

### **ABNS Announces Advocacy Award Honorable Mentions**

**AURORA, Ohio, March 15, 2011** | The American Board of Nursing Specialties (ABNS) Awards and Recognition Committee announced at its Spring Assembly meeting that it has selected three institutions to receive honorable mentions for the 2011 Award for Nursing Certification Advocacy. ABNS recognized Main Line Health in Bryn Mawr, PA; Sierra Surgery Hospital Nursing Department in Carson City, NV; and the Virginia Commonwealth University Health System in Richmond, VA as strong advocates of specialty nursing certification.

“We received the highest number of applications on record for the Advocacy Award this year and all of the applicants strongly demonstrated their commitment to specialty nursing certification,” Judy Lentz, Chair of the ABNS Awards and Recognition Committee, said. “These honorable mention recipients have developed programs and strategies that help to create an organizational culture supportive of specialty nursing certification.”

Among the criteria necessary to receive ABNS’ Advocacy Award, the organization must document the total number of direct patient care RNs and nursing managers and the number and percentage who are certified in specialty nursing. The honorable mention recipients report the following percentages:

- Main Line Health – 30 percent of direct care nurses and nearly 95 percent of nurse managers are certified in their specialty.
- Sierra Surgery Hospital Nursing Department – 46 percent of direct care nurses and 100 percent of nurse managers hold a specialty certification.
- Virginia Commonwealth University Health System – nearly 23 percent of direct care nurses and 64 percent of nurse managers have specialty certification.

Other award criteria include how the organization supports those nurses interested in seeking certification. While each of the institutions supports certification in a variety of ways, the common

element is their focus on encouraging the nursing staff to earn certification and continue their education throughout their careers.

After conducting a survey of all nurses across the system, Main Line Health identified time and money as barriers to certification for its nursing staff. While the institution paid for certification in the past, the fees were reimbursed, not pre-paid. The MLH Nursing Professional Development Council worked with the Nursing Executive Council and the hospital's human resource and finance departments to amend the policy allowing certification fees to be pre-paid without any out-of-pocket expenses for the nurse. Since MLH enacted the policy one year ago, certification rates have doubled.

The Sierra Surgery Hospital Nursing Department provides a five percent increase in the nurse's base pay for earning a specialty certification. The increase remains in place as long as the nurse remains certified. Additionally, if the nurse earns a second certification that is job related, they receive an additional five percent increase on their base pay. In addition to financial support, the hospital also took out a quarter page ad in the local newspaper titled, "Sierra Surgery Hospital Salutes our Board Certified Nurses" to recognize the achievement of certified nurses in a consumer-driven publication.

At the Virginia Commonwealth University Health System certified nurses play key roles in leadership positions. In fact, every decision-making body includes representation from a certified nurse. Certified nurses are involved in every decision that impacts patients. In addition to leadership positions within the hospital system, certified nurses at VCU are active participants in local, regional, and national professional or certifying organizations and serve as adjunct faculty at the VCU School of Nursing.

Through efforts such as those demonstrated at Main Line Health, the Sierra Surgery Hospital Nursing Department and the Virginia Commonwealth University Health System, the ABNS Vision - Specialty nursing care is **THE** standard by which the public recognizes quality nursing care - will be achieved. For more information on the requirements of the award, visit [www.nursingcertification.org](http://www.nursingcertification.org).

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***Editors Note:***

The American Board of Nursing Specialties (ABNS) is a membership organization whose mission is to promote the value of specialty nursing certification to all stakeholders. Currently, 32 ABNS Regular Member represent nearly half a million specialty certified registered nurses. Its 12 Affiliate Members include providers of key certification–related testing products and services. One Public Member represents the consumer’s perspectives on issues about specialty nursing certification. For further information about ABNS, visit [www.nursingcertification.org](http://www.nursingcertification.org) or email Bonnie Niebuhr, MS, RN, CAE, Chief Executive Officer, at [bniebuhr@nursingcertification.org](mailto:bniebuhr@nursingcertification.org).

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