



South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation

South Carolina Board of Nursing

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POSITION STATEMENT: Pharmacotherapeutics Education Required for Prescriptive Authority Application

FORMULATED: July 2004

REVISED: May 2009, February 2019

REVIEWED: December 2024, March 2015, September 2011, August 2021

Section 40-33-34 (E) and (F) outline the requirements for applying for initial prescriptive authority and renewal, including education in pharmacotherapeutics. Among other requirements, the statutes specify that in order to be granted prescriptive authority, a NP, CNM, or CNS must provide evidence of completion of forty-five (45) contact hours in pharmacotherapeutics acceptable to the Board within two years preceding the application, or provide evidence of pharmacotherapeutics during the organized educational program equivalent to forty-five (45) hours, or provide evidence of prescriptive authority in another state meeting twenty (20) hours in pharmacotherapeutics acceptable to the Board, within two years before the date of application.

New graduates must apply within two years of graduation from their APRN (NP, CNM, CNS) program. Those who exceed the two year period must show evidence that they completed forty-five (45) contact hours in pharmacotherapeutics prior to application.

If the NP, CNM or CNS is applying in this state to prescribe Schedules II through V controlled substances, at least fifteen (15) of those hours must be in controlled substances acceptable to the Board. For renewal of prescriptive authority, twenty (20) contact hours of pharmacotherapeutics within the preceding two years are required. For a NP, CNM, or CNS with controlled substance prescriptive authority, two (2) of the twenty (20) hours must be related to prescribing controlled substances.

Initial Application Requirements:

1. For first time applicants for prescriptive authority, forty-five (45) contact hours of pharmacotherapeutics education acceptable to the Board of Nursing must have been completed in the two years prior to the date of the application. New graduates must apply within two years of graduation from their APRN (NP, CNM, CNS) program. Those who exceed the two year period must show evidence that they completed forty-five (45) contact hours in pharmacotherapeutics prior to application. Additionally, if the NP, CNM, or CNS is applying to prescribe controlled substances, fifteen (15) of the forty-five (45) contact hours must be education in controlled substances acceptable to the Board. This also applies to NPs, CNMs or

CNSs reactivating/ reinstating their SC license whose privileges have lapsed by more than six (6) months or NPs, CNMs or CNSs previously holding prescriptive authority in another state but whose privileges in that state have expired by more than six (6) months.

2. New graduates must apply within two years of graduation from their APRN (NP, CNM, CNS) program. NPs, CNMs, or CNSs who have graduated within the preceding two (2) years and who have completed a graduate level pharmacology course within the advanced practice nursing curriculum also meet the educational requirements for prescriptive authority and Schedules II through V controlled substances.

3. NPs, CNMs or CNSs with documented current prescriptive authority in another state must submit documentation of at least twenty (20) hours within the two (2) years preceding the date of their application for initial SC prescriptive authority licensure. Fifteen (15) hours of education in controlled substances acceptable to the Board must be part of the twenty (20) hours if the NP, CNM, or CNS currently has equivalent controlled substance prescribing authority in another state. For renewal for prescriptive authority in SC, NPs, CNMs or CNS must complete 20 contact hours of pharmacotherapeutic education within the two years preceding the renewal application, two of those hours must be related to controlled substances.

Educational Requirements:

1. Contact hours may be obtained through courses taught in an approved program of study or through approved continuing education offerings, which may include personal attendance at real time course sessions (including remote locations), self-study courses, video based and computer based courses. Examples of learning may include web-based on-line education, distance education and learner-centered programs.

2. For initial applications, a maximum of fifteen percent (15%), or 6.75 hours, may be obtained through approved alternative, natural, herbal or complementary pharmacotherapeutics education. For renewal applications, a maximum of fifteen percent (15%), or three hours, may be obtained through approved alternative, natural, herbal or complementary pharmacotherapeutics education.

Renewal Application Requirements:

1. For renewal of prescriptive authority, twenty (20) contact hours of continuing education in pharmacotherapeutics related to the NP's, CNM's, or CNS's certification specialty must be obtained every two (2) years and documented upon Board request. For an NP, CNM, or CNS with controlled substance prescriptive authority, two (2) of the twenty (20) hours must be related to prescribing controlled substances.

2. The Board randomly audits renewal applications and, if requested, documentation of education in pharmacotherapeutics must be provided within the time specified in the request. Failure to timely comply will result in suspension of prescriptive authority and possible disciplinary action

3. Renewal applicants selected for audit must provide the following evidence of pharmacotherapeutics education, as applicable:

a. Documentation of attendance either by official transcript or copies of certificates of continuing education attendance. Official transcripts must be sent directly from the educational institution to the Board of Nursing.
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b. Documentation of continuing education approval by a provider acceptable to the Board. It is the responsibility of the NP, CNM, or CNS to assure that the documentation includes the number of hours received in any particular session or course.

c. A description of course content which is applicable to the APRN's specialty area(s) of practice.