



SPRING 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.

As we continue to elevate and enhance the CBN program, we are actively pursuing the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) Accreditation. Our CBN subcommittees have been meeting regularly, working both individually and collectively, to update, revise, and develop the necessary protocols, guidelines, and documentation required to meet NCCA's rigorous standards.

Additionally, we have restructured the CBN Committee to better align with both NCCA's standards and the strategic mission of ASMBS. These changes are specifically targeted to strengthen our membership and ensure greater transparency moving forward. With all of the ongoing changes within the CBN program and the accreditation application process, I would like to take a moment to express my deepest thanks to all the dedicated CBN members who have been working tirelessly to maintain the integrity of the certification and push forward to complete the NCCA application. We are getting closer to the finish line, and your unwavering dedication, commitment, and expertise are truly invaluable. This progress would not be possible without you.

On behalf of the entire CBN Committee, I would also like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to Ruth Davis, who has served as the Exam Development Committee Leader and will be stepping down this spring. Ruth's long-term commitment, leadership, and profound knowledge have been instrumental to the success and growth of the CBN program. We are incredibly grateful for her contributions. Although Ruth's shoes will be difficult to fill, we are confident that her successor, Heidi Bednarchuk, will continue to guide us toward success.

Finally, I would like to recognize Morgan Matlock, the Director of Certification and Credentialing for ASMBS. Morgan has played a pivotal role in the restructuring of the CBN Committee and in guiding the accreditation application process. Her tireless efforts and dedication over the past year have made a tremendous impact. Morgan's contribution as an ASMBS liaison and team player has been indispensable.

We are excited for the future and the continued success of the CBN program. Thank you all for your dedication and hard work.



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

## IMPORTANT DATES



ASMBS Annual Meeting 2025  
**June 15 – 19, 2025**  
Gaylord National Resort  
[Register Today](#)

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2025 Test Window 2

**June 27, 2025**  
Regular Registration Deadline  
**July 7-August, 2025**  
CBN Exam Window

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2026 Test Window 1

**October 13, 2025**  
Early Online Registration Opens  
**January 5, 2026**  
Regular Registration Deadline  
**January 12 – March 9, 2026**  
CBN Exam Window

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**November 14-15, 2025**  
ASMBS Weekend  
Louisville, KY

### 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](mailto:CBN@asmbs.org) or on our Facebook page.

# FAQS: CBN, ACCREDITATION AND MAGNET RECOGNITION

## What is the CBN certification?

The Certified Bariatric Nurse (CBN) certification is a professional credential for nurses specializing in the care of patients undergoing metabolic and bariatric surgery. The examination is designed to assess the professional competence of practitioners in the specialty of metabolic and bariatric nursing. It signifies a nurse's dedication, expertise, and commitment to providing high-quality care in the field of metabolic and bariatric nursing.

## CBN Accreditation Status

ASMBS, the CBN Accreditation Council, and the CBN Committee are actively pursuing accreditation through the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA), a Magnet Recognition Program approved accreditation authority. The process is comprehensive and ongoing, with a dedicated team working towards meeting all necessary criteria for accreditation. While ASMBS is making significant progress and prioritizing this effort, a specific timeline for completion is not yet available. However, ASMBS is committed to keeping candidates informed and will share updates as soon as they become available. Please visit the [CBN Program webpage](#) or contact [cbn@asmbs.org](mailto:cbn@asmbs.org) for additional information.

## Why is accreditation of the CBN certification important?

Accreditation ensures that the CBN certification meets the highest standards of professional excellence and credibility. It is a mark of quality that reflects adherence to stringent criteria regarding the certification's development, administration, and governance.

## How does Magnet designation relate to CBN certification?

Magnet-designated health systems and some other non-Magnet-designated hospital systems recognize and often financially support nurses in obtaining certifications that are accredited by the organizations recognized by the Magnet Recognition Program. Accreditation of the CBN certification would enable more nurses to obtain this credential with financial support from their employers, enhancing the quality of care provided to metabolic bariatric surgery patients.

## What should I do if I'm interested in obtaining the CBN certification, but my hospital requires it to be accredited?

ASMBS is actively working towards achieving NCCA accreditation, and sharing this information may help in discussions about potential support for obtaining the CBN certification in the future.

**ADVOCACY  
RESEARCH**



**EDUCATION  
COMPASSION**

Find us on 

**CBN  
Facebook**

@CBNCertification

## 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	CBNS WHO TESTED IN THE JULY WINDOW	CBNS WHO TESTED IN THE FEBRUARY WINDOW
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!

## 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.

See the **2024-2025 CBN Handbook** for additional information on Recertification (page 19) and Retired Status (page 27) .

## STIGMA, WEIGHT BIAS AND ACCESS TO CARE BY SHIRLEY BEARDEN, RN, CBN

During my research for this article and exploring new approaches, I found an overwhelming number of studies and articles addressing stigma, weight bias, and access to care. So, it makes me wonder why do such significant obstacles still exist in our patient community?

In my personal experience, I was always taught that being "fat" was bad. As I grew older, I learned that a person who was overweight, or obese, could simply lose weight by exercising and eating healthy. But if it were that simple, why wasn't everyone at a healthy weight?

I decided to approach this article from a personal perspective—as both a patient with the disease of obesity and a healthcare professional. I wasn't always obese, just overweight. Like many, I tried countless diets and pills, only to regain the weight, plus more. By age 49, I was severely obese with multiple obesity related conditions: severe asthma that left me breathless with any exertion, hypertension, sleep apnea, and insulin-dependent diabetes.

As an RN working in the ICU, I understood the importance of seeing my physicians, but I dreaded the appointments. I refused to weigh in, knowing the scale was placed in the hallway where anyone passing by could see the number or overhear the nurse announcing it. I once had a nurse insist that I step on the scale. When I refused, she argued that a doctor might order a weight-based medication. I responded, "In all my years of medical visits, no one has ever prescribed a weight-based medication for me. If that changes today, bring the scale into my room, and I will weigh. Until then, I'm done."

Fortunately, I had a forward-thinking primary care physician (PCP) who discussed my health and weight concerns with me and recommended metabolic and bariatric surgery (MBS) before I turned 50. At the time, I still believed I could lose the weight through diet alone. It took me several more years to realize that severe obesity is a disease. At age 54, after another ICU admission for respiratory issues, I recognized that I might not live to see my 60th birthday. It was time to explore MBS.

After attending seminars and determining that the Roux-en-Y gastric bypass was the best option for me, I was shocked to learn that my hospital insurance did not cover MBS. My husband and I made the decision to use savings to self-pay for the procedure. I was lucky—we had savings. Many people do not have that privilege.

As my health improved post-surgery, I became a strong advocate for MBS and its benefits. By 2012, it was added as a benefit to our insurance plan. I was later approached about developing an MBS program, which allowed me to immerse myself in standards, policies, and pathways to reduce stigma, address weight bias, and improve access to care. While significant progress has been made, much work remains.

Addressing weight stigma in healthcare is critical. We continue to witness and experience it firsthand. This is about advocating for the same access to care that other disease processes receive.

### STIGMA, WEIGHT BIAS AND ACCESS TO CARE **CONTINUED...**

As an example, in 2022, when the ASMBS and IFSO released new guidelines for MBS, I had the opportunity to present them to our Bariatric Specialty Council. Our surgeons then took the guidelines to our insurance board, where they were largely adopted into our employees' benefit package. However, when we changed insurance providers this year, the MBS benefits were altered to reflect outdated standards from the 1990s, with even more restrictions. My fellow coordinators and I immediately wrote emails outlining our concerns about how these limitations would negatively impact access to and quality of care. Our insurance board reviewed our concerns and reinstated the MBS benefits to align with the 2022 ASMBS/IFSO standards.

We are the advocates for change. Thus, we must recognize the need for education and training. Who better to provide it than those who work to improve lives daily? We need to engage with local government and legislators to improve access to care. But most importantly, we must continuously reflect within ourselves and our own practices to ensure we are providing the compassionate care our patients deserve.

### QUALITY IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVE : A CBN EXAM PREP COURSE **KELLIE ARMSTRONG, MSN, RN, FASMBS-IH, CBN**

The Center for Medical and Surgical Weight Loss (formally Center for Bariatric Surgery) at The Miriam Hospital in Providence, RI, was recognized for an outstanding quality improvement (QI) project by the hospital's Quality Improvement Council, which made a significant impact on patient outcomes, saved lives, and reduced healthcare costs. As part of the annual Hurvitz Award, funds were allocated to support Registered Nurses (RNs) working with the hospital's metabolic and bariatric surgery patients in preparing for and taking the Certified Bariatric Nurse (CBN) exam.

The MBS Service Line manager/Coordinator arranged a discounted rate for purchasing bundled CBN online review courses. Pre-paid registration codes were purchased for the RNs and notifications were distributed via email. Unit-based huddles were organized to encourage participation in CBN exam study groups. As a Magnet-designated hospital, The Miriam Hospital also provides reimbursement for RN certification and recertification exams, further supporting their professional development.

A one-year plan was implemented, allowing the RNs to complete an online review course at their own pace. Monthly review/study meetings were held via TEAMS to discuss course materials and track progress, facilitated by the MBS Service Line Manager/Coordinator, a Certified Bariatric Nurse since the inaugural CBN exam in 2007. Participating RNs came from various departments, including Pre-Admission Testing, Perioperative Services, Inpatient Units, Quality, and Case Management. The collaboration across departments proved invaluable, as the CBN exam covers a wide range of topics relevant to multiple nursing specialties.

This QI initiative exemplifies how organizations can collaborate on similar projects, potentially advocating for CBN exam preparation at the state or regional level or sharing the cost of review courses across facilities to reduce individual financial burdens.



## Ruth Davis

### RN, BSN, MBA, CBN

Our CBN Spotlight for this edition of C.A.R.E. is Ruth Davis. Ruth has been involved with the CBN Committee in exam development for over 20 years. She began her nursing career as an RN in 1988, with a unique nursing experience including taking care of patients with HIV/AIDS at the rise of this new virus and disease. Ruth sympathized with this population, as these patients were discriminated against and marginalized.

She also worked in an Infectious Disease clinic conducting research studies for HIV treatments. She found many similarities with patients seeking metabolic and bariatric surgery in terms of marginalization. Her work serving patients experiencing discrimination motivated her to make a difference in their lives and dive deeper into CBN involvement.

Ruth sought out opportunities to get involved in a committee at the ASMBS Annual Meeting 2004. She found the CBN meeting room and Bill Gourash and asked how she could get involved. Bill directed her to take a seat and welcomed her into the CBN Committee. She initially was a general member of the CBN Committee, then became a member of the Exam Development Subcommittee, and ultimately the leader of exam development, her current position. Ruth feels privileged to be consistently engaged in CBN exam development, supporting the intricate details of the growth and evolution of the certification. She has had the opportunity to present at ASMBS Annual Meeting over the years.

Ruth continues working in the bariatric field at Ascension Illinois, where she has been since 2003. She began her career there as a Bariatric Coordinator and advanced over time to the position of vice president of the digestive health service line. Ruth currently resides in western North Carolina and works remotely supporting three Chicagoland hospitals as an MBSCR.

Ruth loves spending her free time with family, and her three grandchildren who are the joy of her life. Her and her husband are travel enthusiasts, which has led them recently to the British Isles, Norway, Iceland, the Canadian Rockies, and an upcoming cruise of the Panama Canal.

What a pleasure it was to interview Ruth and learn about her fascinating experiences in nursing and life. As a fellow CBN, I was appreciative to spend a moment in time with her and graciously thank her for all of her contributions to our continuously growing metabolic and bariatric surgery field and certification.

Written by Veronica Cook, RN, MSN, 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](mailto:cbn@asmbs.org)** for him or her to be featured in an 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 DATES

### 2025 Test Window 2

- Early Online Registration Opens: March 17, 2025
- Early Registration Deadline: May 19, 2025
- Regular Registration Deadline: June 27, 2025
- Exam Administration: July 7 - August 25, 2025

### 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

Visit our website for additional information:  
<https://asmbs.org/professional-education/cbn>

## WELCOME CLASS OF MARCH 2025 OUR NEWEST CERTIFIED BARIATRIC NURSES!



K. Agnew  
D. Anderson  
L. Brewster  
A. Bryson  
J. Danieli  
A. DeVita  
A. Faulkner  
S. Firari  
M. Gill

L. Hale  
S. Harding  
A. Hershkowitz  
J. Laco  
V. Lagao-Ybarra  
K. Lancaster Mitten  
E. Mathis  
H. Michel  
S. Miller

K. Monje  
V. Monson  
M. Moriarty  
F. Regan  
J. Strother  
K. Thompson  
A. Valesko  
A. Wells

# ARTICLES OF INTEREST

An important recently published article that all working in area of obesity should have some familiarity is **"Definition and diagnostic criteria of clinical obesity"** published in the **January 2025 Lancet Diabetes and Endocrinology**. An international commission of 58 experts representing multiple medical specialties "sought to define clinical obesity as a condition of illness that, akin to the notion of chronic disease in other medical specialties, directly results from the effect of excess adiposity on the function of organs and tissues." Their aim was "to establish objective criteria for disease diagnosis, aiding clinical decision making and prioritization of therapeutic interventions and public health strategies." They defined obesity as a condition characterized by excess adiposity, with or without abnormal distribution or function of adipose tissue, and with causes that are multifactorial and still incompletely understood." They delineated clinical obesity as "as a chronic, systemic illness characterized by alterations in the function of tissues, organs, the entire individual, or a combination thereof, due to excess adiposity."

Rubino F, Cummings DE, Eckel RH, Cohen RV, Wilding JPH, Brown WA, Stanford FC, Batterham RL, Farooqi IS, Farpour-Lambert NJ, le Roux CW, Sattar N, Baur LA, Morrison KM, Misra A, Kadowaki T, Tham KW, Sumithran P, Garvey WT, Kirwan JP, Fernández-Real JM, Corkey BE, Toplak H, Kokkinos A, Kushner RF, Branca F, Valabhji J, Blüher M, Bornstein SR, Grill HJ, Ravussin E, Gregg E, Al Busaidi NB, Alfari NF, Al Ozairi E, Carlsson LMS, Clément K, Després JP, Dixon JB, Galea G, Kaplan LM, Laferrière B, Laville M, Lim S, Luna Fuentes JR, Mooney VM, Nadglowski J Jr, Urudinachi A, Olszanecka-Glinianowicz M, Pan A, Pattou F, Schauer PR, Tschöp MH, van der Merwe MT, Vettor R, Mingrone G. Definition and diagnostic criteria of clinical obesity. *Lancet Diabetes Endocrinol.* 2025 Mar;13(3):221-262. doi: 10.1016/S2213-8587(24)00316-4. Epub 2025 Jan 14. Erratum in: *Lancet Diabetes Endocrinol.* 2025 Mar;13(3):e6. doi: 10.1016/S2213-8587(25)00006-3. PMID: 39824205; PMCID: PMC11870235

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/39824205/>

## CERTIFIED BARIATRIC NURSE COMMITTEE & SUBCOMMITTEES

### CHAIR

Karen Flanders

### CO-CHAIR

Open

### IH SECTION EC LIAISONS

Kellie Armstrong  
Karen Groller

### CBN Accreditation Council

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Shirley Bearden  
Heidi Bednarchuk  
Ruth Davis  
Bill Gourash  
Karen Groller  
Sharon Hillgartner  
Marcela Montemayor  
Melissa Rowan  
Mary Sparks

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Heidi Bednarchuk (coleader)  
Mara Berman  
Cheryl Holsworth  
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Kimberly Cole  
Barbara Cooper  
Karen Flanders  
Bill Gourash  
Karen Groller

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Melissa Rowan (leader)  
Bill Gourash

### INTERNATIONAL SUBCOMMITTEE (new)

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