

# Certification UPDATE

Winter 2010

Keeping BONENT Members Informed

## What is the Impact of Your Country's Government Regulations on Patient Education and Safety in Your Facility?

### Wesley Watkins 2009 Scholarship Recipients

The Wesley Watkins Scholarship is awarded annually to as many as four BONENT members in good standing: two international and two U.S. members. Competition is based on a winning essay written by the applicants.



See both of our 2009 winning essays on our website [www.BONENT.org](http://www.BONENT.org)

Below is the essay from our second recipient Cheryl Bryan-Dawkins, RN, CHN of Jamaica.

Government regulation plays an important role in patient's safety and education in my facility. Safety standard are maintained through policies and regulated by the Medical Association of Jamaica, which ensures that the center maintains the criteria for operation. Policy and procedure manuals are used as tools for safe practices and basic education of both staff and patients, which is in collaboration with the standards set by international regulatory body. The Association for Advancement of Medical Instrument (AAMI) is the primary resource for the industry, professions and government for national and international standards. They also provide multidisciplinary leadership and programs that enhance the ability of the professions, healthcare institutions, and industry to understand, develop, manage, and use medical instrumentation and related technologies safely and effectively.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, government regulations of patient's safety and education have a positive impact on the safe operations of my facility.

The AAMI standard sets specific guidelines to monitor the water treatment system which is critical to safe dialysis. Specifically, water used for haemodialysis has to be treated to remove harmful and toxic substances such as chloramines.<sup>2</sup> In addition, the water has to be tested for softness daily and bacterial growth monthly.

The water must be free of elements such as copper, magnesium, dirt and debris that are detrimental to patient's health.

Furthermore, other safety precautions are maintained, which includes proper mixing of bicarbonate solution to prevent infection, reprocessing of dialyzers for reuse to remove bacteria and debris, single use of dialyzers for infectious patients and labeling of dialyzers of non-infectious patients with the correct patient's name to prevent cross-contaminations. In addition, the Ministry of

Health sets specific guidelines for testing patients for blood borne diseases such as Human Immune Virus (HIV), Hepatitis B and C and recommends Hepatitis B vaccine for all dialysis patients. Consequently; follow-up tests are done quarterly to protect both staff and patients. Besides, protocols are observed in maintaining universal precaution and isolation. Finally, special precautions are taken when handling blood and body fluid as well as disinfecting haemodialysis machines.

Similarly, patients are educated about the transmission of blood borne diseases which can occur from frequent blood transfusions. Certainly, those who are already infected with blood borne diseases are educated on how to handle blood and body fluid and to practice safe sex to prevent transmission of the virus.

Therefore, the impact of government policies and regulations promotes safe and effective practices of haemodialysis. The AAMI standards, policy and procedure manuals are guidelines for safe practice. The Ministry of Health's protocol prevents cross-contaminations and universal precaution is practiced. Patient's education is paramount in remaining healthy on haemodialysis thus decreasing mortality.

**Dialysis Certification DEADLINE: April 14, 2010**

Are all of your  
co-workers  
certified?

Get the  
New & Updated  
**Candidate Handbook**  
and  
**Exam Application**  
at  
[www.BONENT.org](http://www.BONENT.org)

Choose From



**Paper &  
Pencil Exam**

- OR -



**Computer  
Based Test**

# Certification UPDATE

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## FROM THE PRESIDENT

### A Historic Time for BONENT & PCTs

As you know, the east coast was pummeled by successive snow storms in early February. The BONENT Executive Office is located in Washington, DC on Pennsylvania Avenue just a few blocks from the White House. Washington DC received over 50 inches of snow in less than a week. The staff manage keep the office open and functioning except a couple days when there was no traffic moving. I would like to let Peter Anas, Executive Director, know that we appreciate the dedication of him and his staff keeping BONENT functioning while Congress ground to a halt.



**RJ Picciano**  
President

### CHT Exam Continually Updated – Your Help is Needed:

We are in the process of updating the Certified Hemodialysis Technologist (CHT) examination. We do this on a regular basis to keep the examination and the content up-to-date with changes in the dialysis world. A group of subject matter experts come together through conference calls and webinars to determine what things are new in practice and what things are no longer appropriate. We test for knowledge needed to provide the best care to our patients.

**Any BONENT certified individual that is interested in being part of updating any of our exams is encouraged to contact the Executive Office by phone or email.** We need individuals with a broad-base of experience, from someone with 20 or more years of experience to someone newly certified. So, if you are interested, please contact us. A fresh view of what our exams should be is always welcome.

**The Most Exam Applicants Ever!** As I said in the last President's Letter, this continues to be the most active year in the 35-year history of BONENT. Since the passage of the new Medicare regulation that requires all current patient care technologists be nationally certified by April 2010 and all newly trained patient care technologists be nationally certified within 18 months of starting in dialysis, things have been busy. The deadline is quickly approaching.

**To Meet the Deadline, Tell Your Colleagues to Take the CBT:** There is still time to sign up for the CHT exam. At this point, it would be most effective to apply for an exam at a computer based testing (CBT) site. BONENT started offering the CBT in October 2008. CBT allows candidates to take the BONENT exam at any of hundreds of testing centers throughout the US and internationally. On the BONENT website (BONENT.org), there are instructions on how to apply to take a BONENT exam by CBT and a link to the available testing centers. If there is not a CBT center near you, hopefully there will be soon.

**Have Your Facility Host an Exam:** If you or your dialysis clinic needs to host an exam, the host application can be printed from the website. We require that at least 5 candidates sign up for the live paper/pencil exam or the site will need to be rescheduled.

**Inspection of Facility & Certified PCTs:** From talking with many Technicians, Nurses and Administrators, there is confusion about certification, continuing education and recertification. As a Condition to Coverage, Medicare, through a facility certification program that is conducted by State Inspectors in each State, will be reviewing whether all patient care technicians have been appropriately trained and passed an approved national certification examination. They will be ensuring that all PCT's are currently certified and were certified at any time that they work in the clinic after the first 18 months following the beginning of their training.

PCT's can maintain their certification in 2 ways:

- 1) Pass the certification exam again prior to their certification expiring or
- 2) Completing the required continuing education.

Some of the confusion stems from states that have required initial certification for State Licensure, but then did not require continued certification to retain licensure. Hopefully, in the near future, dialysis clinics and dialysis providers will gear up to provide increased continuing education opportunities, locally, regionally and on-line. The benefit of this will be to provide all dialysis staff with the most complete and up-to-date information about best demonstrated practices. Thanks for being part of this great organization!

# Hospice & Palliative Care for ESRD

by: Lorraine O. Dolsen, RN, CHPN, Professional Relations Coordinator  
Hospice of the Western Reserve, Cleveland, OH

For years the nephrology community has focused on sophisticated technology to extend life in the face of end-stage renal disease (ESRD) with much success. But there has been a tendency to direct attention away from the physical, emotional and spiritual suffering that complicates the lives of many of these patients and families. Hospice and palliative care can help address these needs for symptom management, spiritual and psychosocial support, and bereavement services for persons with Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD).

## Hospice Care & Renal Disease

It is a common misnomer in the nephrology community that a person on dialysis cannot receive hospice care; however, that is not the case in the United States. Hospice care is appropriate for patients in the following scenarios:

- A CKD patient who decides not to initiate dialysis and has a prognosis of months rather than years to live
- For any dialysis patient who decides to withdraw treatment
- For any dialysis patient *continuing dialysis* but who has a *different terminal disease* (such as congestive heart failure, cancer or other serious illness) with a limited prognosis. In this last scenario, the patient can continue dialysis and be on the Hospice Benefit if they have Medicare Part A.

## Palliative Care & Renal Disease

Studies indicate that dialysis patients do not receive adequate symptom management. Some of these symptoms can include, but are not limited to pain, tiredness, itching, constipation, depression, and problems with sleeping or breathing. This is where palliative care may be appropriate to incorporate into the patient's plan of care. The goal of palliative care is to relieve suffering and improve quality of life for patients with serious illnesses such as renal disease. The results of palliative care are improved symptom management, fewer hospital readmissions and trips to the ER, shorter lengths of stay, lower costs and more satisfied and comforted patients. It is offered *simultaneously with all other appropriate medical treatment*. In addition, billing for palliative care does not interfere with dialysis or physician billing.

## Hospice of the Western Reserve's Renal Care Team

The Renal Care Team consists of Advance Practice Nurses and spiritual care coordinators as well as other highly trained caregivers that work together to meet all of the patient and family's needs: physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual needs. Since the team visits the patient wherever the patient lives, the team can provide an additional set of eyes and ears as to the patient's condition. Furthermore, assistance in completing Advance Directives is offered through the services of the Renal Care Team. Research shows that only 30% of CKD have their advance directives (living wills and health care power of attorney) completed, and that patients are not generally aware of their poor prognosis. The Renal Care Team can help patients and families through these important discussions and relieve anxiety over medical decisions, while strengthening inter-family relationships.

If you are interested in learning more information on how hospice and palliative care benefits CKD patients, please visit [www.hospicewr.org](http://www.hospicewr.org) or call 1-800-707-8921.

## CHT Volunteers Needed for Exam Update

In 2010, BONENT will do an update of the Certified Hemodialysis Technologist (CHT) exam. We ask that any BONENT members with the CHT certification wishing to help in this process, to please contact President RJ Picciano at [president@BONENT.org](mailto:president@BONENT.org). We need an assortment of individuals to do this right. We need technicians that have just passed their certification exam as well as those of you with 10+ years of being certified. We need certified technicians from all parts of the country as well as technicians from for-profit and not-for-profit units. The larger the variety of people participating in this process, the greater the validity of the BONENT exam. So, if you can give us 4-5 hours of your time, we would love to make you part of the process of keeping the BONENT exam current.

## MEMBER INTERVIEW

# How Has BONENT Certification Helped You Professionally?



**Carl Lockman, CHT**  
Whitestone, NY

Being BONENT-certified improves my self-esteem and paycheck!



**Arthur Merriweather, CHT**  
Maple Heights, OH

A lot. It has advanced my career and given me more respect from the patients.



**Christine Hahn, CHT**  
Berea, OH

Maintaining my BONENT certification makes me a better technician by keeping me abreast of current dialysis care.



**Vicki Krupa, CHT**  
Dewitt, MI

My BONENT certification lets me move to different states without taking an exam again.



**Katelyn Boles, CHT**  
Atwater, OH

It has let my knowledge of dialysis grow and help others understand dialysis.



**Wanda Johnson, CHT**  
Euclid, OH

It's enhanced my career as an educator, helping others to become certified.



**Board of Nephrology Examiners  
Nursing & Technology**  
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Washington, DC, 20006

## Are Your Co-Workers Certified?

**Dialysis Certification DEADLINE: April 14, 2010**

### 2010 BONENT CERTIFICATION EXAMINATIONS



#### Paper & Pencil Exam Schedule

*\*Schedule is subject to change. The Paper & Pencil Exam (PPE) schedule below is updated weekly. The PPE schedule below is a completely different list than the Computer-Based Testing (CBT) list.*

Exam Dates	Location	App. Deadline	Exam Dates	Location	App. Deadline
Apr. 4	New Orleans, LA - Davita Regional Office	02/18/10	Jun. 13	Warren, OH - Centers for Dialysis Care of Warren	04/29/10
Apr. 4	New Orleans, LA - Davita Regional Office	02/18/10	Jul. 11	Toledo, OH - University of Toledo Medical Center	05/27/10
Apr. 11	Cleveland, OH - CDC - East	02/25/10	Aug. 1	Cleveland, OH - CDC - East	06/17/10
Apr. 11	Lancaster, CA - Plush Systems	02/25/10	Sep. 12	Toledo, OH - University of Toledo Medical Center	07/29/10
Apr. 11	New York, NY - TCC HCC	02/25/10	Oct. 10	Warren, OH - Centers for Dialysis Care of Warren	08/26/10
Apr. 15	Saluda, SC - DCI Saluda	03/01/10	Nov. 7	Cleveland, OH - CDC - East	09/23/10
May 1	Auckland, NZ - Park Road Auckland Hospital	03/02/10	Dec. 5	Montrose, OH - Conference Center	10/21/10
May 18	Eau Claire, WI - Chippewa Valley Technical College	04/30/10	Note: Exam list is updated weekly.		



#### Computer Based Testing Locations

*The CBT list of locations is updated weekly. Please check [www.BONENT.org](http://www.BONENT.org) for updates to the list. The CBT list of locations is completely different from the Paper & Pencil Exam (PPE) schedule above.*

For more information, please visit our website at [www.bonent.org](http://www.bonent.org) to download a Candidate Handbook, an Application, or Host Forms.

## Send Us Your Essay for the Wesley Watkins Scholarship

Deadline for submission:  
**September 30, 2010**

**\$500 awarded annually to as many as four  
BONENT members in good standing.**

2009-10 Essay Topic:  
“What are the professional  
boundaries in the dialysis clinic?”

See [www.BONENT.org](http://www.BONENT.org) for:  
• Submission & Selection Criteria  
• 2009 Winning Essays

See the BONENT Web Site: [www.BONENT.org](http://www.BONENT.org) to discover quick tips and reminders about our:

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