

Frequently Asked Questions about the PHN Ready Program - FAQs

Q: Is it really FREE?

A: Yes, it's really free! There is no charge for enrollment, no charge for courses, no charge for Nurse Contact Hours, and no charge for the certificate. It is totally free to the enrollee, made possible through a grant from the federal Department of Labor.

Q: How do I enroll?

A: Directions for enrollment are in the Student Guidebook, located on our website, www.phnready.org. This is the first place you should try for complete and pictorial instructions. If you are still having difficulty, please contact the Program Coordinator. Her contact information is also on our website.

Q. I am not a nurse. Can I still take PHN Ready?

A: Sure! The certificate was designed for nurses, but other professions may find the competency-based certificate to be helpful. The certificate will still say "Public Health Nurse Ready," but if you don't mind, we don't either. A number of non-nurses are currently enrolled in the program.

Q: Can people from the Territories also take the PHN Ready courses?

A. Yes, anyone can take the courses and apply for a certificate. The courses are all on-line and available 24/7, so your time zone makes no difference.

Q: I know that Selective Service registration is required for males. What should I do if I can't find my Selective Service registration card?

A: You need not worry. Please contact us when you are ready to submit your application and we will supply direction for you. We will verify your registration prior to issuing the certificate.

Q: How long will the certificate program be available?

A: The University at Albany School of Public Health's Center for Public Health Continuing Education has committed to ensuring that the PHN Ready program will be available beyond the grant period. It is our intent that the certificate will be available for years to come. That said, however, PHN Ready enrollees are encouraged to maintain their steady progress and complete the certificate within a few months of enrolling. Nurses who maintain their involvement at a steady pace are probably more likely to complete the program.

Q: Is there is a difference in choosing "CEU" or "CNE" when given that option?

A: The School of Public Health at the University at Albany and New York-New Jersey Public Health Training Center issue CNEs, which are nurse contact hours. Our center is an approved provider of Continuing Nurse Education by the New York State Nurses Association, an accredited approver by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation. Our assigned provider code is 7WDQEL-PRV-10.

Just to be clear about the difference, "Contact Hours" is the term used by the American Nurses Credential Center's Commission on Accreditation (ANCC) to define a unit of nursing continuing education in nursing. A contact hour is defined as: "Sixty minutes of an organized learning activity, which is either a didactic or clinical experience." So, if one were calculating the contact hours for an activity that took 150 minutes, it would equal 2.5 contact hours. A CEU or "Continuing Education Unit" is "ten contact hours of participation in an organized continuing education experience under responsible sponsorship, capable direction, and qualified instruction." Most nurses look for CNE credit, we have found.

Q: In our state, we do not have a copy of our nursing license, since it is renewed and verified online. What do we do about that? I have always been told not to copy my nursing license. Is that true?

A: The PHN Ready program can look up your licensure if you will send us the link. We will then keep the documentation as required by our funder. We have encountered no issues with keeping a copy of the licensure verification.

Q: Can this certificate serve as a "PHN Certification" for states that require PHNs to be certified?

A: That question should be directed to the agency that provides the certification in your state or territory. We are happy to work with them and provide information about the courses so that they can determine whether our certificate or any part of the program meets their needs.

Q: Do you need to pass an examination at the end of each course or before you receive your PHN Ready Certificate?

A. : Some of the courses in the certificate curriculum may require filling out a final evaluation and a post-test in order to get the CNEs. There is no test in order to get the certificate itself.

Q: How much content is New York-specific?

A: The content of the certificate is based on the Quad Council Competencies for Public Health Nurses, which are not state-specific.

Q: When you leave the Learning Management System, do you have to enroll and setup passwords at other sites?

A: Unfortunately, sometimes you do, especially if it's a course that is offered by someone other than our Center. Most of our courses are on the New York- New Jersey Public Health Training Center site (www.nynj-phtc.org), so once you enroll, you don't have to enroll again. For courses that are outside that system, you may need to enroll and set up a password for that.

Q: If you working on a course and get interrupted, can you go back in and complete?

A: Yes, you can. You are able to pick up wherever you left off.

Q: I live in a rural area, and the bandwidth is sometimes an issue. What can I do if I can't tune into the web-streamed offerings?

A: We have identified a couple of courses in the curriculum where people in some remote areas may have difficulty accessing the courses. We have DVDs of those offerings available. Please contact the PHN Ready Coordinator to have DVDs sent.

Q: Do you advise if you have more than a certain amount experience that the nurse enroll in Public Health 2 instead of PHN Ready?

A: That is a decision that each nurse will have to make on their own. It is recommended that you look at the PHN Ready curriculum first. The PHN Ready curriculum focuses on competencies for public health nursing, and will be most helpful to those who are new to public health nursing, those who are newly returning to public health nursing, and those whose education in public health nursing was not competency based. The Quad Council Competencies for public health nursing practice have been available since 2004. Those educated before that date may not be familiar with the full scope of the competencies, and may find the PHN Ready certificate to be helpful. One thing to keep in mind is that the PHN Ready curriculum is non-state-specific, whereas the continuing education requirements for PHN 2 and Supervising Public Health Nurse are New York-specific. The PHN Ready website provides a portal to the PHN2 and SPHN continuing education offerings, so it's easy to look at each program and compare.

Q: Is there a way to get college credit for the coursework in PHN Ready?

A: This is a non-academic certificate, so there will not be University at Albany college credit given. The University's School of Public Health has online college credit available, which you can learn about at www.albany.edu/sph/. The PHN Ready certificate can be incorporated into college courses, and we are willing to work with any nursing programs who would like to know more about this.