

CHN Certification Sponsorship: A Multifaceted Strategy for Building Leadership Capacity

The purpose of this report is to describe the pilot year (2013) of a CHN certification initiative designed to build leadership capacity within the provincial context.

Focus:

Financial sponsorship of CHNA Alberta members to write the CNA Certification Exam for CHN
Networking support for exam preparation

Target:

Cohort of 5 to 10 current CHNA Alberta members

Projected Outcomes:

- Increased number of certified CHNs
- Increased profile of CHN certification
- Increased vitality within CHNA Alberta in terms of membership, leadership, mentorship, board involvement, and/or related activities

Focus Activities

- Development of materials (January – April 2013)
- Marketing (May – September 2013)
- Application submissions (September 15, 2013)
- Application management, selection, and notification (September 15 – October 01, 2014)
- Networking support (December – March 2014)
- Exam (April 2014)
- Evaluation (May 2014)
- Results and reimbursement (June 2014)
- Follow-up

Application Form

- General Applicant Information
- Nursing Background
 - Year of Graduation
 - Years in CHN
 - Current Employer, Position, and Focus
- Individual Responses
 - Years as a member of CHNA Alberta?
 - Involvement in CHNA Alberta in those years?
 - Reasons for wanting to write exam?
 - Intentions to “pay it forward” in terms of
 - CHNA Alberta work and/or support of certification?

Selection of Applicants

- Criteria:
 - Years in CHN
 - Years and involvement in CHNA Alberta
 - Reasons for writing certification exam
 - Plans for “paying-it-forward”
- Process:
 - Ranking of 10 applicants by 3 Board members
 - Meeting of Sub-Committee for discussion

- Selection of pilot cohort of 6 applicants
- Notification to all applicants
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Applicant Cohort

- Are from Southern Alberta
- Have 3 to 22 years of CHN experience
- Work in public health, school health, chronic disease management, nursing education, evaluation, and research
- Have been CHNA Alberta members from 1 to 9 years
- Have been involved in CHNA Alberta with conference planning, member recruitment, and networking
- Articulate certification rationale such as increased knowledge, skills, and attitudes, new challenge, improved mentoring and leadership, enhanced credibility, strengthened practice, and better health promotion and disease prevention strategies

Suggest “pay-it-forward” strategies such as:

- Joining the CHNA Alberta Board
- Leading presentations about certification
- Working on projects with CHNA Alberta
- Mentoring colleagues in certification study groups
- Being a speaker in webinars and workshops
- Recruiting new members for CHNA Alberta
- Conducting sessions on certification
- Promoting certification by developing study groups within the employment setting
- Developing certification information for newsletters

Exam Support Webinars

- September 2013
 - Introductory webinar about certification project
- October 2013
 - Email links
- January 2014
 - Study group webinar
 - Support for first ‘solo’ webinar

Exam Support Meeting Space

- Initial use of Google Groups
- Ongoing use of ReadyTalk
- Change to Dropbox as an online file cabinet

Exam Support Study Group

- Set 9 meeting dates from January 2014 to March 2014
- Used each other’s areas of expertise to fill in gaps in knowledge
- Posted articles and resources
- Took turns reviewing, posting, and presenting assigned content areas

Exam Support Consultation

- Needed some support in the area of Home Health Care

Cohort Evaluation

- Overall Value of Project
 - Very valuable process, tremendous value, high value experience, an excellent initiative

- Importance of networking, role insight, improved practice, inspiration for others
- Application Form and Process
 - Clear, easy, timely, thought-provoking, welcoming “goodies” in the acceptance package
- Communication from Project Team
 - Very helpful and critical in early stages of organization
 - Some home care support, but needed more
- Support for Exam Preparation
 - Invaluable re online resources, study group formation, posting tool, Ready Talk meetings, resource person
- Recommendations for Change
 - More direction re areas to study
 - More support from certified nurses
 - More help with home health content
 - Advise applicants to start prior to January

Evaluation of Costs

- People (Team of 6 Board Members)
 - Development of materials
 - Application processing
 - Communication with applicants via email, webinar, and study group
- Budget
 - Ready Talk for study group from January 2014 to April 2014 ($\$69.57 + \$174.12 + \$203.62 + \$244.44 = \$691.75$)
 - Exam fees = \$3000 approximately
 - Total for annual project = \$3691.75

Potential Benefits

- To individual CHNs
- To CHNA Alberta
- To CHNs in Alberta
- To CHN practice
- To clients
- To employers
- To the community
- To the our CHN profile

Participants Voices: The Last Word

- “I believe that the sponsorship made a big difference in my and my study team’s confidence going into the examination. Even if some don’t pass, the process and group study was well worth the effort. It is a bonus that we might have our exam fees reimbursed, but the other aspects of the sponsorship were the ones with the highest value.”
- “I do believe that it will encourage others to become certified knowing that there is a group behind them and encouraging them.”
- “I have gained insight into my role as a nurse working in a community setting. My nursing practice has improved.”
- “The experience was absolutely invigorating! What a sense of pride in being CHNs”