities. ACRNs have the option of recertifying with one hundred percent (100%) HIV/AIDS nursing CEs.
3. The CE may include up to 35 continuing medical/allied health continuing education credits that are directly related to the practice of HIV/AIDS nursing.
4. The CNEs **MUST BE APPROVED** by one of the following nursing organizations:
 - a) Any state Board of Nursing,
 - b) American Nurses Credentialing Center,
 - c) Association of Nurses in AIDS Care,
 - d) American Academy of Nurse Practitioners
 - e) or the international equivalent of the above organizations.
5. All CMEs must be accredited by an approved provider such as the American Medical Association, Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education, or other approved providers.
6. CEs via home study will be accepted as long as they are certified by the above organization(s). The ACRN may acquire all (100%) credit for recertification via the home study method.
7. CE credits earned after the certification exam was taken are applicable towards the subsequent recertification.
8. Late applications will be accepted within a 30-day grace period with an additional fee of \$50.

For further information, contact HANCB (hancb@anacnet.org), 80 South Summit Street, 500 Courtyard Square, Akron, Ohio 44308-1736, or call at 800-260-6780.

Revocation of Certification

Certification will be revoked for any of the following reasons:

- 1) Falsification of an application for certification or recertification.
- 2) Misrepresentation of certification status.
- 3) Suspension or revocation of nursing license by a State or Provincial professional nursing regulatory body.

HANCB provides an appeal mechanism for challenging revocation of board certification. It is the responsibility of the individual to initiate this process in writing.

Application Procedure

Obtain an application for admission to the certification examination in HIV/AIDS nursing from the Professional Testing Corporation, 1350 Broadway-17th Floor, New York, New York 10018, (212) 356-0660. [Click here for Handbook and Application](#). (Copies of the handbook and additional copies of the application may also be obtained at this address.)

Application Deadline	Examination Date
October 1, 2003	October 25, 2003 through November 15, 2003

Fees (IN US DOLLARS) Schedules and Rules:

Application fee for the certification examination in HIV/AIDS nursing:

ANAC/CANAC members	\$260.00 USD
Nonmembers	\$400.00 USD
Special Testing Center Fee	\$100.00 USD

Note: Pay the special testing center fee only if a special testing center is being requested. See above for special testing center instructions.

Refunds

There will be no refund of fees. Fees will not be transferred from one testing period to another.

Schedule for Examination

With the implementation of **computerized testing**, approved candidates will indicate with their application the site(s) of preference for taking the exam. Candidates are encouraged to arrive at the testing center of his/her choice at least 30 minutes prior to the scheduled time of the examination. Latecomers may be admitted to the examination at the discretion of the examiner but will not be permitted to write beyond the time scheduled for completion of the examination.

Admission to Testing

The Professional Testing Corporation will notify candidates approximately three weeks before the testing date of final assignments for testing centers by means of an admission notice showing exact location/address to which candidates should report.

This admission notice plus some other form of positive personal identification (preferably photo I.D.) must be presented in order to gain admission to the testing site. A candidate not receiving an admission notice at least one week before the test date should contact the Professional Testing Corporation by telephone at (212) 356-0660. Changes in assignments to testing centers cannot be made later than four weeks before the examination date.

Rules for the Examination

1. Candidates must bring several sharpened number 2 pencils with erasers with them to the testing center.
2. No signaling devices, including cellular phones, pagers, and alarms, may be operative during the examination.
3. No books or other reference materials may be taken into the examination room.
4. No test materials, documents, or memoranda of any sort are to be taken from the examination room.
5. No questions concerning content of the examination may be asked during the testing period. The candidate should listen carefully to the instructions given by the examiner and should read carefully directions in the test booklet.

Report of Results

Candidates will be notified within six weeks whether they have passed or failed the examination. Scores on the major areas of the examination and on the total examination will be reported. Successful candidates will also receive certificates from HANCB. Upon written request of a candidate, scores will be manually verified. Failure of the examination is not a circumstance for appeal.

Reexamination

The certification examination in HIV/AIDS nursing may be taken as often as desired upon filing of a new application and fee. There is no limit to the number of times the examination may be repeated.

Confidentiality

- 1) Test scores will be released in writing only to the individual candidate.
- 2) Any questions concerning test results should be referred to the Professional Testing Corporation.

Content of Examination

- 1) The certification examination in HIV/AIDS nursing is a written examination composed of a maximum of 250 multiple choice, objective questions with a total testing time of four (4) hours.
- 2) The content for the examination is described in the content outline below.
- 3) The questions for the examination are obtained from individuals with expertise in HIV/AIDS nursing and are reviewed for construction, accuracy, and appropriateness by HANCB.
- 4) HANCB, with the advice and assistance of the Professional Testing Corporation, prepares the examination.
- 5) The certification examination in HIV/AIDS nursing will be weighted in approximately the following manner:

I....Epidemiology and Prevention:	10%
II.... Pathophysiology:	15%
III.... Clinical Manifestations and Management:	35%
IV.... Psychosocial Issues:	10%
V.... Specific Populations:	20%
VI.... Ethical and Legal Issues:	5%
VII.... Professional and Institutional Issues:	5%

For more detailed descriptions of content areas and sample questions, [Click Here](http://www.anacnet.org/certification/hancb/contentoutline.htm) (www.anacnet.org/certification/hancb/contentoutline.htm)

Study Resources

Although HANCB or CANAC do NOT endorse any study guide or reference materials for individuals interested in taking the ACRN certification exam, the following are suggested resources for preparing for the ACRN certification examination.

- **2003 Medical Management of HIV Infection** by John Bartlett and Joel Gallant. Available through the Johns Hopkins AIDS Service. (<http://www.hopkins-aidseu/publications/publications.html>)

- **A Guide to the Clinical Care of Women with HIV - 2001** edited by Jean Anderson. Available through the HIV/AIDS Bureau, HRSA (Order your free copy from the HRSA information center by calling 1-888-ASK-HRSA (1-888-275-4772).
- **ANAC's Core Curriculum for HIV/AIDS Nursing.** (2003) edited by Carl Kirton. Thousand Oaks, California: www.sagepub.com
- **Current Treatment Guidelines** published by the US Department of Health and Human Services are available at <http://www.aidsinfo.nih.gov/guidelines/>
- **Handbook of HIV/AIDS Nursing** (2000) by Carl Kirton, Dorothy Talotta & Kenneth Zwolski. St. Louis: Mosby. ISBN 0323-00336-2.
- **HIV Nursing and Symptom Management** (1998) edited by Mary Ropka & Ann Williams. Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett.
- **HIV/AIDS : A Guide to Primary Care Management** (1999) edited by Peter J. Ungvarski & Jacquelyn Haak Flaskerud (4th ed). Philadelphia : W.B. Saunders. ISBN: 0721673228
- **The Persons with HIV/AIDS: Nursing Perspectives** (2000) by JD Durham and FR Lashley (3rd ed). New York: Springer.

The following professional journals are also valuable resources providing current, state-of-the science information relevant to HIV/AIDS nursing:

- *AIDS Patient Care*
- *American Journal of Hospice and Palliative Care*
- *American Journal of Public Health*
- *Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes and Retrovirology*
- *Journal of the Association of Nurses in AIDS Care (JANAC).*
- *Journal of Pain and Symptom Management*