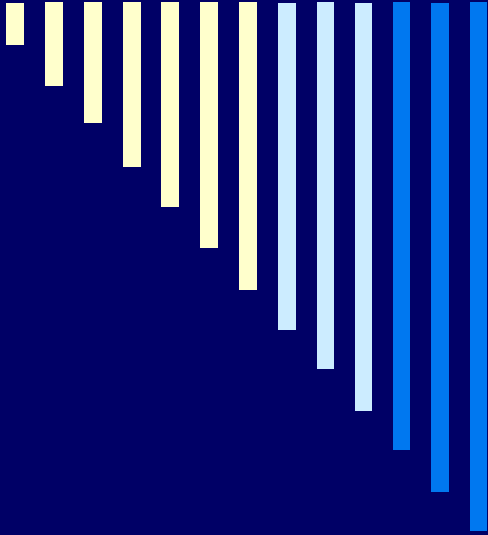




Australian College of Critical Care Nurses



# Possibilities and Pitfalls in Developing a Credentialing Program

Dr Carol Grech

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# Session Outline

- ❑ Background that lead to the ACCCN credentialing model for critical care nurses.
  - ❑ Overview of the development, implementation and uptake of the credentialing program.
  - ❑ Lessons learned in developing a credentialing program, review processes and future directions for credentialing of critical care nurses.
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# Background

- ❑ In 1996 ACCCN published Competency Standards for Specialist Critical Care Nurses
  - ❑ Standards were the outcome of a national research project which examined practice in over 50 critical care settings with input of over 100 critical care nurse specialists
  - ❑ Standards were revised in 2002.
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## Background cont:

- ❑ Practice of critical care nurses should be measured against the specialist competency standards
  - ❑ Identified a glossary of terms
  - ❑ Established a Credentialing and Standards Board
  - ❑ Review/benchmarking process
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# Key Terms

## Competence

- ❑ Refers to the attributes necessary for job performance to an appropriate standard
  - ❑ Competence focuses on 3 elements - attributes, performance and standards
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## Key Terms cont:

### Competency

- ❑ Describes the combination of attributes underlying some aspect of effective and/or superior performance
  - ❑ Specialist competencies describe higher level performance as compared to the standard expected of an entry level practitioner
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## Key Terms cont:

### Credentialing

□ Establishment of a self regulatory process instituted by the appropriate professional body to determine and acknowledge that an individual has demonstrated the described competence of the relevant specialist nursing role

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# Review/benchmarking

## American Association of Critical Care Nurses (AACN) Certification

- 1750 hrs of clinical practice within previous 2 years, 875hrs within last year
- A 150 question 3 hour exam in areas of preferred specialty – adult, paediatric or neonatal
- Recertification every 3 years
  - 400 hours within last year
  - 100 CERT points within 3 years



# Development

## Principles underpinning the model:

- ❑ Competency based (no examination) demonstrated by exemplars addressing each standard arising from a reflective journal and other forms of evidence submitted in a portfolio
  - ❑ Aimed at clinical (advanced practice) nurses
  - ❑ Cost neutral supported by a business plan
  - ❑ Indemnity coverage
  - ❑ Assessed by peer reviewers and a panel of experts
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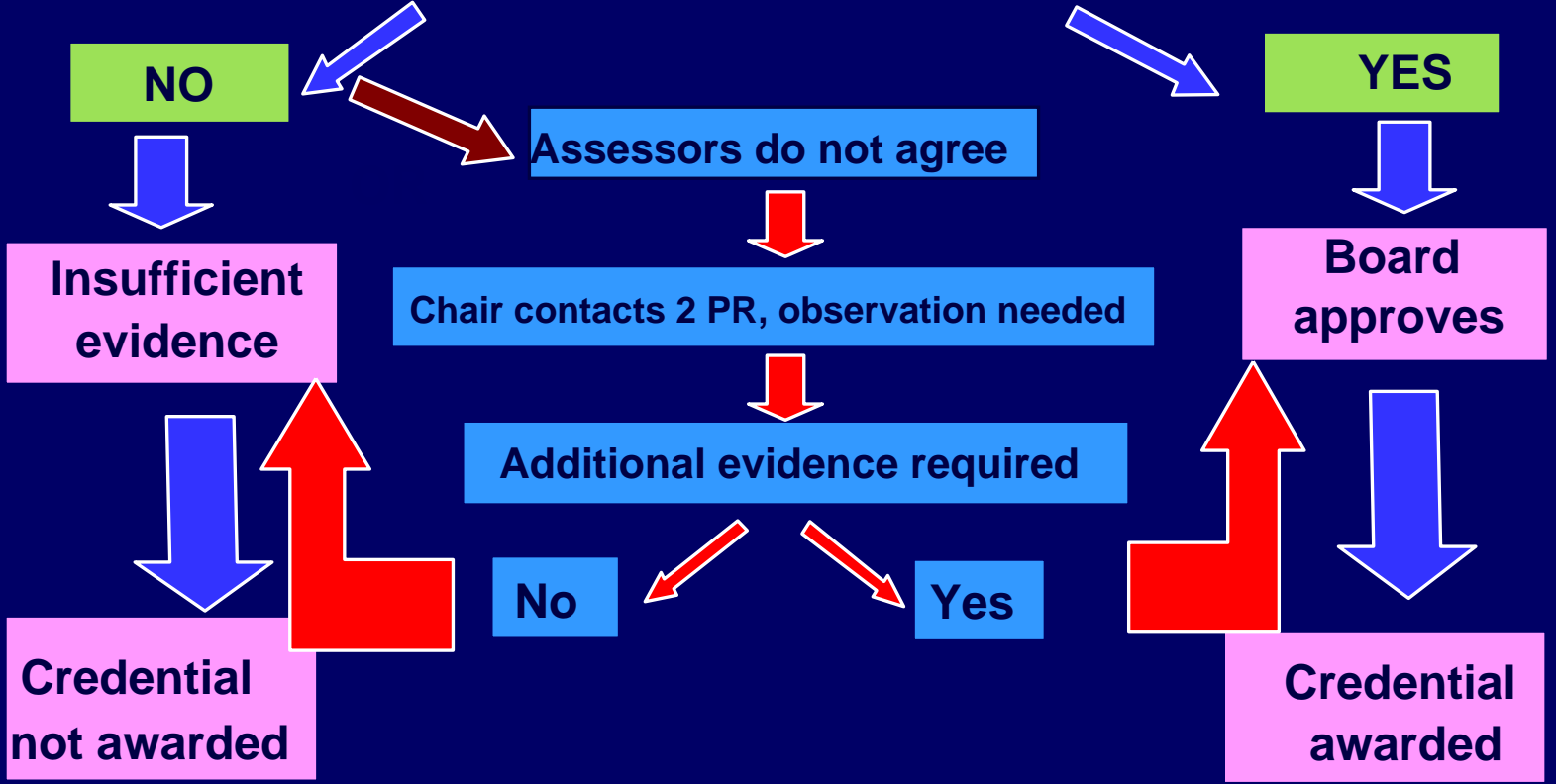
# Purpose

- ❑ Promote excellence, quality and safety in critical care nursing
  - ❑ Identify those nurses meeting the national standards
  - ❑ Provide a means for critical care nurses to confirm their competence
  - ❑ Professional & collegial recognition
  - ❑ National and international transferability of the Credential
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# Australian College of Critical Care Nurses Credentialing Model

Application to Assessment Panel (Chair + 2 Assessors)

Successful application? Agreement of 3 Assessors?





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# Implementation

- ❑ Application package written/printed
  - ❑ Assessors package written/printed
  - ❑ Piloted with six critical care nurses
  - ❑ Refined the model
  - ❑ Workshops undertaken re process
    - Journal and Professional Portfolio
    - Professional Referee/Employer Verification
    - Peer Reviewers
    - Curriculum Vitae
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## Implementation cont:

- ❑ Duration of the Credential 3 years
  - ❑ Re-Credential
    - If practice area unchanged & evidence of continuing professional development
    - If practice area changed submit a new portfolio
  - ❑ Uptake 20 nurses (*membership 1,900*)
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# Review Process

## National Members' Survey 2006

- 75% of respondents indicated they had not considered becoming Credentialed because:
    - little perceived benefit
    - too difficult/arduous
    - employment related issues
    - competing demands
    - too expensive
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# Lessons Learned

- ❑ Model needs to be modified (? inclusion of an examination &/or e-Portfolio)
  - ❑ Credential must have currency
    - continuing education points
    - credit in relevant postgraduate specialty programs or NP accreditation
    - employment recognition
  - ❑ Benefits and process needs to be better communicated to members
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# Future Directions

- ❑ Standards and Credentialing now under the ACCCN Education Advisory Committee
  - ❑ Exploring level of practice to aim credentialing at (entry or advanced)
  - ❑ Exploring credentialing being expanded to other critical care (non-clinician) nurses
  - ❑ ? Developing and piloting a new model or abandoning the process
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# Key Question

*Where is the evidence that credentialing promotes excellence, quality and safety in critical care nursing and improves patient outcomes?*

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