



FALL 2025

CBN C.A.R.E

Official Newsletter of the ASMBS CBN Certification Committee

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Dear CBNs,

At the Certified Bariatric Nurse (CBN) certification program, we are dedicated to advancing the specialty of metabolic and bariatric surgery nursing care. Metabolic and bariatric surgery nursing is recognized as distinct and nationally significant, continuously evolving with advancements across various sciences. Our mission is to support you in providing the highest quality care for metabolic and bariatric surgery patients and to offer the premier credential for nurses in this specialty. I'd like to take this opportunity to share some exciting updates regarding the Certified Bariatric Nurse (CBN) certification program.

Exam Updates

One major enhancement is how exam results are delivered. Starting with the most recent testing cycle, candidates receive their pass/fail result immediately after completing the exam. They also receive a detailed score report from our testing vendor, PSI, including total correct answers, minimum passing score, and performance breakdown by domain. This diagnostic feedback helps candidates identify strengths and areas for improvement, a significant improvement from the previous six-week wait.

Leadership Updates

The CBN Committee and Accreditation Council have implemented several leadership changes:

- Sharon Hillgartner, CBN Co-Chair
- Heidi Bednarchuk, Exam Development Subcommittee Leader
- Shirley Beardon, Accreditation Subcommittee Leader
- Veronica Cook, Professional Outreach Subcommittee Leader
- Ron Permenter, Recertification Subcommittee Leader

We also welcome new members to the CBN Committee, and a record number of Item Writers to the Exam Development Item Writer Task Force.

Accreditation Progress

Thanks to the hard work and dedication of our committee members, the CBN program continues to thrive. Subcommittees have been meeting regularly to update, revise, and develop the protocols, guidelines, and documentation needed to meet NCCA's rigorous accreditation standards.

We are excited about the future of the CBN program and are grateful for your continued dedication, expertise, and contributions.



Karen Flanders,
NP-C, CBN, FASMBS-IH



Sharon Hillgartner
RN, CBN, FASMBS-IH

IMPORTANT DATES



2026 Test Window 1

October 13, 2025-January 5, 2026

Registration Window

January 12 – March 9, 2026

CBN Exam Window

November 14-15, 2025

ASMBS Weekend

Louisville, KY

May 3 – 7, 2026

ASMBS Annual Meeting 2026
Henry B. Gonzalez Convention
Center San Antonio, TX

Connect with Us:

Join the [ASMBS IH CBN – Certified Bariatric Nurses Private Facebook Group](#). Suggest newsletter topics or ask questions via email to CBN@asmbs.org or on our Facebook page.

Visit the virtual [ASMBS Marketplace](#) for new CBN Swag

DISTINGUISHED CBN AWARD



Ruth Davis RN, BSN, MBA, CBN

Our 2025 Distinguished Certified Bariatric Nurse is Ruth Davis!

The distinguished CBN award is one that is nominated and voted on by peers and CBNs, making it even more meaningful. In the last CBN newsletter, the spotlight provided an extensive view of her nursing career and personal life. Ruth's involvement in CBN exam development has spanned over 21 years, and still going! So we are shaking things up for this distinguished CBN. To truly feel the impact Ruth has made, please read these statements from fellow CBNs who had the pleasure of working closely with her over the years:

"I feel so blessed to have had the opportunity to work with and learn from Ruth on the CBN Exam Development Committee, which she led with quiet dedication for many years. The amount of work involved in writing and reviewing exam items and constructing valid, reliable exams is tremendous- and she did it with grace, precision, and an unwavering commitment to excellence. The breadth and depth of her knowledge is astounding, and I am personally so grateful for her patient mentorship and guidance."

Heidi Bednarchuk, MSN, APRN, CNS, CBN,
CBN Exam Development Subcommittee Leader

"It's been an absolute honor and privilege to work alongside Ruth over the years. Her passion, dedication, and constant willingness to go above and beyond truly embody what it means to be a professional. Ruth has inspired me and mentored me in ways that have made a lasting impact. Her depth of knowledge and expertise never ceased to impress me. She is also one of the kindest, sweetest people I have ever met. While I wish her nothing but the best in her next chapter, her departure leaves a deep void in the CBN. She will definitely be missed."

Carmela Pontillo, RN, MSN, CBN,
CBN Exam Development Subcommittee Member

"Ruth is a metabolic bariatric nurse extraordinaire! Her nursing career has spanned many metabolic bariatric nurse roles including – bariatric nurse clinician and health system weight management director. She was one of the rocks in the foundation of CBN examination development, a member of the subcommittee for greater 15 years and leader for more than 10 years. As CBN Chair, I was able to count on her to plan, organize, and execute all that was needed for her team to develop a psychometrically sound and representative certification examination, year after year. Ruth is truly an exceptional bariatric nurse leader and a cherished friend!"

William Gourash, PhD, CRNP, RN, CBN,
CBN Committee Immediate Past Chair

"Ruth has always been an advocate for excellence in bariatric care; it's her passion, and she shares it willingly with her colleagues and anyone in the field. Over her career, she has developed clinical skills in her many nursing protégées and mentored many to take on leadership roles. During our twenty years of working together, I found she approached every challenge with compassion, deep thought, and focus on the well being of both our patients and our nurses."

Jessie Moore, FNP-BC, MSN
CBN Committee Past CoChair

*Written and coordinated by Veronica Cook, RN MSN CBN

APPLY TO JOIN THE CERTIFIED BARIATRIC NURSE COMMITTEE

Are you passionate about advancing the field of metabolic and bariatric nursing? The Certified Bariatric Nurse (CBN) Committee is looking for dedicated professionals to join our team! As a member, you'll have the opportunity to shape certification standards, contribute to the exam development process, and ensure excellence in metabolic and bariatric care.

Whether you're experienced in item writing or simply eager to get involved, your expertise and enthusiasm can make a difference. Help us continue our mission of promoting high-quality metabolic and bariatric nursing.

Apply today and be a part of something impactful!



WHEN SHOULD YOU RECERTIFY YOUR CBN?

Don't Let Your CBN Credential Expire—Recertify with Confidence!

Recertification keeps your Certified Bariatric Nurse (CBN) status active and confirms your ongoing expertise in bariatric nursing. Whether you choose to recertify through continuing education or by retaking the exam, maintaining your credential ensures you remain a recognized leader in the field. You can begin entering your professional development activities anytime within your recertification window through the streamlined LearningBuilder platform. Stay current, stay credentialed—**recertify before your expiration date to avoid any lapse in your CBN status!**

RECERTIFICATION	IF YOU TESTED IN THE FALL	IF YOU TESTED IN THE SPRING
Early Recertification Registration (Begins 1 year prior to Certification Expiration)	September 1 through April 30	March 1 through October 31
Regular Recertification Registration (if you submit fulfillment materials within 3 months of your due date, there is a possibility that there will be an interruption in your certification status.)	May 1 through August 31	November 1 through February 28

WHAT IS THE CBN "GRACE YEAR"?

If your CBN credential expires, you have a **one-year grace** period to submit your recertification application without retaking the exam. All **recertification credits must be earned during your active 4-year certification period**, but the **recertification application can be submitted during the grace year**. If you do not complete the process within the grace year, you'll need to **retake and pass the CBN exam** to regain certification. **Stay on track**—log your CEUs early and don't wait until the final year!

See the **2025-2026 CBN Handbook** for additional information on Recertification (page 19) and Retired Status (page 27).

THINKING ABOUT RETIREMENT?

If you hold an active **CBN credential in good standing and are fully retired from all nursing practice**, including teaching, you may apply for CBN Retired Status (Ret). This **honorary designation** may be used on your résumé, CV, or business card, but not in clinical documentation or any setting implying active practice. If you return to work, Retired Status is forfeited, and you must notify the CBN Accreditation Council. Applications are accepted **up to one year after certification expiration**, and must be submitted via your CBN LearningBuilder account at least 30 days before the deadline.

FEATURED ARTICLES

METABOLIC AND BARIATRIC NURSING PRACTICE ANALYSIS: AN UPDATE

In 2006, the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery (ASMBS) conducted a nationwide role delineation study to define the responsibilities and tasks essential to competent performance as a Bariatric Nurse. This foundational work established the basis for the Certified Bariatric Nurse (CBN) credential.

The study was updated in 2016 and most recently in 2022 to ensure continued alignment with current clinical practices and professional standards. The 2022 practice analysis serves as the current source for determining the content outline, scope, and complexity of the CBN examination.

The Practice Analysis Writing Group believes that transparency and access to this information is an invaluable resource for the nursing community. The report linked below has been peer-reviewed by ASMBS leadership and is now available for public access.

We invite you to review this document to deepen your understanding of the bariatric nursing specialty.

Practice Analysis Writing Group

Melissa G. Rowan, BSN, RN, CBN
Carmela Pontillo, MSN, RN, CBN
Thomas Trautman, MS, ICE-CCP
Veronica Cook Gardner, MSN, RN, CBN
Sue Dugan, BSN, RN, CBN (Ret.)
Teresa Fraker, FACHE, RN, CPHQ, CBN, FASMBS-IH
Linda Neumann-Potash, MN, RN, CBN
William Gourash, PhD, CRNP, RN, CBN, FASMBS-IH

Download:

[Metabolic and Bariatric Nursing
Practice Analysis: An Update](#)

METABOLIC AND BARIATRIC SURGERY NURSING IN AUSTRALIA. BY MS. JARRYD WALKLEY, MN

Like global trends, the prevalence of obesity is escalating in Australia, noting that nearly two-thirds of adults are classified as having overweight or obesity with approximately 10% having severe obesity. Despite a deceleration in the overall growth of overweight and obesity rates, the incidence of severe obesity continues to rise.

Obesity, which negatively impacts health, is now widely recognised as a disease deserving of care, consideration, and treatment, rather than judgment and exclusion. Those working in the specialty know that individuals with obesity are entitled to the same access to safe and appropriate care environments and options as those without obesity, free from stigmatising attitudes, language, and policies. Nurses represent more than half the healthcare workforce in Australia, yet MBS nurses represent a small part of this.

The nuanced skill and knowledge of MBS nurses means that many end up carrying the weight for the majority, in a system that is not designed for our patient population and play a significant role in navigating care through the inherent weight stigma that exists in healthcare settings.

Accessing MBS continues to carry stigma globally and this trend is reflected in Australia. It is purported that less than 1% of those eligible for MBS access this option in Australia. The lower rates of surgery, compounded by the impacts of the increased availability of adjuvant therapies on procedure numbers, mean that the scope of our roles is evolving.



In 2024 we saw a substantial drop in the number of MBS procedures. Proposed to be an outcome of increased cost of living or the uptake of effective pharmaceuticals, many MBS practices are expanding their scope to provide obesity care beyond surgery and nurses are adapting their roles towards an enhanced scope of practice. Most (95%) MBS is performed in private practice (covered by insurance) with only 5% occurring in a government-funded setting (public). Reflecting this, most nurses in MBS work in private practices or as sole-traders (Nurse Practitioners), while few work as specialists in Government-funded settings.

One of the more challenging things I have done is to try defining my role as there is a huge degree of variability. I identify as a sub-specialist clinician, care consultant, researcher, an educator (of patients and colleagues), clinical coordinator, a business manager, a support system in an often poorly designed healthcare system, a leader of quality improvement and innovation and unfortunately a fixer of any and all IT issues (something I have no business in being!). I provide nutrition and dietetic advice, order and interpret investigations under supervision, provide psychological support, and clinical advice with a team of medical and integrated health professionals. Above all, I view myself as an advocate for an underserved population in a system that was not designed for them, with limited resources...and so proud to be.

In 2019, a quantitative descriptive study reported consistency in the roles of MBS nurses in Australia and USA when comparing task description (Bogiatzis et al., 2019). While the USA has a history of assessing practice of MBS nurses, and the provision of a credentialling program, Australia has yet to follow suit. Bogiatzis et al (2019) reinforce that defining the practice of any nursing specialty is an essential step in developing population-specific clinical practice guidelines and competencies to improve nursing practice. In 2025, we still see variability in the definition and scope of these roles. Some nurses work primarily in private practice that encompasses pre and post operative care, some solely in operating theatre spaces or as surgical assistants, some responsible for all post-operative assessment and lifelong follow-up in the community. Nurse Practitioners (NPs) often do all the above and can prescribe medication and order diagnostics. In public hospital settings we need to practice across a number of these spaces, and not always in a clinical capacity. Importantly, we represent a large portion of the membership in our Society (Australia and New Zealand Metabolic and Obesity Surgery Society) and continue to elevate the work of our colleagues as highly skilled clinicians.

Despite variation, almost all of the roles within MBS nursing encompass elements of patient education, quality improvement or clinical research, support of systems, direct clinical care, and professional leadership affirming the flexibility of nurses in the space beyond their defined scope. We regularly hear that we must meet the patients where they are and so it is true for the spaces that we work.

Nurses in Australia remain steadfast in their passion for providing equitable access to MBS and continue to fill the gaps in service delivery to meet the needs of their patients. The arguably indefinable nature of nursing is its strength. The art of applying science to patient care allows for nuanced, compassionate, and quality care that is valued.

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References:

- Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2024) Overweight and obesity, AIHW, Australian Government, accessed 23 July 2025.
- Bogiatzis, M., Wicking, K., Birks, M. (2020). Australian bariatric nurses: What do they do and what do they need?. Collegian. Volume 27, Issue 4, 2020. Pages 422-429, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.colegn.2019.11.011>.
- The Bariatric Surgery Registry Annual Report - 2023. School of Translational Medicine, Monash University, August 2024, Report No. 11. Version 1.0.

Disclosures: Nil relevant



Kellie Armstrong MSN, RN, FASMBS-IH, CBN

Kellie Armstrong MSN, RN, FASMBS-IH, CBN became a staff nurse at Rhode Island Hospital on a medical-surgical unit in 1998. She soon felt a calling to critical care in 2000—a move that would shape her future career path in a unique way.

It was during her time in critical care that Kellie cared for her first patient who had undergone gastric bypass surgery. At that time, they had never taken care of a patient undergoing metabolic and bariatric surgery before. That experience led to an administrator asking if she would like to run the education portion of the new bariatric program because, as she put it, she “likes to talk.” She still held a full-time position on the critical care floor and ran the bariatric program on a volunteer basis.

In 2004, she had her own medical emergency in the Dominican Republic while on a medical mission trip there. After climbing a mountain to get water for lunch, she had a hypertensive crisis and SVT which led to her exploring her options for her own weight loss surgery. In 2005, she had a gastric bypass with the program she helped create.

She became the first registered nurse in Rhode Island to become a CBN in 2007 at which time she also joined ASMBS. She has presented at local and national venues. In 2010, she organized and directed the Inaugural Bariatric Symposium at RIH and was the program director for the 2012-14 RI Obesity Symposiums. Kellie led the Walk from Obesity events in the state. She co-authored an article about preparing for a MBSAQIP virtual survey and published, “The Wise Provider: Wielding the Tools to Combat Obesity”. Kellie has served on ASMBS Board of Directors, Corporate Council, Access to Care and Integrated Health Leadership committees, including the IHLEC (Executive Council): 22-23 MAL, 23-24 IHS Secretary, 24-25 President Elect and is current the IHLC Director. In 2021, she was awarded the Hurvitz Quality Award (TMH) for her work revamping the bariatric surgery program during the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2022, she was awarded the Distinguished Certified Bariatric Nurse Award. In 2024, Kellie was the part of the first cohort of FASMBS-IH and IH Leadership Academy.

She loves to spend time with her family and describes herself as a “Disney fanatic.” She has traveled to almost all fifty states and multiple countries. Kellie has participated in over 250 races and endurance events including Ironmans, marathons and triathlons. Her new motto is “because I can.” She states above all else she is beyond grateful for a job that she truly loves. She says, “even on the worst days, I help people get better and it’s incredible.”

Written by Meghan Bell, RN, CBN

If you have a CBN that exemplifies the values of the CBN and should be recognized in the C.A.R.E. newsletter CBN spotlight, **please email cbn@asmbs.org** for him or her to be featured in a upcoming newsletter.



INTERESTED IN BECOMING A CBN?

CBN Exam Preparation

"How do I prepare to take the CBN exam?" is a question that is frequently asked. Every individual is different, but we have some guidelines to help you develop a study plan on our webpage: <https://asmbs.org/integrated-health/cbn-exam-preparation/>

- Reviewing the Content Outline section of the CBN Handbook and doing a self assessment.
- Find learning experiences to meet your needs.
- Study with a partner!
- Find us on Facebook to connect with CBNs!

CBN Online Review Course

Developed by ASMBS in order to assist those who would like to take the CBN® examination and attain the CBN® certification. This course will provide the learner with a readily available, flexible, easy to use, reasonably priced and quality resource to study for the examination. *This course does not guarantee the learner will pass the CBN Examination.*

<https://asmbs.org/professional-education/cbn/cbn-online-review-course/>

**While the ASMBS CBN Review Courses are helpful, they do not guarantee exam success. The CBN Accreditation Council recommends reviewing a variety of materials.*

IMPORTANT TESTING INFORMATION

2026 Test Window 1

- Early Online Registration Opens: October 13, 2025
- Early Registration Deadline: December 8, 2025
- Regular Registration Deadline: January 5, 2026
- Exam Administration: January 12 – March 9, 2026

2026 Test Window 2

- Early Online Registration Opens: April 13, 2026
- Early Registration Deadline: June 8, 2026
- Regular Registration Deadline: July 6, 2026
- Exam Administration: July 13 – September 7, 2026

Visit our website for additional information:

<https://asmbs.org/professional-education/cbn>

Get Your Results INSTANTLY!

The waiting is over! We are thrilled to announce that the CBN Certification Exam now provides an immediate pass/fail result as soon as you complete your test. With our new automated scoring system, you'll receive your detailed score report on the spot.

This isn't just a pass or fail—it's a comprehensive look at your performance, including your total raw score and a breakdown of your strengths and areas for growth across each domain. Celebrate your achievement or get the diagnostic feedback you need to prepare for future success, all in a single, powerful moment!

Please note: The provided domain-level information is for diagnostic purposes only and should not be used to determine a pass or fail outcome. The final pass or fail result is based solely on your overall total score.

WELCOME CLASS OF AUGUST 2025 OUR NEWEST CERTIFIED BARIATRIC NURSES!



C. Adams
D. Ault
A. Branch
T. Bubniak
S. Christiansen
M. Fortner
C. Fridley
K. Friedmeyer
M. Glass

J. Hahn
C. Hair
J. Hall
S. Healy
A. Honer
M. Marshall
L. Martinez Cardona
A. Miller
A. Miranda

M. Monroe
E. Nonato
B. Pearson
K. Persons
N. Quick
H. Raake
R. Renoir
R. Richardson
A. Roberts

Z. Roman
S. Similien
T. Stob
H. Tusing
N. Williams
J. Zahorak

ARTICLES OF INTEREST

Educating patients is a core task of nurses and many integrated health professionals. While the Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery Accreditation and Quality Improvement Program (MBSAQIP) has created patient education pathways, there is room to explore and further refine the elements involved in this crucial task. A national survey sought to examine how preoperative metabolic and bariatric surgery patient education (MBS-PE) was provided by nurses and other integrated health professionals working in obesity management. The results of this descriptive study identified educational content that nurses and other IH professionals felt was valuable to include in preoperative MBS-PE learning experiences. Participants also shared how preoperative MBS-PE was delivered using various methods and environmental settings. Lastly, survey results revealed how preoperative MBS-PE is currently evaluated from two perspectives—measuring patients' knowledge and clinical outcomes. The study concludes with a useful table that nurses and other integrated health practitioners can use to reflect on and offer practical recommendations to refine those preoperative MBS-PE experiences using the educational constructs of content, delivery methods, knowledge measurement and clinical outcomes.

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/40451695/>

Submitted by: Karen Groller, PhD, RN-BC, CMSRN
Grollerk@moravian.edu
8.19.2025

Groller KD, Curley B, Gourash W. The practice of preoperative patient education in metabolic bariatric surgery: results of a national survey. *Surg Obes Relat Dis.* 2025 Aug;21(8):971-981. doi: 10.1016/j.soard.2025.05.006. Epub 2025 May 20. PMID: 40451695.



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The CBN Newsletter was developed by the CBN Committee and produced by the ASMBS Director of Certification and Credentialing and ASMBS Marketing Department