



Validating Excellence

IN MEDICAL-SURGICAL NURSING

**Your Toolkit for Certification,
Growth, and Success**

About MSNCB

The Medical-Surgical Nursing Certification Board (MSNCB) is the certifying body dedicated to validating excellence in medical-surgical nursing. Through nationally recognized certification programs and supportive resources, MSNCB works to advance high-quality nursing practice and positively impact patient outcomes.



Our Mission

Validate excellence in medical-surgical nursing.



Our Vision

MSNCB certification is universally valued as essential to positive patient outcomes.

What We Offer

- Specialty certification for medical-surgical and virtual acute-care nurses
- Certification support programs for individuals and organizations

What's In This Brochure

Certifications at a Glance	03
CMSRN	04
CAVRN	05
Certification Support Programs	06
FailSafe	06
CertAssure	07
Frequently Asked Questions	08
Checklists	09
Contact Information	10

Certifications at a Glance



NAME

Certified Medical-Surgical Registered Nurse (CMSRN®)

FOCUS

Adult acute-care, bedside practice

PRACTICE REQUIREMENT

2,000 hours in the past 3 years

Hold a current Registered Nurse (RN) license in the U.S., its territories, or Canada

Recommended two years of med-surg practice

**Additional requirements may apply for international candidates.*

EXAM FORMAT AND TIME

150 questions; 3 hours

RECERTIFICATION

Every 5 years by examination or continuing education

[Read more about CMSRN online](#)



NAME

Certified Acute-Care Virtual Registered Nurse (CAVRN®)

FOCUS

Virtual nursing in acute-care hospitals

PRACTICE REQUIREMENT

1,000 hours in the past 2 years

Hold a current Registered Nurse (RN) license in the U.S.

**Practice hours may include clinical nursing, management, or education.*

EXAM FORMAT AND TIME

120 questions; 2.5 hours

RECERTIFICATION

Every 5 years by examination or continuing education

[Read more about CAVRN online](#)



The CMSRN certification is accredited by the Accreditation Board for Specialty Nursing Certification (ABSNC) and accepted by the Magnet Recognition Program®.

Certified Medical-Surgical Registered Nurse (CMSRN®)

CMSRN® is the gold-standard certification validating specialized knowledge and clinical expertise in adult medical-surgical nursing. It demonstrates a nurse's commitment to professional excellence and high-quality patient care across a wide range of acute-care settings.

Why CMSRN Matters



For Nurses

- Demonstrates competence in and dedication to medical-surgical nursing
- Validates specialized, evidence-based knowledge
- Builds confidence in clinical decision making
- Supports professional growth and career advancement



For Organizations

- Supports high-quality patient care and safety
- Strengthens nurse engagement and retention
- Reinforces professional practice standards
- Aligns with certification-focused workforce initiatives
- Supports the Magnet Recognition Program

Domains of Medical-Surgical Practice

- ✓ Patient/Care Management
- ✓ Holistic Patient Care
- ✓ Elements of Interprofessional Care
- ✓ Professional Concepts
- ✓ Nursing Teamwork and Collaboration



Exam-at-a-Glance

150 questions
3-hour testing window
Domain-level score report

Explore CMSRN FAQs and preparation resources.

Certified Acute-Care Virtual Registered Nurse (CAVRN[®])

The CAVRN[®] certification recognizes registered nurses who deliver virtual nursing services in acute-care hospital settings in partnership with bedside clinical teams. This certification reflects the evolving role of technology in healthcare and validates expertise in virtual acute-care practice.

Why CAVRN Matters



For Nurses

- Validates expertise in virtual care delivery
- Demonstrates innovation and adaptability in practice
- Builds confidence in emerging care models



For Organizations

- Supports high-quality virtual patient care
- Enhances nurse engagement and retention
- Strengthens workforce adaptability
- Helps attract forward-thinking clinical talent

Domains of Acute-Care Virtual Nursing Practice

- ✓ Quality & Safety
- ✓ Patient & Caregiver Education
- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Teamwork & Interprofessional Collaboration
- ✓ Coaching & Mentoring
- ✓ Leadership Skills
- ✓ Informatics & Technology



Exam-at-a-Glance

120 questions
2.5-hour testing window
Domain-level score report

Explore CAVRN FAQs and preparation resources.

Certification Support Programs

Supporting Certification Success

MSNCB offers certification support options designed to reduce barriers, boost confidence, and help nurses and organizations invest in professional growth.



FailSafe — For Organizations

Certification Support for Your Workforce

FailSafe is an employer-purchased certification support program that helps organizations invest in nurse certification while reducing financial risk.

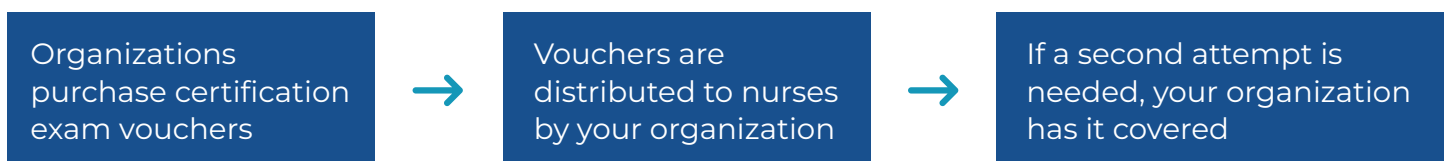
What FailSafe Does

- Covers a nurse's initial certification or recertification exam attempt
- Provides a second exam attempt at no additional cost if needed

Who FailSafe Helps

- Healthcare organizations and systems
- Nurse leaders and professional development teams

How FailSafe Works



Why Organizations Choose FailSafe

- Low-cost, predictable investment helping nurse managers strengthen engagement and retention by supporting certification.
- Preventing even one RN departure can more than offset the cost of vouchers, saving an average of \$60,090 in turnover per RN and saving the up to 83 days it may take to fill med-surg vacancies. *2025 NSI National Health Care Retention & RN Staffing Report by NSI Nursing Solutions, Inc.*
- Reduces vacancy strain, overtime, and disruption to the team.

[Learn more about FailSafe.](#)

Certification Support Programs

Supporting Certification Success

MSNCB offers certification support options designed to reduce barriers, boost confidence, and help nurses and organizations invest in professional growth.



CertAssure™ — For Individuals

Individual Exam Protection for Added Confidence

CertAssure™ is MSNCB's certification support program designed to help nurses pursue CMSRN or CAVRN certification with reduced financial risk and added peace of mind.

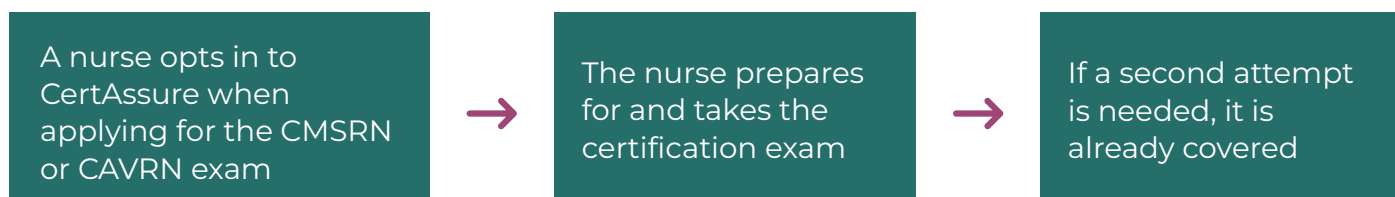
What CertAssure Does

- Provides individual exam assurance for nurses applying for CMSRN or CAVRN certification
- Covers the cost of a second exam attempt if the first attempt is unsuccessful
- Reduces financial stress and removes uncertainty from the certification process

Who CertAssure Helps

- Nurses pursuing certification independently
- First-time certification candidates
- Nurses seeking additional financial reassurance and confidence during exam preparation

How CertAssure Works



[Learn more about CertAssure.](#)

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is eligible to pursue MSNCB certification?

Eligibility varies by certification and includes current RN licensure and required practice hours.

How do I prepare for the certification exam?

MSNCB provides exam blueprints, candidate handbooks, and recommended preparation resources for each certification. Visit the [CMSRN](#) and [CAVRN](#) resource pages to learn more.

Is financial support available for certification or recertification?

There are several ways to obtain financial support. Applying for one of AMSN's [CMSRN Certification or Recertification Grant](#) can offset costs, and purchasing CertAssure or encouraging your organization to support FailSafe can help with CMSRN and CAVRN certification and recertification.

Are certification support programs required?

No. Certification support programs such as [FailSafe](#) and [CertAssure](#) are optional tools designed to provide added confidence and financial protection.

How long is certification valid?

Certification is valid for five years and requires recertification to maintain active status.

Are resources available for recertification?

Yes. MSNCB provides recertification guidance and tools for [CMSRN](#) and [CAVRN](#) to support nurses in maintaining their credentials.

Where can I find the most current information?

Visit the [MSNCB website](#) for complete, up-to-date details on certifications and programs. You can reach out to MSNCB with questions at any time by contacting msncb@msncb.org.

Ready to get started? Use the below checklists for an helpful guide to earning your certification.

Certification Checklist

- Download the CMSRN[®] or CAVRN[®] Certification Handbook.
- Check if you meet the eligibility requirements.
- Consider CertAssure™ or approach your organization about enrollment in FailSafe.
- Submit your application.
- Get familiar with the CMSRN or CAVRN Exam Blueprint.
- Identify your study priorities and prepare your study plan.
- Schedule your exam.
- Review testing policies and test day procedures to prepare for your exam day.
- Show up to your exam appointment 30 minutes early – you got this!

Recertification Checklist

- Download the CMSRN or CAVRN Recertification Handbook.
- Review the recertification requirements and pick your pathway.
- Ask your organization about applying FailSafe to your recertification.
- Take the exam or enter your continuing education credits before the end of your five-year certification period.
- Submit your application to recertify!

Still Have Questions?

Visit msncb.org to explore certifications, resources, and support programs, or contact MSNCB at msncb@msncb.org for additional assistance.

