

## Progress Is Steady for Implementation of APRN Consensus Model

In 2008, the Advanced Practice RN (APRN) Consensus Work Group and the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) APRN Advisory Committee launched the groundbreaking [APRN Consensus Model](#), which seeks to introduce standard regulatory requirements for APRNs across states, specifically focusing on

- The APRN legal scope of practice
- Recognized roles and titles of APRNs
- Criteria for entry into advanced practice, including graduate education and certification in a broad population focus

NCSBN explained that as long as regulatory requirements differ from state to state, each state border represents an obstacle to portability—potentially preventing access to professionals and access to care. The consensus model, once fully implemented, will remove these barriers by unifying regulatory requirements in licensure, accreditation, certification, and education across states.

ONS, the Oncology Nursing Certification Corporation (ONCC), and 46 other nursing organizations endorsed the model when it first launched. The model has set a goal for implementation across the United States by 2015. Five states have currently fully implemented the model, with 10 more nearing completion. Others are in various stages of implementation. To find out where your state stands, visit [NCSBN's maps page](#).

The model promotes specialization for APRNs in areas such as oncology; however, it does not include specialty education or certification as part of the regulatory process. In states where the model is implemented, new APRNs must have completed broad graduate education in one of six population-based foci (adult/gerontology [primary or acute care], women's health, pediatrics, neonatal, family, or psychiatric/mental health) and must pass a certification examination in the same area as their education. APRNs may also specialize, but state boards will not recognize the specialty education or certification for regulatory (licensure) purposes. Much like OCN® certification, advanced oncology certification will be recognized in the workplace but not required by regulatory bodies.

In preparation for the model, graduate programs that previously focused only on oncology are expanding to include the population-based competencies in areas such as primary or acute adult/gerontology. Many still include oncology electives and additional clinical hours in oncology. Graduates will take the respective population-focused certification (e.g., primary or acute adult/gerontology) required by the state board but will also be eligible for oncology certification. Oncology APRNs who are already licensed by the state board will not have to attain additional education or certification; they will be “grandfathered” to continue practicing as long as they maintain their certification. Issues have arisen, however, for nurses who relocate to another state.

A group of nursing organizations, including ONCC and NCSBN, is working to try to facilitate grandfathering across states. As information becomes available, it will be shared with ONS members and oncology certified nurses.

### **New Eligibility Criteria for AOCNP® and AOCNS® Certification Will Take Effect in 2013**

In recognition that APRNs may attain oncology competencies in a variety of ways, that sometimes do not include specialty-specific graduate education, ONCC has developed new eligibility pathways for Advanced Oncology Certified Nurse Practitioner (AOCNP®) or Advanced Oncology Certified Clinical Nurse Specialist (AOCNS®) certification that will take effect in 2013. The new pathways may qualify more APRNs for oncology certification. The ONCC eligibility criteria apply to all APRNs who apply for initial certification as an AOCNP® or AOCNS®, regardless of where your state stands in the implementation of the APRN Consensus Model. [New pathways](#) will allow for new combinations of education, advanced practice experience, and oncology-specific education to meet the eligibility criteria for advanced

certification as an [AOCNP®](#) or [AOCNS®](#). The pathways do not apply to candidates who are renewing current AOCNP® or AOCNS® certification.