



July/August 2015

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National Council For Therapeutic Recreation Certification

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Welcome to NCTRC e-News!

A Message from the NCTRC Chair

Jennifer L. Hinton, Ph.D., LRT/CTRS, FDRT
NCTRC Board of Directors

It was humbling to be installed as the Chair of the NCTRC Board of Directors in April. I'm proud to be part of the legacy of this remarkable organization. To see the photos of the past directors on the wall in the NCTRC office in New City, NY is to view a cadre of amazing professionals who have continued to move forward the mission of the organization and the progress of our profession as a whole. This year, the challenge is great. It will be a year of transition as Dr. Bob Riley departs at the end of this month and Ms. Anne Richard joins NCTRC as the new Executive Director.

Dr. Bob Riley began his post as Executive Director of NCTRC in 2003, although his commitment to NCTRC began with the start of the organization. Bob was involved in a number of projects with the Council for many years before succeeding Dr. Peg Connolly, the initial Executive Director. Dr. Connolly provided a strong foundation, and Dr. Riley has spent a dozen years building on that foundation and helping NCTRC to become a solid organization for the 21st century. His dedication to NCTRC cannot be understated, and his leadership in the profession will be missed. The Board of Directors wishes Bob and his wife, Maria, a fruitful future.

Ms. Anne Richard will bring a wide variety of experience and talent to the NCTRC office. If you missed the announcement in the spring, you should know that Anne has practice and leadership experience in settings including behavioral health, acute hospital care, both skilled nursing and assisted living, and as an educator in RT academic programs. She has also been actively involved professionally and holds Specialty Certification in Gerontology. In her roles as educator, consultant, clinical specialist, director, therapist, internship supervisor and manager, Anne has gained valuable skills that will continue the tradition of excellence at NCTRC.

The NCTRC BOD continues to follow and update the strategic plan that was approved by the Board of Directors in 2013 and will continue to guide our work through 2018. With the efforts of all of the NCTRC staff (thank you!) we continue to make strong progress toward our goals. We were pleased to have Wayne Pollock and Diane Wagner-Heffner join the Board in April, and said goodbye to past Chair Sharon Nichols and Sue Popek-Boeve. The Nominations and Elections Committee has been hard at work preparing a ballot for the Fall Board Elections- stay tuned and make sure to cast your vote in November!

I'm sure that you have noticed the CEU pre-approval process for ATRA-sponsored conferences over the past two years. This process has been a collaborative effort between ATRA and NCTRC, and was the first phase of NCTRC's efforts to allow you to have pre-approval of continuing education toward your certification process. Phase II (CEU pre-approval by other conference providers) and Phase III (CEU pre-approval of individual CTRS CEUs) has begun. Details are being posted this month on the NCTRC website.

The NCTRC Board continues to implement the *Board Ambassador Program*. Piloted in the winter of 2014, Board members have exhibited for NCTRC at three different conferences. Most recently, Board Member Kelly Ramella exhibited at the American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Conference. The intent is to give people who have the opportunity to hire CTRSs a face-to-face opportunity with NCTRC. Kelly received great feedback. Do you

have a suggestion for a conference that NCTRC might attend? Please email me- we'd be happy to discuss the opportunity!

Continuing collaborations with the Canadian Therapeutic Recreation Association and the American Therapeutic Recreation Association are also yielding some great marketing conversations. Agreeing on a plan wherein each of us can help to move the profession forward is imperative; this includes continuing discussions of licensure and supporting state efforts.

Though transition can be challenging, there will be little loss of momentum in moving forward! We continue to have record numbers of individuals applying for the exam, and we don't expect that to change as we've moved to the new exam schedule. The ability to apply to take the exam every other month started this spring, with our first July exam yielding 285 test takers. This is a great opportunity for potential CTRSs to schedule their exams in a timely fashion. This can be particularly important in a state like my current home state of North Carolina, where you must be licensed to practice.

This is an exciting time at NCTRC. I'm privileged to work with this organization as we welcome new leadership and continue to move forward with exciting new initiatives. Thank you for the opportunity to serve!

Jennifer

CTRS Recognition: When you least expect it!

Each month I attend our hospital leadership meeting as the supervisor of recreational therapy. This meeting is attended by approximately 150 physicians, department heads, unit managers, financial analysts and senior level administrators. At our last meeting I was unexpectedly asked to stand. To my surprise, a letter sent by NCTRC to the President/CEO of my hospital was read aloud. The letter was to thank the hospital for allowing me to participate in the Exam Standard Setting/Passing Score Committee. What was notable to me as the letter was being read was not that I was being recognized publically, but that so much of the letter highlighted the high standards that are set to create a world class certification exam and the importance of the CTRS credential in fulfilling NCTRC's mission to protect the public. It was a powerful way for an important message to be delivered to the right audience at my hospital.

NCTRC frequently sends these letters to individuals who serve the Council through committee work. I wanted to thank NCTRC for sending this letter to my direct supervisor, but more importantly, to the president of my hospital. Since this leadership meeting took place, I have had numerous people approach me wanting more information on the services we provide. I ask that NCTRC not underestimate the magnitude of the impact these letters have on educating key stakeholders about the value of the CTRS credential. Keep up the great work!

Jim Shea, MS, CTRS
Supervisor of Recreational Therapy
Bridgeport Hospital
Bridgeport, CT

CTRS Recognized by CMS

The Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist (CTRS) was recently identified by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) as a contributing allied health professional in providing services to individuals with dementia. An expert panel of professionals recently completed work on the development of a Tool Kit www.nursinghometoolkit.com for CMS surveyors and providers to increase their understanding of persons with dementia. The expert panel examined research on dementia and associative behaviors to determine the non-pharmacological interventions that have the most efficacious outcomes in minimizing challenging behaviors among persons with dementia. The panel's work also included a review of the allied health professions involved in working with persons with dementia and the development of a professional profile of qualified providers. Sharon Nichols, CTRS/L (former NCTRC Board Chairperson) was responsible for the development of the profile for recreational therapists. Nichols was the only CTRS serving on this prestigious national panel and as a result of her contributions, CMS incorporated the recreational therapist (CTRS) into the profile of

qualified providers www.nursinghometoolkit.com/#!/interdisciplinary-team-members/cqgj The outcome of Nichol's involvement underscores the importance of professional outreach in establishing professional recognition by state and national regulatory organizations. Kudos to Sharon Nichols, CTRS/L!

CTRSs in the News

<http://www.monster.com/healthcare/a/recreational-therapists-help-patients-play-to-win-0615>

NCTRC to Conduct Annual Certificants Meeting

NCTRC conducts its Annual Meeting for CTRSs at the annual professional conference of the American Therapeutic Recreation Association (ATRA). The official meeting this year will be held in Albuquerque, NM at the 2015 Annual ATRA Conference. The Annual Meeting will be held at the Hyatt Regency Tamaya Resort and Spa on Monday, September 28th from 11:30am-1:00pm.

The NCTRC Annual Meeting of Certificants is a valuable opportunity for NCTRC to share information regarding current strategic initiatives and to introduce the Board of Directors, Standing Committees, and Staff. NCTRC has several exciting projects underway that we look forward to sharing with you. We hope that you will attend the meeting at ATRA or review a post of the meeting on the NCTRC website. If you are unable to attend, please contact NCTRC with any questions or suggestions you may have about the CTRS credentialing program

Application Review and Exam Statistics

NCTRC Exam: NCTRC conducts three exam administrations within a one-year cycle. A review of the October 2014, January 2015, and the May 2015 exams indicate that a total of 1725 individuals participated in the NCTRC exam program. Provided below is a summary table that contains the number of candidates per exam administration and the corresponding pass rate of first-time examinees.

Exam Date	# Tested	Pass Rate
Oct. 2014	697	73%
Jan. 2015	373	74%
May 2015	655	79%

New Applications for Professional Eligibility: For the period March 26, 2014 to March 24, 2015, 1460 new applications were reviewed for professional eligibility. The total number of candidates that met the NCTRC Professional Eligibility Standards and thus became eligible to sit for the NCTRC exam was 1382 (94.7%).

CTRS Annual Renewal: For the period November 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015, 9606 (86.4%) individual CTRSs renewed their certification.

Recertification Application: For the period November 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015, 1461 applications for recertification were received by NCTRC. A total of 97.5% of the applications were approved for recertification. Approximately 2.2% of the individuals who applied for recertification used the exam option while the majority (97.8%) used the professional experience and continuing education option.

November Recertification Exam Option

NCTRC would like to remind you that if you are coming to the end of your five year recertification cycle you can take the NCTRC exam to meet the requirements for recertification. The November 2015 exam is the only exam one can take to meet the December Recertification cycle requirements. The recertification registration deadline for the November 2015 exam is September 15, 2015. Visit the NCTRC website www.nctrc.org to access the exam registration form. From the home page, click on "exam" or use your log-in information to access the form. There are two options for submission. You can fill out the registration form online and submit it

with a credit card payment or print off the registration form, fill it out, and mail it directly to NCTRC with a check, money order or credit card number. The dates for the November 2015 exam are November 2-14, 2015.

Did you know ...

- NCTRC uses email notifications for reminders about recertification and annual maintenance applications. For a printed application mailed to you, please contact the office.
- NCTRC has a recertification extension policy if you have experienced a life-altering circumstance or an emergency beyond your control.
- Recertification applications may be submitted up to one year prior to your expiration date.

Please contact NCTRC at 845-639-1439 or nctrc@nctrc.org if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you for your continued support of NCTRC and the CTRS credential.