

Public Health Nursing Learning Lab

October 22nd, 2025

Session 4 – Leveraging Partnerships to Strengthen the PHN Workforce

Agenda Highlights:

- **Welcome & Icebreaker:** *Do you have a mantra, phrase, or word that you whisper to yourself during a tough moment?*
- **PHN Certification & Slido Poll:** Discussion of PHN Certification in development through NBPHE – Shirley, Allison Foster (NBPHE), Shantal Johnson (NBPHE), Kaye Bender
- **Overview of Public Health Training Centers:** High-level overview of the national network of Public Health Training Centers and the range of resources they provide to support the public health workforce, including PHNs
- **Interactive Peer-to-Peer Dialogue**

PHN Certification | Presented by NBPHE

Why Develop a PHN Certification

- Broad interest exists in a **specialty certification** focused on public health nursing science.
- The initiative is being developed through collaboration between **APHN, NBPHE, public health nurses, and national PHN leaders.**
- The **former ANCC Advanced PHN Certification (PHNA-BC)** was discontinued, creating a gap this new certification aims to fill.

Certification Process

- **Eligibility:** Open to students, alumni, and professionals with relevant work experience.
- **Exam:** CPH-style format with **200 questions.**
- **Maintenance:** Requires **recertification** and adherence to a **code of ethics.**
- **Development Input:** Based on **1,147 survey responses** from public health nurses collected by NBPHE.
- For more details: [NBPHE PHN Certification Webpage](#)

Overview of Public Health Training Centers | Presented by Betty Bekemeier

The Public Health Training Center Network (PHTCN) helps sustain a skilled public health workforce by providing access to world-class professional development, experiential learning, and consulting and technical assistance.

- **Professional Development:** We offer a comprehensive set of resources to help public health professionals build core skills and strategic competencies required to address current and emerging public health challenges.

- **Experiential Learning:** We help students gain valuable practical experience through funded field placements at agencies in underserved communities.
- **Consulting and Technical Assistance:** We provide access to expertise and other resources that help our community partners understand and plan for local workforce development needs.

Interactive Peer-to-Peer Dialogue

Q1: Is this discussion about the PHN certification or about workforce replacement issues (e.g., CD Nurses replaced by DIS)?

A: The focus today is on the *Public Health Nurse (PHN) certification* currently in development. Workforce concerns can be shared later to development@phnurse.org.

Q2: What is the difference between the Certified Public Health Nurse (CPHN) and the PH Nurse certification?

A: The PHN certification specifically validates the *nursing role within public health*, highlighting specialized knowledge and skills distinct from other public health positions.

Q3: What is the time commitment for volunteers writing the exam?

A: The question was raised, but specific time details were not provided during this session.

Q4: How might the PHN certification benefit nurses and public health agencies?

A: It may bring *greater visibility* to public health nursing and potentially support *reimbursement* for PHN services by demonstrating professional expertise.

Q5: Is there any benefit to taking the PHN certification if you already hold the CPH credential?

A: Yes. The PHN certification focuses on *nursing-specific competencies*, while the CPH covers *general public health knowledge*.

Q6: What is the difference between this certification and the state-issued PHN certificates granted during BSN training (which include community health modules and clinical experience)?

A: The national PHN certification aims to *standardize and formally recognize* PHN competencies across states, beyond what is covered in BSN-level coursework.

Q7: What is the background on PHN certification availability?

A: The *ANCC discontinued* both the BSN-level and advanced PHN certifications (PHNA-BC) in 2014 due to low enrollment. National PHN organizations (then APHN, now CPHNO) *advocated to maintain* certification, and there is strong support for *NBPHE's development of a new PHN credential*.

Discussion Questions:

- What are some of the resources you have used to provide a general PHN orientation for those new to the field?
- What additional resources are needed to prepare new PHNs?
- What additional educational resources or programs are most needed today (preparation for specific roles/functions, quality improvement, leadership development, etc.)?