

# PA CERTIFICATION

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# NCCPA Representatives

- ▣ Dr. Lee Smith, JD, Chair-Elect
- ▣ Janet J. Lathrop, MBA, NCCPA President
- ▣ Ragan Cohn, NCCPA Foundation Managing Director

# What is NCCCPA?

- ▣ Founded in 1975
- ▣ Independent, not-for-profit organization
- ▣ Single national certifying agency for PAs
- ▣ PA-C required by all 50 states and US territories for initial licensure
- ▣ Governed by a Board of Directors
  - Appointees from 14 medical, educational, and governmental organizations
  - 2 public members
  - 4 PA directors at large

# Mission

NCCPA assures that certified PAs meet professional standards of knowledge and skills.

# Goal #1

- ▣ NCCPA will be an essential indicator of PA competence and will utilize a competencies-based approach to refine its certification and recertification programs and to develop new products and services for certified PAs.

# A Critical Look at Competence

- ▣ IOM report on quality in health care spurred still ongoing discussions of “competence” and “competency assessment” throughout health care
- ▣ 2003: NCCPA developed a working definition of PA competencies
- ▣ 2004: AAPA, ARC-PA, and PAEA joined with NCCPA in a multi-organizational effort to refine that draft
- ▣ 2005: All four national PA organizations endorsed the Competencies document.
- ▣ Now: Continuing dialogue to determine what changes need made, if any, to PA education and assessment

## Goal #2

- ▣ Through the exchange of knowledge, expertise and resources with others, NCCPA will continue to enhance the reputation of the organization and the visibility of and appreciation for certified PAs.

## Goal #3

- ▣ NCCPA will use technology and research to be responsive, innovative and effective in addressing the interests of the public and other stakeholders.



# Certification Requirements

- ▣ Two-tiered system of certification maintenance focused on evaluation and education
- ▣ Initial and recertification exams
  - Exams are developed by committees of item writers (each with at least one physician and 9-11 PAs)
  - All items are pretested.
- ▣ 100 hours of continuing medical education every two years

# NCCPA's Examination Program

- ▣ Practice analysis
- ▣ Content blueprint
- ▣ Exam development
  - Example genetics item
- ▣ Exam scoring

# Practice Analysis

- ▣ Method of revising the content of NCCCPA's exams to ensure accurate reflection of PA practice
- ▣ Determines current set of knowledge, skills and abilities used by PAs on a regular basis
- ▣ Conducted every 5 to 7 years with focus groups and extensive survey research
- ▣ Determines the content blueprint or the two dimensions upon which the exam is based.

# Content Blueprint

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<b>%</b>	<b>Knowledge &amp; Skills in:</b>
18	Pharmaceutical Therapeutics
18	Formulating Most Likely Diagnosis
16	History Taking & Performing Physical Exams
14	Using Lab & Diagnostic Studies
14	Clinical Intervention
10	Health Maintenance
10	Applying Basic Science Concepts
100%	

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# Content Blueprint

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<b>%</b>	<b>Diseases, Disorders &amp; Medical Assessments of the:</b>
16	Cardiovascular System
12	Pulmonary System
10	Gastrointestinal/Nutritional System
10	Musculoskeletal System
9	Eye, Ear, Nose & Throat
8	Reproductive System
6	Neurologic System
6	Urinary/Renal System

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# Content Blueprint

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%	Diseases, Disorders & Medical Assessments of the: (cont.)
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6	Psychiatric/Behavioral System
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6	Endocrine System
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5	Dermatological System
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3	Hematologic System
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3	Infectious Diseases
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100%	
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# Sample Genetics Information

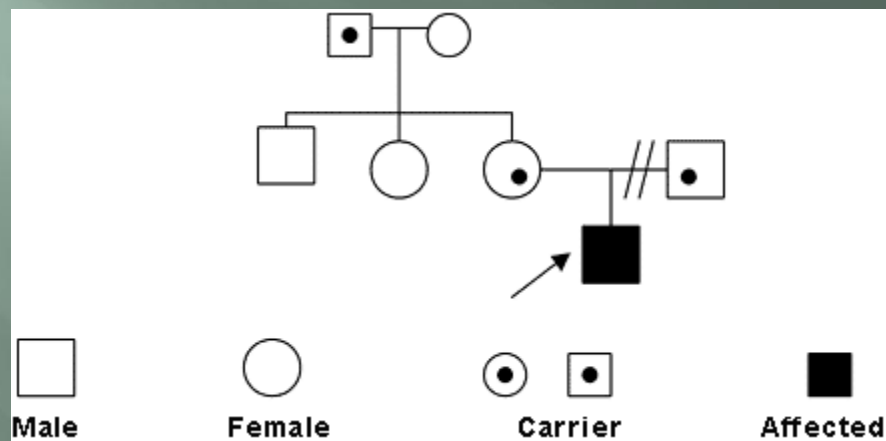
- ▣ Cystic fibrosis
- ▣ Wilson's disease
- ▣ von Willebrand disease
- ▣ Muscular dystrophy
- ▣ Huntington's disease

# Exam Development

- ▣ NCCPA test committee members from a variety of practice specialties and settings write all items.
- ▣ Committees review items for style and to validate every aspect of the question.
- ▣ Items are then pretested. Statistical analyses determine whether the question should be thrown out, returned to the committee, or made part of the NCCPA item bank.
- ▣ Dynamic process allows questions to be continuously reviewed and updated or eliminated.



# Sample Question



Which the following patterns is demonstrated on the pedigree shown?

- (A) Autosomal-dominant inheritance
- (B) Autosomal-recessive inheritance
- (C) Mosaicism
- (D) Spontaneous mutation
- (E) X-linked inheritance

# Exam Scoring

- ▣ NCCPA uses a content-based standard setting process.
  - An absolute standard is established.
  - Everyone who meets the standard passes.
- ▣ Much more sophisticated than norm-referenced standard setting (i.e., the bell-shaped curve)
- ▣ Examinees receive a detailed report of their performance by each area in the content blueprint.

QUESTIONS?