As a Certified Nurse Practitioner, How do I Sign my Name?

by Margaret A. Fitzgerald, DNP, FNP-BC, NP-C, FAANP, CSP, FAAN, DCC

As a newly or soon-to-be graduated nurse practitioner (NP), the challenge of NP certification, licensure and practice are ahead. As you prepared for this role, you have earned new professional credentials. Now for the challenging part, how do you sign your name? Should you omit your academic credentials, drop the RN and just add NP as advocated by many? This would be a great idea for all NPs, regardless of area of certification, specialization and practice. Indeed, increasing public and professional awareness of the NP title will benefit all of us. However, at times, such as in your CV, when making up that well-earned desktop nameplate, listing out all your designations, that alphabet soup list that now follows your name is warranted. Here is some advice on how to do this.

Now that I have an advanced degree, how do I list my academic credentials?

Your highest academic degree should be placed immediately.

(Sign my Name: Continued on page 7)
Question and Answer with Dr. Margaret A. Fitzgerald

Common Questions about Nurse Practitioner Certification and Practice

Are the NP certification exams through AANP and ANCC like the NCLEX exam in that all answer are right but we need to choose the most correct or best answer?
All well-designed multiple choice questions in high-stakes exams such as the NP boards or the NCLEX exams are similar in that you must pick the answer that is the best for the given scenario presented. Occasionally, you could encounter a question where more than one answer is technically correct. Your job is to pick out the answer that will complete the concept being tested in that particular question. As a result, figuring out the purpose of the question (for example, is this item testing assessment, diagnosis, plan, intervention, or evaluation) is one of the most important parts of deciding on which answer is correct.

For adult NPs and adult-gero primary care NPs, will there be questions about the pregnant women on the ANCC or AANP exams?
No. Questions on the childbearing woman, including pregnancy, lactation, and postpartum care, are not part of the adult NP or adult-gero NP certification examinations.

If a person fails the NP certification examination from one agency, can he/she take the exam from the other agency without a waiting period?
Yes. The only limitation will be the time needed to process the application for the examination with the second certifying body.

If a person plans to certify as a family NP (FNP) but decides to practice in a pediatric setting, should he/she take the pediatric NP certification exam? Does he/she need to go back to school prior to qualifying for the pediatric NP boards? Similarly, if someone certifies as an FNP or ANP, is he/she qualified to sit for the women’s health NP (WHNP) certification examination?
In both scenarios, the NP, even with certification as a family, adult, or adult-gero NP, needs to be a graduate of a NP program in either pediatrics or women’s health to qualify for the respective boards.

Want to take a look at past Q&A sessions with Dr. Fitzgerald? Visit our Q&A archive.
NP News in Brief

FDA Recommends Against Codeine Use in Post-Op Children
The Federal Drug Administration (FDA) issued new recommendations against the use of codeine drugs for pain relief in children post-surgery for tonsil or adenoid removal. The new guidelines came after research revealed that 13 deaths occurred from 1969 to 2012 in children who took codeine drugs after surgery. Evidence suggested the codeine was metabolized too quickly, causing the substance to be converted into morphine at fatal levels. Since many of the children had sleep apnea, they may have had an increased sensitivity to the respiratory side effects that occur when codeine is metabolized into high levels of morphine in the body, according to the FDA. Since it is difficult to identify children who rapidly metabolize codeine, the FDA recommends that prescribing codeine after tonsil or adenoid surgery should be avoided for all children. According to the American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery, every year in the United States more than 500,000 children 15 years or younger undergo surgery to have their tonsils removed. In 2011, 1.7 million prescriptions for codeine-containing drugs were written for children 17 years and younger, according to the FDA. The guidelines against issuing codeine prescriptions for children after surgery apply only to tonsil and adenoid surgery. In all other cases, the FDA recommends using codeine-containing drugs when the benefits are greater than the risks.

Read more

Editors note: More on this subject matter is included in FHEA’s Pharmacogenomics: Exploring Genetic Variations in Drug Metabolism.

Synthetic Marijuana Responsible for 16 Kidney Injuries
The United States (US) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has published a report concluding that the use of synthetic cannabinoids was responsible for 16 cases of kidney injuries occurring in six US states last year. According to the CDC, the use of synthetic cannabinoids and its effect on the renal system is an area of high importance for healthcare providers. All of the patients suffering from AKI experienced symptoms of nausea and vomiting after use of the synthetic substance. All patients went to the emergency room for immediate treatment. There was no history of renal deficiencies in any of the patients. Twelve of the patients reported pain in the abdomen, flank and back. The average symptom onset occurred on the third day after use, with the earliest symptom onset at one day and the latest being the sixth day. Only two of the 16 were shown to be related. Four cases of kidney injury were reported in Wyoming, six cases occurred in Oregon, two in New York, two in Oklahoma, and one case each in Rhode Island and Kansas. Synthetic cannabinoids have are illegal substances in the US, however, unlawful use and distribution of these substances continue to be widespread. Synthetic cannabinoids have proven to have dangerous short-term effects on health. The long-term effects on health from the use of these substances is still unknown.

Read more

NP and PA 2012 Salary Survey Results Published
Last year, nurse practitioner (NP) and physician assistant (PA) salaries recovered the loss they faced in 2011, according the 2012 National Salary Survey of NPs and PAs. The study reported that the average annual salary for a full-time NP increased approximately $2,500. Full-time PAs saw an increase of approximately $7,000 last year. The average annual salary for PAs in 2012 was $102,165 and full-time NPs earned an annual salary of $93,032. The average part-time PA earned $55.16 per hour, representing an increase $4.64 per hour over the hourly rate in 2011. Last year, part-time NPs earned $48.49 per hour, representing an increase of $.86 from 2011. Since 2010, the average annual NP salaries has increased $2,262.

Read more

Important System Update Information
Routine maintenance is scheduled for March 16, 2013. FHEA is committed to providing our customers maximum uptime, reliability and security for our On-line Testing and Learning Site, www.npexpert.com. Regular system maintenance is critical to achieving this goal and is normally performed the third Saturday of each month.
We are pleased to announce that Fitzgerald Health Education Associates, Inc. (FHEA) Associate Lecturer Teresa “Tess” Judge-Ellis, DNP, FNP-BC, PMHNP-BC, has been chosen to be inducted as a Fellow of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners (FAANP). FAANPs are selected based on their contributions to the nurse practitioner (NP) field and commitment to NP policy, education, research, and clinical practice. The 2013 FAANP Induction Ceremony is scheduled to take place at the 28th National AANP Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada.

“It is a wonderful recognition and honor to have been selected,” Dr. Judge-Ellis said of her upcoming FAANP induction. “I think it will be interesting and professionally stimulating to be included in this community of phenomenal NP leaders.”

Dr. Judge-Ellis developed and presents the Psychiatric/Mental Health Nurse Practitioner Certification Exam Review and Advanced Practice Update for FHEA. She practices as a psychiatric mental health NP (PMHNP) at Meadowlark Psychiatric Services, PC, North Liberty, Iowa and as a PMHNP and family NP (FNP) at Winfield Community Clinic in Winfield, Iowa.

“Opportunities in psychiatric mental health advanced practice nursing are endless. It has been rewarding to work with FHEA through the PMHNP certification review course and witness the enthusiasm and energy of soon-to-be PMHNPs,” Dr. Judge-Ellis said.

As an associate clinical professor for the University of Iowa’s College of Nursing, Dr. Judge-Ellis has helped enhance the quality of the university’s nurse practitioner program. Over the years, she has been instrumental in the development of the university’s doctor of nursing practice (DNP) program. Currently, she teaches adult health and mental health disorders in the DNP program. She has been a member of numerous committees at the university’s college of nursing, including the Faculty Practice Advisory Committee, and the College of Nursing Diversity Committee. She was a representative for the college of nursing for the university’s Health Sciences Human Rights Program Committee. She is the recipient of the University of Iowa College of Nursing Distinguished Faculty Advising award.

“One of my professional goals is to share my passion for mental health in general and for the care of people with mental disorders specifically. I teach and practice in both primary care and psychiatric settings and I like how they complement and inform one another.” Dr. Judge-Ellis said. “The brain is wonderfully complex and I never tire of learning more about it. It’s also very rewarding to help de-mystify psychiatry for non-psych providers and increase their comfort with psychiatric issues.”

Dr. Judge-Ellis is the co-founder, charter member, and past-president of the Iowa Nurse Practitioner Society (INPS) and has been involved in various committees with the society. She has been published in several journals including Advance for Nurse Practitioners and The Nurse Practitioner Journal. She has co-written several chapters in Current Issues in Nursing, 7th Edition. She has presented various topics at state and national conferences including the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties Annual Meeting and the Iowa Nurse Practitioner Society Annual Meeting.

Congratulations, Tess!
Learn about the latest in drug therapy with Dr. Margaret A. Fitzgerald as she presents the FHEA Pharmacology Update in desirable resort settings.

Topics Include:
- Drug Update: New products, new indications, new warnings
- Pharmacogenomics: Exploring genetic variations in drug metabolism
- Antimicrobial Update: A focus on treatment recommendations in urinary tract infections (UTI)
- Prescribing in the Presence of Impaired Renal Function
- Depression: A primary care approach to assessment and intervention
- As Seen on TV: What's in the OTC and herbal products your patients are taking?

Falmouth, Cape Cod, Massachusetts
July 23-24, 2013

Boscolo Prague Hotel
Prague, Czech Republic
September 13-14, 2013

New and Updated Products

2013 Adult Nurse Practitioner Certification Exam Review and Advanced Practice Update for Family, Adult and Adult-Gero Primary Care
On-line and on Audio CD

The on-line and audio CD versions of our 2013 Nurse Practitioner Certification Exam Review and Advanced Practice Update for family, adult, and adult-gero primary care nurse practitioners are now available. Each of these review course tracks is presented by Dr. Margaret A. Fitzgerald. The Fitzgerald Certification Review is the most comprehensive, current and convenient certification exam preparation and practice update available.

- Best review value on the market
- More accredited contact hours than any other course available
- Expanded content meets the latest changes to the exam blueprints and domains
- A comprehensive workbook included with all formats
- Extensive on-line resources
- Annual revisions reflect changes in
  - Exam content
  - Evidence-based practice
  - NP professional issues
- On-line study resources include:
  - Final review of hundreds of course questions
  - 150-item sample exam
  - Supplemental exam preparation materials to enhance your learning
- More than 65,000 NPs have chosen Fitzgerald for certification preparation and advanced practice update during the past 25 years

Click Here for More Information
It’s not nice to alter a little body’s microbiome.

Recommend Florajen probiotics along with antibiotics to help restore a little body’s natural balance. Send for your free professional samples and $2.00 coupons. Call 800-257-5433 or visit florajensamples.com.

**Come see us in person!**
We will be exhibiting at the following locations:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 17-20, 2013</td>
<td>Kentucky Coalition of Nurse Practitioners and Nurse Midwives, Lexington, Kentucky</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 1-4, 2013</td>
<td>National Conference for Nurse Practitioners Annual Meeting, Nashville, Tennessee</td>
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**A Sample of Dr. Fitzgerald’s Upcoming Speaking Engagements**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>More information</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 11-14, 2013</td>
<td>National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties</td>
<td>600 Commonwealth Place, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 26, 2013</td>
<td>Illinois Society for Advanced Practice Nursing Pharmacology Update</td>
<td>Bourbannais, Illinois</td>
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after your surname, before professional designation and certification credential. Most NPs have a master of science (MS), with some earning a master of nursing (MN) or master of science in nursing (MSN), and a growing number with a doctor of nursing practice (DNP), doctor of philosophy (PhD), or doctor of nursing science (DNSc). In addition, some NPs that have returned to school for post-master or post-doctoral NP preparation have earned a certificate of advanced study (CAS). Check with your school to make sure you are using the appropriate academic designation.

I am now a certified NP. Is there a special way to designate this?

The NP certification credential differs according to the certifying body. Here are the designations of the various certifying organization.

The credentials for the American Certification Credentialing Center (ANCC) certified NPs is NP-BC preceded by a letter indicating the particular specialty,

- Family nurse practitioner: FNP-BC
- Adult nurse practitioner: ANP-BC
- Adult-gerontologic primary care NP: AGPCNP-BC
- Acute care nurse practitioner: ACNP-BC
- Adult-gerontologic acute care NP: AGACNP-BC
- Pediatric nurse practitioner (primary care): PNP-BC
- Gerontological nurse practitioner: GNP-BC
- Psychiatric and mental health nurse practitioner: PMHNP-BC

Here is an example of an ANCC-certified family nurse practitioner:

- Hugo Moreno, MS, FNP-BC

Family, adult-gerontologic, adult, and gerontologic nurse practitioners certified by the American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP) are granted the designation of NP-C, or nurse practitioner-certified. Here is an example:

- Melissa Hammond, DNP, NP-C

(Sign my Name: Continued on page 9)
On January 26, 2013, Fitzgerald Health Education Associates, Inc. faculty, staff and friends came together for an anniversary masquerade ball to celebrate 25 years of providing nurse practitioner certification preparation and continuing education. Thank you to everyone who has helped make this a wonderful 25 years!

Visit the FHEA Facebook Page for More Photos!
The NP-C can be modified, if desired, to include a first letter consistent with area of certification such as a family NP using the designation FNP-C.

A comment that I often hear made about this designation is that NP-C clearly denotes that a person is a certified nurse practitioner and that perhaps all NPs should use this. However, NP-C is the AANP’s certification designation and should only be used by those who have earned it.

Those who are certified by the National Certification Corporation (NCC) include women’s health NPs and are granted the designation of WHNP-BC. Here is an example:
- Sarah Thiam, DNP, WHNP-BC

A pediatric nurse practitioner in primary care who is certified by the Pediatric Nursing Certification Board (PNCB) is granted the designation CPNP, with the modifier of PC (primary care) or AC (acute care). Here is an example:
- Clifford Frost, MS, CPNP-PC
- Kara Ashley, DNP, CPNP-AC

**What do I do if I hold more than one certification?**

In general, the most recently earned credential is listed last. Here is an example of a nurse practitioner who is recently passed the AANP family nurse practitioner certification exam but also an American Diabetes Association Certified Diabetic Educator (CDE).
- Maggie Ashley, PhD, CDE, NP-C

**What about adding RN or APRN to my credentials?**

This is certainly an option, particularly with the adoption of the Consensus Model for APRN Regulation. In that case, the designation RN or APRN should be immediately before the NP certification title. Here is an example of a NP who is AANP certified and practicing in a state where the Consensus Model has been adopted and has assigned the designation APRN to NPs, certified nurse midwives (CNMs), certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs), and certified nurse specialists (CNSs).
- Iris Buck, MS, APRN, NP-C

In the state where I am licensed and practice, your state board of nursing grants a specific advanced practice license designation. Where does this go?

State law can dictate that a specific mandated title be used, such as advanced registered nurse practitioner (ARNP), which is used in New Hampshire, Washington and other states, and advanced practice nurse (APN), which is used in New Jersey and other states. Since these titles are not recognized state-to-state, using them as part of your formal credentials is likely not warranted. This issue is further confused by the APRN designation being used increasing to refer to NPs, CRNAs, CNMs, and CNSs.

**How should I list an honorific designation?**

An honorific designation such as Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing (FAAN) or Fellow of the American Association of Nurse Practitioners (FAANP) typically goes at the end of the credentials. Here is an example:
- Kathleen Thomas, PhD, NP-C, FAANP

**Conclusion**

For the day-to-day, keep it simple and use the NP designation. For those special occasions when you need to use your full set of hard earned, well-deserved professional credentials, show them off the right way.

Click here to read an FHEA News article about the Consensus Model for APRN Regulation and NP certification examinations that will be retired in 2014.

Click here for Fitzgerald Health Education Associates, Inc. NP Certification Review and Advanced Practice Update courses.
Skyla, a new progestin IUD, was released this week in the US.

Skyla contains 13.5 mg of levonorgestrel and provides up to three years of protection against pregnancy. For the first three to six months of use, your patient may experience spotting, irregular periods and an increase in the number of bleeding days. Spotting should lessen over time. Eventually, your patient may stop having periods altogether.

Skyla is T-shaped and smaller than both the Paragard and Mirena. Approval of Skyla is supported by data from a Phase 3 trial in which 1,432 women aged 18-35 received Skyla. Thirty-nine percent (556) of participants were nulliparous. Skyla is FDA approved for use in nulliparous women. Although nulliparous women and teens may use any IUD, Skyla can be directly marketed to women who haven’t had a child.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mirena</th>
<th>Skyla</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Hormone</strong></td>
<td>Levonorgestrel</td>
<td>Levonorgestrel</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Efficacy</strong></td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Size</strong></td>
<td>32mm x 32mm</td>
<td>28mm x 30mm</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cost</strong></td>
<td>$843.00</td>
<td>$652.42</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Maximum duration of use</strong></td>
<td>7 years</td>
<td>3 years</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Dose of levonorgestrel</strong></td>
<td>Initially 20 mcg/day, declines to 14 mcg/day</td>
<td>Initially 14 mcg/day, declines to 5 mcg/day</td>
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Please write to pearls@reproductiveaccess.org with any questions, comments or additional resources to add to the list.

Helpful Resources
- [IUD Facts](#)
- [Birth Control User Guide: IUD (Progestin)](#)

Subscribe
- [Access past issues of the Contraceptive Pearls](#)

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### A Sample of Upcoming Speaking Engagements for FHEA Lecturers

<table>
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<tr>
<td>May 1-4, 2013</td>
<td>National Conference for Nurse Practitioners</td>
<td>Cliff Ashley, MS, LATC&lt;br&gt; Bruce Askey, MS, ANP-BC&lt;br&gt; Linda Blasen, MS, ACNP-BC, FNP-BC&lt;br&gt; Victor Czerkasij, MA, MS, FNP-BC&lt;br&gt; Susan Feeney, MS, NP-C, FNP-BC&lt;br&gt; Richard Fletcher, MS, FNP-BC&lt;br&gt; Louise McDevitt, MS, ACNP-BC, ANP-BC, FNP-BC, FAANP&lt;br&gt; Monica Tombasco, MS, MSNA, FNP-BC, CRNA&lt;br&gt; Sally Miller, PhD, ACNP-BC, FNP-BC, GNP-BC, CNE, FAANP&lt;br&gt; Christy Yates, MS, FNP-BC, NP-C, AE-C</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gaylord Opryland Resort &amp; Convention Center</td>
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<td>Nashville, Tennessee</td>
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The Art of Wound Repair: Suturing for NPs and PAs

Presented by: Robert Blumm, MA, PA-C, DFAAPA

June 15, 2013
Crowne Plaza Milwaukee Airport Hotel
6401 South 13th St.
Milwaukee, WI 53221

Earn 6 Contact Hours!

The art of suturing is the process of preparation, thinking, documentation, taking a good history and physical examination, immunizing our patient, delivering proper local anesthesia, in addition to performing a professional suture. This full-day course features the utilization of a pig’s foot, anesthesia tips, 4-0 nylon suture, and a disposable stapler. Dermabond and other products will be covered. We will start with the keystone stitch, and will move on to running sutures, horizontal mattress sutures, vertical mattress sutures, and running intra-cuticular stitches. Malpractice prevention techniques will help secure your future.

Psychiatric and Mental Health NP Certification Exam Review and Advanced Practice Update

Presented by: Tess Judge-Ellis, DNP, FNP-BC, PMHNP-BC

April 5-6, 2013
Embassy Suites San Diego Bay Downtown
601 Pacific Hwy.
San Diego, CA 92101

Earn 23.75 Contact Hours!

This 2-day course is available to NPs and NP students who are interested in getting a comprehensive review of psychiatric/mental health clinical guidelines and those preparing for a psychiatric and mental health certification exam. NPs will earn 23.75 contact hours that can be applied toward recertification, 11.75 of which are pharmacology related. The Fitzgerald NP Review Method is the most comprehensive, current and convenient certification exam preparation available. This multi-media course includes a workbook and hundreds of questions to help clarify course content and hone test-taking skills.

Advanced Pathophysiology for NPs and Advanced Practice Clinicians

Presented by: Margaret A. Fitzgerald, DNP, FNP-BC, NP-C, FAANP, CSP, FAAN, DCC
Sally K. Miller, PhD, ACNP-BC, ANP-BC, FNP-BC, GNP-BC, CNE, FAANP

March 25-30, 2013
Marriott Chicago Schaumburg
50 North Martingale Rd
Schaumburg, IL 60173

This course is scheduled live annually and is always available on-line.

Earn 45 Contact Hours!

This 5 ¾ day course is presented by highly acclaimed clinician-educators who currently maintain clinical practice. Fitzgerald Health brings the highest quality pathophysiology program to our customers. We believe our approach provides an advanced pathophysiology course that will meet your needs whether you are new to the profession or brushing up your pathophysiology. This course is also available on-line. (Contact hours differ from the live course.)

Clinical Pharmacology for NPs and Advanced Practice Clinicians

Presented by: Margaret A. Fitzgerald, DNP, FNP-BC, NP-C, FAANP, CSP, FAAN, DCC
Sally K. Miller, PhD, ACNP-BC, ANP-BC, FNP-BC, GNP-BC, CNE, FAANP

March 18-23, 2013
Crowne Plaza Atlanta Perimeter At Ravinia
4355 Ashford-Dunwoody Rd
Atlanta, GA 30346

This course is scheduled live annually and is always available on-line.

Earn 45 Contact Hours!

This 5 ¾ day course addresses the growing need for a thorough course in the principles of pharmacotherapeutics. Because states’ requirements vary, it is important that you contact your state board of nursing for details regarding educational requirements for prescriptive authority. This course is also available on-line. (Contact hours differ from the live course.)

Click here for more information about these and other courses