



Dialysis Technician Certification: Who, When, How and Why...

Who needs to be certified:

"The CMS requirement for PCT certification applies to unlicensed individuals providing **direct patient care**. PCTs are described in a variety of terms, including "biomedical technician" and "dialysis assistant." For purposes of CMS technician certification requirements, a PCT is any unlicensed staff member who has responsibility for direct patient care, **including setting up the dialysis machine for patient use and testing reprocessed dialyzers that have been placed on the machine for presence or absence of germicide.** A person who reprocesses dialyzers and/or maintains or "takes down" dialysis machines after use and who has no direct patient care contact is not considered a PCT by CMS." CMS's Conditions for Coverage.

When:

CMS's deadline for technicians working prior to Oct. 14, 2008 is Apr. 15, 2010. Those who have never worked as a PCT have 18 months from their date of hire to become certified. CMS will count all PCT work experience, regardless of changes in employer, in determining the 18-month time period allowed for completion of certification. If a PCT has a break in employment as a PCT for 18 months or more, then the 18-month count for certification begins anew.

How:

National Certification is obtained through one of the following certifying agencies or a CMS state approved examination (go to the *VillageWeb* > Clinical Education > Dialysis Technician Certification):

1. The National Nephrology Certification Organization (NNCO) examination – takes the shortest amount of time
2. The Board of Nephrology Examiners for Nursing and Technology (BONENT) examination – takes slightly longer
3. The Certified Clinical Hemodialysis Technician (CCHT) examination offered by the Nephrology Nursing Certification Commission (NNCC) – takes the longest amount of time

Why:

1. "As a dialysis technician, you are in the forefront of ensuring each patient's safe and efficient treatment. How well you understand the treatment and the consequences of improperly applied procedures is critical to keeping your patients safe and healthy. As technicians, you hold our patients' lives in your hands by virtue of your skill and knowledge of dialysis." Core Curriculum for the Dialysis Technician.
2. Obtaining certification enhances your knowledge and professionalism
3. Job Security