



**Medicaid Redesign Team**  
**Workforce Flexibility / Scope of Practice Workgroup**  
**Proposal Information Sheet**

**Proposal Number and Short Name:** #54: Establish certification and title protection for clinical nurse specialists.

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**Problem Statement/Description:** The lack of formal recognition of clinical nurse specialists is negatively impacting not only the state's nursing population but also creates barriers to access to safe, quality care for New York's most vulnerable residents.

Currently, 38 states recognize and provide title protection for the role of clinical nurse specialist, yet clinical nurse specialists are not recognized as advanced practice registered nurses in New York State. They are prepared at the graduate level and are educated for advanced clinical practice in specialties within nursing; the role has existed for more than fifty years. Clinical nurse specialists play an essential role in providing high quality, evidence-based care. CNSs practice in a broad range of specialty areas and the role enhances the utilization of evidence-based practice and improves patient outcomes by providing direct care to complex patients; mentoring, educating and consulting with bedside nursing staff; providing leadership in nursing practice; conducting research and implementing management and systems improvements.

Many healthcare facilities employ nurses as clinical nurse specialists, but protecting the title of "clinical nurse specialist" is necessary to maintain safe patient care and to ensure that only those who are properly educated and qualified are performing CNS services. The competencies for CNS practice have been nationally validated and recognized.

**Proposal Description:** Establish certification by the state of New York for Clinical Nurse Specialists (CNSs) and protect the title "clinical nurse specialist." Based on rules and regulations promulgated by the Commissioner of Education, clinical nurse specialists should be certified by the state of New York to practice as such, and the title "clinical nurse specialist" and the designation "CNS" should only be used by registered nurses certified as such (refer to A2992 Lifton/S522 Krueger).

**Benefits of Proposal:**

- Meets the work group charge to "redefine and develop the workforce, to ensure that the comprehensive health care needs of NY's population are met in the future."
- With the increasing complexity of the healthcare environment, recognition of and title protection for CNSs is essential for the public's health
- Will enable the state to identify those registered nurses who have been properly educated to provide specialized care and will prohibit healthcare facilities from inappropriately utilizing unqualified persons in the role of clinical nurse specialist
- Results in improved patient outcomes; decreased hospital costs, improved retention of hospital nursing staff related to CNS mentoring, leadership and system improvements.

**Impact on Stakeholders:** Registered nurses who meet the necessary requirements, will have to file application with the State Education Department to be registered as clinical nurse specialists; State Education Department rule promulgation and regulation, with collection of associated fees; hospitals will have to ensure a CNS is registered in NYS as such, if hiring into a “CNS” position.

**Impact on Quality of Care:**

- Demonstrated, improved patient care outcomes associated with CNSs.
- CNS-led cardiac rehabilitation leads to cardiac patients returning to work more quickly, having decreased smoking rates, and patients increasing knowledge of their heart disease.
- CNSs improve quality of life in cancer survivors by leading implementation of innovative solutions to patient problems.<sup>1</sup>
- Decreased complications, decreased hospital length of stays, decreased readmissions rate, and decreased healthcare costs.<sup>2,3</sup>

**Impact on Medicaid Costs:** Decreased costs related to lower incidence of avoidable, adverse patient outcomes; shorter inpatient length of stay; decreased hospital re-admissions.

**Impact on Medicaid Costs and Efficiency:**

- Title protection and certification is essential to ensure the public’s protection and access to the specialized advanced nursing care CNSs provide.
- Clinical nurse specialists are the providers that improve safety for patients.
- Research has documented how CNSs improve compliance with hand washing, therefore decreasing hospital acquired infections (Johnson, M., 2011); hospital-acquired infections increase the cost of hospitalization and length of stay.
- Clinical nurse specialists have a direct impact on reducing patient’s length of stay and on reducing rates of hospital re-admission, both of which increase Medicaid costs and lead to inefficiency of the health delivery system.

**Implementation Complexity:** Low

**Required Approvals:** Administrative Action: Yes; Statutory Change: Yes; State Plan Amend: No; Federal Waiver: No

**Implementation Timeline:** Short-term

**Concerns Regarding the Proposal:** This proposal would be a concern for any persons working as a clinical nurse specialist, who have not been appropriately educated.

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<sup>1</sup> Otte, J. L, Carpenter, J.S., Zhong, X. & Johnstone, P. A. S. (September/October 2011). *Feasibility study of acupuncture for reducing sleep disturbances and hot flashes in postmenopausal breast cancer survivors*. *Clinical Nurse Specialist*, 25(5), 228-236. DOI: 10.1097/NUR.0b013e318229950b

<sup>2</sup> Johnson, M. (November/December 2011). The clinical nurse specialists' use of collaborative governance to improve compliance with hand hygiene practices in the medical intensive care unit (MICU). *Clinical Nurse Specialist* 25(6), 294-298. DOI: 10.1097/NUR.0b013e318233f198

<sup>3</sup> Antle, D. & Leafgreen, P., 2001; Kee, C.C., & Borchers, L., 1998; Naylor, M. et al., 1994; Royer, T. 2001.