Q: Why get certified?
A: Give yourself a pay raise. A full-time nurse will earn an additional $3744/year and part-time nurse $2496/year. Over 3 years that is $11,232 and $7488 respectively. Also, get certified to improve your nursing practice, stimulate your learning with CEUs, and provide better patient care. You will also be more competitive when applying for jobs or promotions as it sets you apart as having gone above and beyond to further validate your expertise in your specialty.

Q: How do I take advantage of the certification differential of $2/hr?
A: Get a nursing certification from an accredited source like ANCC, AMSN, AACN, or ENA. Prepare using contractual education hours and reimbursement monies (see PNCC/Education Hours Section) then apply, pass the exam, and obtain the certification that you qualify for from the organization (for example, AACN, ANCC, or AMSN) that provides it. Generally, this should be applicable or related to your department/unit. When you have the card or certificate showing you have the certification, upload a copy via the HR portal (search certification differential for pay) and you should see it paid on your next paycheck until it expires.

Q: Where can I find the list of qualifying certifications?
A: There is no list or policy currently, hospital administration has clarified HR looks to see that it is a certification from a credible professional association or organization that offers board or specialty certifications and then approves it based on the certificate you upload. If you are not sure if it is legit or are skeptical it will qualify, ask a steward or labor rep for advice.

Q: Can I be paid the differential for more than one certification?
A: No, only one certification differential will be paid even if you hold multiple qualifying certifications (page 34 14.1.3).

Q: Does ACLS, PALS, NRP, or PEARs count towards the certification differential?
A: These are not considered specialty area certifications, but rather advanced skill certifications typically required to work in a specialty area or advance skills in a specific specialty. They do not qualify. Typically, qualifying specialty certifications require experience in the specialty, in depth education, and preparation to
pass a specialty examination. The certification validates your expertise in the given specialty. You must pay a fee and in order to renew there are continuing education requirements and minimum hour requirements in the specialty.

Q: What if the hospital doesn't recognize my certification?
A: PNCC (professional nurse care council) elected members may consider new qualifying certifications to recommend to the hospital. You should also speak with your manager, and if necessary contact your labor rep to file a grievance if the hospital continues to deny a certification that you believe should qualify. However, the hospital has stated that when you submit your certification for pay, they approve it if it is from an accredited certification organization. The actual certification policy the hospital had and is referenced in the contract is gone. (Contract page 34, 14.1.1)

Q: Do I get paid the certification differential when I work during meetings, education or other non-patient care hours?
A: Yes, you are paid the differential on top of your base wage for all worked productive and non-productive hours like education, meetings, PTO and EIT use (contract 14.1.1 line10 “paid …per compensated hour.” The $2 differential is also included in your hourly rate for time-and-a-half/overtime calculations (page 37, 14.12).

Q: I am a new grad nurse. Can I obtain a certification?
A: Typically, organizations/associations that offer certifications require at least 2000 hours and/or two or more years of experience in a specific specialty before an applicant can apply. After roughly one year though you could qualify for PNCC Education Funds and Elective Education hours to start preparing, then take the test after you hit two years of experience or whatever the certifications requirements are.

Q: I work Medical-Surgical, is that considered a specialty that I can certify in?
A: Yes! The Academy of Medical Surgical Nurses and ANA’s ANCC both have certifications available for Medical-Surgical Nurses. The CMSRN (AMSN) is valid for 5 years, requires 2 years on the job and 2000 hours in Med-Surg. It only requires 90 hours of CEUS to maintain and renew over the next 5 years.

Q: I work on a unit (3E, 3W, 2W) that cares for Medical-Surgical patients and specialized patients like Ortho, Tele, and Rehab, must I obtain a certification in those specific areas or can I qualify with a Med-Surg certification?
A: Yes, med-surg would still qualify and in fact the past and current practice is for the hospital to pay the differential for a certification regardless of an identical match to the unit and specialty certification. Each of those areas also have a more specialized certification in those areas, while the med-surg would include broader aspects of each.

Q: Obtaining a certification in my specialty will cost me significantly more money than the PNCC Funds available ($450, up to $850). Are there other ways to help pay the costs?
A: Yes. Use PNCC funds to pay the membership fee of the specialty organization you wish to certify in if they offer reduced fees for members. Consider packaging the deal with a convention, prep session, and test over a weekend. Time when you actually get certified: prepare for the certification and use PNCC funds in one year
Q: What are PNCC Funds and Educational Leave?
A: This is a negotiated contract benefit for our nurses to offset and be reimbursed for costs associated with ELECTIVE nursing education for new nursing practice knowledge, update nursing knowledge and skills, and/or maintain certifications. Eligible nurses can receive $450 initially and up to $850 if money is left at the end of the year. Per ONA contract the hospital has a total fund of $35K to cover reimbursement. Generally, there is money left over and nurses get or close to $850. You also get up to 16 paid hours for educational leave per year. (ONA Contract Article 9, page 21-22)

Q: What can I use PNCC funds for?
A: The funds are for “assistance in paying for registration fee, required materials, travel, lodging, meals, and parking in conjunction with educational courses…” (page 22, article 9.5). Examples include: attending education courses at college or university, traveling for a convention or professional development workshop, books for self-study with CEUs, 3 day courses like Advance Wilderness First Responder, Certification review courses, Professional Association membership fees, and more.

Q: Are all nurses eligible for PNCC funds and Education Leave hours?
A: Nurses who worked more than 550 hours in the previous 12 months are eligible whether Regular, Part-Time, or Per Diem status for the PNCC Funds ($450/$850 reimbursement, page 22, 9.5)). For the 16 hours educational leave, eligibility is slightly different, for nurses who “worked at least 550 hours in the prior calendar year.” In other words, not last 12 months, but previous year (page 21, 9.3).

Q: Can I get paid by the hour for educational courses?
A: Yes, eligible nurses get 16 hours per year for educational leave to “acquire new knowledge related to the practice of nursing, update nursing knowledge, and/or maintain certifications.”

Q: Can I use the “educational leave hours” in conjunction with PTO?
Yes, you could take 16 hours educational leave and 20 hours PTO to take an entire week off to attend a convention or educational course. Educational leave should be requested consistent with the timelines for PTO.

Q: How do I request 16 hours Educational Leave?
A: You must submit the “Manager Approval for PNCC Education Time” form. You can request the timeoff in Kronos with PTO, but you still need to get the form signed by your manager. Managers don’t “approve” the education, but rather that you are using the educational leave. If you are using the time off in conjunction with PNCC reimbursement you can submit all the paperwork at the same time. Ideally, get the form signed in (take a review course, pay membership, buy materials), then apply and pay for the exam/certification the next year (twice the funds for the same outcome). If you pay ONA dues, you are also a member of ANA and may qualify for a discount via ANCC which offers several certifications apart from standalone specialty associations like AMSN. Also, ONA has scholarships available for up to $500 and for online CEUs (up to $125/year) that could cover some costs as well (https://oregonnursesfoundation.org/huggins-and-haggland-grant-for-continuing-education)
advance and make sure it is coded in Kronos correctly so the educational leave is used instead of PTO at the
time of the course/education. Additionally, you can request 4 hours per week if you are full-time to prep or take
courses in addition to your FTE (more if part time or oncall) and not take it with PTO or any time off. The leave
can’t create overtime.

Q: How do I find PNCC Expense Reimbursement and/or Educational Leave request forms?
A: Go to PMMC homepage on the Intranet. On the left side click “Nursing” and then from the Nursing page on
the left side click “PNCC Education Reimbursement.” Download the REIMBURSEMENT REQUEST
PACKETS, PDF version for all paperwork, the “Manager Approval for Education Time” form is the last page of
the packet.

Q: How do I get reimbursed for education Expenses?
A: Download the packet as described above. Read over each page and follow the step by step instructions
and check boxes as you complete them. Submit your paperwork to the “PNCC Mailbox” via interoffice mail or
drop off in the box in 3central near the entrance. It’s a good idea to scan or photocopy everything in case it is
lost. You can also email a scanned copy to Sandi Speers at PMMC. You can also check out a short video
how on YouTube under PMMC ONA VIDEOS.

Q: When must I submit the paperwork by to get reimbursed?
A: You should submit as soon as you have completed the education so you get reimbursed in a timely fashion.
The total PNCC fund is limited to $35,000, usually there is money left over, but the fund could be exhausted if
you wait too long. Per contract you have until January 31st to request reimbursement for expenses incurred in
the previous calendar year. If you are concerned how much money is in the fund you can email Sandi Speers
at PMMC or contact your labor rep.

Q: My Manager says I have to use PNCC funds and hours to obtain ACLS or attend a hospital training
that used to be required, but now they are saying is elective? Can they do that?
A: If ACLS, etc. it is not required to work on your unit you could use the hours to attend and/or funds if the
hospital won’t pay. However, if the hospital previously required a training and now has made it elective to save
money and prevent you from using the hours for something truly elective or is scheduling you to attend a
training, that would be a “past practice” change, could be considered required education, and you should
contact your labor rep to discuss. Required education is paid by the hospital and is in addition to educational
leave (Article 9.1-9.2, page20-21). Your educational leave should not be used for required education.

Q: Can I use PNCC funds in conjunction with the hospitals tuition reimbursement policy?
A: Yes, the hospital offers up to $2000 ($1k for part-timers) for tuition reimbursement at an accredited
institution. Use the hospital funds if eligible first and then PNCC for expenses not covered by the hospital
policy or expenses in excess.

Q: How do I get tuition reimbursement from the Hospital?
A: Go to PMMC HR Portal, search “Tuition Education Reimbursement Policy” or “KB0052757” for the PMMC
Specific policy details. For the actual reimbursement, it appears you must apply for the funds via “Bright
Horizons ED Assist Online App,” the link is found under “tuition reimbursement” or KB0065149 within the HR portal as well. Per the policy you must submit for reimbursement within 15 days of the end of the course to be considered.