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### Letter from the President

VACC President Christopher Frith thanks VA-BC™s for their strength during the pandemic and their commitment to their patients, their coworkers, and their continued education on vascular access.

### Celebrating Past and Future Certificants

Join us as we congratulate all who certified and recertified in June 2021! We also wish good luck to our December 2021 test takers.

### Madigan Army Medical Center Certifies Nearly Half Its 60-Person Vascular Access Team in June 2021

Madigan Army Medical Center in Tacoma, WA, looked to certify eight staff members in June 2021. By the end of June, 27 clinicians had taken the exam, 25 of which passed the exam and now hold the VA-BC™ credential.

### Keep in Mind

Reminders on your certification and resources to maintain your credential.



(Left) VACC President Christopher Frith, RN, BSN, VA-BC™, TQMP, SSBBP. Photo provided by Christopher Frith.

## Letter from the President

On behalf of the entire VACC Board of Directors, I am thrilled to welcome you to the first issue of VACC's biannual newsletter!

As VACC and the VA-BC™ credential grow, we recognized the need for us as the VACC board and staff to connect with our certificants and, possibly more importantly, for the certificants to better connect with one another. Especially now, we encourage our certificants to find community in one another and in shared experiences, as well as in shared passions.

For over a year and a half, health care workers have stood together against COVID-19. VACC sends its sincere thanks to our certificants as they continue to work through the pandemic, focusing on safe patient care and their own safety as well. It has been nearly a nonstop effort for clinicians and their support systems, and we greatly appreciate your efforts!

Throughout all the grief and sadness, you never stop growing. You volunteer at VACC and other organizations that allow you to expand your knowledge base. You attend conferences, accrue continuing education credits, and stay up to date on vascular access. Our driven certificants are continually looking for ways to build on their current understanding

of vascular access to improve their skills for themselves, their coworkers, and their patients.

Not only do you make us and your institution proud, but you prove to yourself that you have the knowledge and the skills to thrive in your environment.

VACC has seen its numbers of new and returning certificants increase over the past year. In the June 2021 window, we saw our most significant number of applicants – and certificants! – to date. As a result, some organizations, such as Madigan Army Medical Center, as you will read later in the newsletter, welcomed dozens of first-time certificants. Others kept their entire vascular access team certified or saw their unit's first VA-BC™ clinician!

Additionally, we had the honor of welcoming Leigh Anne Bowe-Geddes to the VACC team as President-Elect! We are looking forward to the organization's growth under her leadership.

We are incredibly grateful for your support and dedication to the specialty, even during the most challenging times. I am happy to be with you through these pages of history on behalf of VACC. Thank you for the opportunity to serve as the VACC President. Cheers to vascular access and all clinical disciplines and departments who have and will continue to fight through this challenging time. ■

- Christopher D.O. Frith RN, BSN, VA-BC™, TQMP, SSBP

## Celebrating Past and Future Certificants

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The VACC board and staff would like to extend their congratulations to our newest certificants who passed the June 2021 VA-BC™ exam! The wait for results as a result of VACC's latest Job Analysis was a long one, and we truly appreciate our June exam takers' patience and understanding.

This June, VACC saw its largest group of test takers to date, as well as our largest number of certificants by far. During the June 2021 cycle, 437 VA-BC™s successfully recertified from June 2018 and 432 candidates passed the VA-BC™ exam. Our passing rate for the exam was 89%.

Preparing for and taking the exam is difficult to navigate between the demanding work schedules of clinicians and their home lives. The same can be said for earning continuing education credits for recertification. Many of our certificants are caretakers for parents or children, and many have rigid work schedules or may work outside of traditional business hours, which can make it difficult to earn CEs or schedule a testing appointment. Still, you strive to become Vascular Access Board Certified™ (VA-BC™) and provide a positive patient experience. We applaud your dedication to your professional growth and your patients' safety!

Currently a new batch of candidates are undergoing similar experiences for the December 2021 VA-BC™ exam and recertification period. In just a few weeks, we anticipate nearly 500 clinicians to sit for the exam. Additionally, as of early November, over 175 VA-BC™s have applied for recertification by CE, the deadline for which is December 1.

Please join us in wishing them good luck! ■



# Madigan Army Medical Center Certifies Nearly Half Its 60-Person Vascular Access Team in June 2021

In the fall of 2020, Caryn Kennemore BSN, RN, CRNI, VA-BC™ encouraged three vascular access nurses to register for the December VA-BC™ exam. Kennemore is the Vascular Access Manager at Madigan Army Medical Center, responsible for administering patient care, training new employees, and evaluating the level of care the team gives to patients. She has been certified since July 2019 and was confident her staff could pass the test to gain the same understanding and passion for vascular access that she found in her VA-BC™.

She was right – all three test takers passed the December exam and word spread within the vascular access team. Six more nurses requested to take the exam in the next testing window, June 2021.

The following spring, Kennemore prepared to request funding from Madigan for eight exams in June. Eight was a stretch at the time, but she knew she could ask two team members to fill the slots. If not, the extra exams could roll over for up to two years through VACC's voucher system.

Almost overnight, without any outreach from administration, dozens of qualified nurses wanted to take the exam in June.

"The excitement spread like wildfire," Kennemore said.

The members of Madigan's vascular access program, she explained, share a drive for building on their current skills and seeing one another succeed. Twenty-nine clinicians – almost half of the clinicians in the program – asked to test in the end. Fingers crossed, Kennemore asked for funding for all 29 exams.

Madigan approved.

Immediately, the candidates went to work. Kennemore held study sessions every Thursday for two months until the first day of testing, June 1. On top of



Some of Madigan Army Medical Center's vascular access team gathers to celebrate Vascular Access Specialty Day 2020. Photo provided by Caryn Kennemore, Madigan Army Medical Center.

reviewing the references used to create the exam, exam candidates also heard from a few guest speakers. VA-BC™ nurses in the unit shared tips for preparing for the exam, and knowledgeable staff throughout Madigan, such as a neonatal PICC nurse, Respiratory Therapists, and a Clinical Nurse Specialist, shared their experiences with vascular access.

Some staff worried they would not have all the appropriate knowledge to pass the exam, Kennemore said. For example, a nurse who mainly handles vascular access in adults may not know much about appropriate vascular access in neonates. Hearing from such a diverse group of specialists helped prepare these candidates for the exam, Kennemore said, because they could better understand the process of vascular access from one area of care to the next, even if they did not work in that unit.

“You don’t have to be an expert in each of these areas. You don’t even have to be proficient at every task, but we have to have a competency and awareness of these different [areas],” she said.

Come June 1, she had the date of all 29 exam appointments marked on her calendar. Each night before a clinician’s exam, Kennemore would text that person and wish them good luck.

***“It shouldn’t be circumstantial or arbitrary whether someone can receive care from a nurse with advanced training in vascular access.”***

“I would send them little cool GIFs that were like ‘you got this!’ just sending good energy to them while they were taking it.”

Twenty-seven clinicians out of 29 sat for the exam. Twenty-five test takers passed the exam, giving Madigan a passing rate of 93% within their institution this June.

Following these results, Madigan purchased an additional 30 exams for its staff, all of which the institution anticipates using for the December exam.

On top of paying for each candidate’s exam, Madigan also gave the staff members four paid hours to take the exam. Kennemore said that the institution values the certification not just because it validates the clinicians’ skills but because it shows patients that they will be in qualified hands. Out of 60 staff members on the vascular access team, which is available for care 24/7, 29 clinicians are currently certified, including herself.

“We just want there to be a patient awareness that we got you,” she said. “I think sometimes our patients might expect that service to only be available Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. - 3 p.m. ... It shouldn’t be circumstantial or arbitrary whether someone can receive care from a nurse with advanced training in vascular access.”

The VA-BC™ credential is especially affirming for

Madigan’s active-duty clinicians. Kennemore said that active-duty staff members typically serve on the team for about a year after training before they receive a new duty assignment. The established credential lets the clinician show their skills, wherever they go next.

“It’s something they can take with them that’s personal, that’s theirs, that validates them,” Kennemore said.

Kennemore added that because of the VA-BC™, the staff has expressed an interest in taking their own duties at Madigan a step further by analyzing the unit’s data to improve the patient experience. They are, she said, appreciating vascular access for more than “just poking the needle in the vein.”

“The VA-BC™ motivates them to gain the knowledge,” she said. “It’s energizing and creates an excitement for questioning and growing in a completely unique and interesting way.” ■



Caryn Kennemore (right) stands with the newly certified VA-BC™s following the December 2020 exam. Left to right, Rheanna Rose, RN, VA-BC™, Lisa Winter, RN, VA-BC™, and Lieutenant Matthew O’Hare, RN, VA-BC™. Photo provided by Caryn Kennemore, Madigan Army Medical Center.

# Keep in Mind

If you need a reminder on when you are due to recertify, our timeline below should give you a quick glance. Remember that recertification by CE applications open 10 months prior to when applications are due. For more information on dates and fees, please [visit our website](#).

VA-BC™ Attained	VA-BC™ Expires	VA-BC™ Renewal Documents and Fees Due Date
June 2021	June 30, 2024	June 1, 2024
December 2020	December 31, 2023	December 1, 2023
June 2020	June 30, 2023	June 1, 2023
December 2019	December 31, 2022	December 1, 2022
June 2019	June 30, 2022	June 1, 2022
December 2018	December 31, 2021	December 1, 2021

## Visit the VA-BC™ Store

Wear your VA-BC™ on your sleeve with our VA-BC™ products. From pins to badges, we have what you need to share your achievement. [Shop all things VACC in our online store](#).

## Not sure where to start with your VA-BC™ journey?

Take a look at our [Certification Toolkit](#) if you want to show your dedication to vascular access by taking the exam, or dive into our [Recertification Toolkit](#) if you’re looking to renew your credential and your commitment to vascular access.

*We like to hear from you! Remember to keep your information updated with VACC so we can reach you with any questions, concerns, or announcements. Log into the [Certificant Portal](#) and click the “My Profile” button to confirm that your information is right.*

## Follow us on social media!

Stay connected with your VA-BC™ community through the VACC socials. See what other VA-BC™s are accomplishing and celebrate together, get reminders on deadlines, and find updates on all things VA-BC™. Ready to join the conversation?



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