

## Position Statement on Education and Certification

AALNC has defined legal nurse consulting as the specialty practice of the profession of nursing in which Registered Nurses apply their nursing education and clinical expertise to the medically related issues of the litigation process. The primary role of the legal nurse consultant is to evaluate, analyze, and render informed opinions about the delivery of healthcare and the resulting outcomes.<sup>1</sup>

The practice of legal nurse consulting predates any specialty organization, training program, or certification. While many legal nurse consultants have acquired knowledge of the legal system through such experience as consulting with attorneys and attending seminars, legal or paralegal education is not prerequisite to the practice of legal nurse consulting. In the early days of the specialty, nurses became legal nurse consultants (LNCs) without the benefit of formal education, relying on their nursing expertise and informal guidance or "on the job training" from attorneys. Then as now, nurses entered the specialty with a variety of educational backgrounds and practical experiences in nursing. The nurses who founded the American Association of Legal Nurse Consultants in 1989 were already practicing as LNCs when they came together to share their experience and to promote the specialty by forming a professional association.

### Education

Today, numerous educational opportunities are available to nurses who wish to become LNCs. While formal training in legal nurse consulting is not required to practice, some nurses may benefit from a structured introduction to the specialty. AALNC believes that the individual nurse is best able to determine what, if any, program will meet his/her needs and goals.

While AALNC does not recommend or endorse particular programs, the following criteria should be considered in assessing credible, useful, legal nurse consulting education.

**Institution.** Legal nurse consulting education is offered by universities, colleges, community colleges, for-profit businesses, and not-for-profit organizations. In assessing the value of these programs, the reputation and accreditation of the sponsoring institution should be considered.

**Program.** Legal nurse consulting education programs may be found in various colleges or departments including the School of Nursing, the College of Health Sciences, the Office of Continuing Education, and the Paralegal Department, among others. To the extent that legal education is provided to nurses by legal assistant or paralegal education programs, it should be considered separate from the education of paralegals and legal assistants because of the differences in their practice in the legal arena. The primary focus of legal nurse consulting education should be to build on nursing education and clinical experience and to prepare nurses to function in the legal arena. In evaluating a particular program, its mission and purpose should be compared to this standard.

**Program directors and instructors.** AALNC maintains the position that legal nurse consulting

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[Conferences](#)

[Education and Professional Resources](#)

- [Bookstore](#)
- [Legal Nurse Consulting Online Course](#)
- [Journal of Legal Nurse Consulting](#)
- [Related Links](#)

[Why Hire A LNC](#)

[Certification](#)

education programs should be developed and presented as specialty nursing curricula by nurse educators in partnership with legal educators. The qualifications of the program directors and instructors should be considered when evaluating a program. In general, programs developed and taught by experienced nurse educators who are practicing LNCs are preferred.

**Curriculum.** AALNC recommends Legal Nurse Consulting: Principles and Practice as the core curriculum of legal nurse consulting education. Courses of study based on this curriculum vary in length from one day to two years. Nurses are encouraged to choose a course of study that meets personal needs and professional goals.

## Certification

Most LNC education programs offer a certificate that testifies to the completion of a course of study and, in some cases, to passing an examination on the course material. Some graduates of LNC certificate programs chose to include letters such as "LNC" after their names, along with their educational degrees and professional credentials. AALNC does not endorse this practice. It is customary to list such certificates in the education section of a resume or curriculum vitae. These certificate programs should not be confused with the certification programs offered by nursing certification boards, which are commonly affiliated with professional nursing associations. Certification is a process that recognizes an individual's qualifications and demonstrated knowledge in a specialty. In 1997, AALNC established the American Legal Nurse Consultant Certification Board (ALNCCB) to administer the Legal Nurse Consultant Certified (LNCC) program. The LNCC certification program is accredited by the American Board of Nursing Specialties (ABNS).

The purpose of the LNCC program is to promote a level of expertise and professionalism in legal nurse consulting. Legal nurse consultants must meet the eligibility requirements, which include consulting experience, and achieve a passing score on a multiple-choice examination to earn the LNCC designation. As with many clinical nursing certification programs, the LNCC credential is designed for those who have demonstrated experience and knowledge in the specialty.<sup>2</sup> Certification is an appropriate goal for those who are committed to a professional legal nurse consulting practice.

AALNC supports the practice initiated by the American Nurses Association of listing one's credentials in the following order: highest educational degree, highest nursing degree if different, licensure, and professional certifications. "LNCC" is the only legal nurse consulting credential recognized by AALNC and ABNS.

<sup>1</sup> Refer to the AALNC Position Statement on The Role of the Legal Nurse Consultant as distinct from the role of the paralegal and legal assistant.

<sup>2</sup> The LNCC credential can be compared to recognized nursing credentials such as RNC; CCRN; CEN; CPN; and CRRN.

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[Education and Professional Resources](#)

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- [Legal Nurse Consulting Online Course](#)
- [Journal of Legal Nurse Consulting](#)
- [Related Links](#)

[Why Hire A LNC](#)

[Certification](#)

## Education and Professional Resources

### Position Statement on Education and Certification

Interested in becoming a legal nurse consultant? Please take a minute to read AALNC's official position statement on education and certification for information that will help you evaluate what program is best for you! [Click here](#) to read.

### AALNC Legal Nurse Consulting Online Course

AALNC recently launched an online learning tool to help legal nurse consultants and registered nurses gain the knowledge and skills necessary to enter into this nursing specialty. For more information about this 8-module program, [Click here](#).

### Bookstore

AALNC has developed of a wide array of resources, from introductory materials for the beginning LNC through continuing education materials for the experienced LNC. In our [bookstore](#), you can browse our products and publications by specific type, or you can view the entire catalog. Our online order form makes it easy and fast for you to receive the educational resources that you need to excel as a Legal Nurse Consultant! Download the [AALNC Product Catalogue](#) to mail or fax your order.

### What is Certification?

People often ask, "What is the difference between certification and a certificate?" To assist you in communicating with your colleagues and clients and to help avoid confusion in the marketplace, we have provided you with a detailed comparison. [Click here](#) for more information!

### Journal of Legal Nurse Consulting

AALNC's official journal, the *Journal of Legal Nurse Consulting* (JLNC), promotes legal nurse consulting within the medical-legal community and provides both the novice and the experienced legal nurse consultant (LNC) with a high-quality professional publication. [Click here](#) for the article index, for advertising opportunities, and for information about submitting your article to the JLNC!

### Annual Educational Conference

AALNC's annual premier event is the National Educational Conference. The National Educational Conference is the primary opportunity for legal nurse consultants to earn Continuing Education Hours (CEUs) through education sessions, to network with LNCs from across the country and to interact with vendors within the medical-legal community each year. [Click here](#) for detailed information!

### Related Links

AALNC offers a complete list of internet resources. Websites of professional medical and legal associations as well as websites of services for LNC are just a [click](#) away!



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