

UCNS Offers First Recertification Examinations for 2006 and 2007 HM and BNNP Diplomates

UCNS will offer its first recertification examinations in Headache Medicine (HM) and Behavioral Neurology & Neuropsychiatry (BNNP) in 2016. The HM recertification examination is scheduled for the week of October 17–20, 2016 and the BNNP recertification examination is scheduled for the week of November 14–18, 2016. UCNS recertification examinations are given every other year. Therefore, to avoid a lapse in certification, 2007 HM and BNNP diplomates must apply to sit for the 2016 recertification examinations.

Physicians certified in 2006 will be required to document a total of 180 ACCME Category 1 CME credits, 36 of which must be subspecialty specific. Physicians certified in 2007 will be required to document a total of 210 ACCME Category 1 CME credits, 42 of which must be subspecialty specific. Recertification information is located on each subspecialty certification page.

UCNS has launched a new online CME tracker system to assist diplomates in the UCNS recertification process. Diplomates can now quickly and conveniently enter earned CME and generate a report at any time to track their progress in meeting UCNS recertification requirements. The CME tracker also allows diplomates with more than one UCNS subspecialty certification to monitor their progress for each certification.

Certification Council Chair Gregory Gruener, MD, MBA said, “Our goal is to continue to improve our processes to better serve our diplomates. I believe the addition of the CME tracking system is an improvement that will benefit all UCNS diplomates.”

To get started using the CME tracker, users must first register and [create a personal log-in](#). Once the log-in has been approved, diplomates can begin entering their CME activities. Instructions for using the CME tracker may be found on each subspecialty certification page or [here](#). For more information, contact Todd Bulson at tbulson@ucns.org or (612) 928-6067.

Year of Initial Subspecialty Certification	Certification Expires	Total CMEs Required to Recertify	Is Exam Offered in Expiration Year?	Date of Recertification Exam
2006 HM	12/31/2016	180*	YES	October 2016
2006 BNNP	12/31/2016	180*	YES	November 2016
2007 HM	12/31/2017	210*	NO	October 2016
2007 BNNP	12/31/2017	210*	NO	November 2016

*20% of the CMEs earned must be subspecialty specific

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For more information about the UCNS, visit the UCNS website at www.ucns.org.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the United Council for Neurologic Subspecialties is to provide for accreditation and certification with the goal of enhancing the quality of training for physicians in neurologic subspecialties and the quality of patient care.

Important Dates

November 1, 2014
 Clinical Neuromuscular Pathology certification application available

December 1, 2014
 Accreditation application deadline for spring 2015 review

January 15, 2015
 Neuro-oncology certification application deadline

Letter from the Chair



Paul M. Vespa, MD,
FCCM, FAAN

How time flies! In 2006, UCNS administered our first certification examinations in the Headache Medicine (HM) and Behavioral Neurology & Neuropsychiatry (BNNP) subspecialties. Our certificates are valid for 10 years. This means that the first HM and BNNP diplomates will be seeking recertification in 2016. Unlike in 2006, these diplomates will be able to apply online to sit for their recertification examinations and pay their fees by credit card. The UCNS Board has determined that the fee to sit for a recertification examination will be lower than the current initial certification fee. As noted in our lead article, we also have developed an online tracker to help diplomates report their continuing medical education credits. In short, we have worked to make the recertification process as painless as possible.

This summer, the Board of Directors of the American Academy of Neurology (AAN) voted to accept a report of an AAN task force on UCNS subspecialties. We will be working closely with the AAN to implement a plan to help these subspecialties secure greater recognition by insurers. Hopefully, this initiative will address the concerns raised by Dr. Albright in this issue's Diplomate Highlight.

We are looking forward to our fall meeting of the UCNS Board of Directors to be held in Minneapolis. At that time, we will welcome Paola Sandroni, MD, PhD, as a new member representing the Autonomic Disorders subspecialty. Dr. Sandroni is at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, where her research focuses on pure autonomic failure (PAF), autoimmune autonomic neuropathies (AAN), postural tachycardia syndrome (POTS), and multiple system atrophy (MSA). We bid a fond farewell to Patricia Crumrine, MD, who has served as the ACGME Residency Review Committee's liaison to the UCNS Board. We have benefited from Dr. Crumrine's wise counsel over the years, and we look forward to working with her successor.

This year, our expenses are on budget and our revenues are slightly higher than budget. This means that we expect to end 2014 with a balanced budget and will not need to ask our parent organizations for operating support contributions. We thank all of our volunteers for their ongoing efforts to make UCNS financially strong.

Paul M. Vespa, MD, FCCM, FAAN

Board Member Highlight – José Biller, MD, FAAN, FACP, FAHA



José Biller, MD, FAAN,
FACP, FAHA

José Biller, MD, FAAN, FACP, FAHA, is Professor of Neurology and Neurological Surgery and Chairperson of the Department of Neurology at Loyola University Chicago Stritch School of Medicine. He is the Vice-Chair of the Vascular Neurology Writing Subcommittee of the ABPN and the current Chair of the Neurohospitalist Section of the American Academy of Neurology (AAN). Biller is past Chair of the UCNS Certification Council. He is the Editor of the *Journal of Stroke and Cerebrovascular Diseases*, Chief-Editor of *Frontiers in Neurology*, and an editorial board member and reviewer for several other national and international journals and publications.

Why did you choose to practice medicine and go into the field of neurology?

Being the youngest of seven siblings, I was the only one to have the privilege of an advanced education. Both my parents died when I was nine years old and my older siblings had to go to work at an early age. I chose medicine as serving others appeared natural to my upbringing. My early fascination with the brain and the mind sent me in the direction of clinical neurology, which I still consider captivating, mysterious, and energizing.

How do you think UCNS benefits the field of neurology?

UCNS was founded in 2003 serving the interests of certification and fellowship accreditation for small established and emergent subspecialties within neurology. UCNS and other accrediting bodies have had major impacts in enhancing the value of certification by setting the standards of subspecialties such as: Behavioral Neurology & Neuropsychiatry; Clinical Neuromuscular Pathology; Headache Medicine; Neuro-oncology; Neuroimaging; Neurocritical Care; Autonomic Disorders; Geriatric Neurology; and Neural Repair and Rehabilitation.

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Certification News

Letter from the Certification Council Chair



Gregory Gruener, MD,
MBA

As UCNS closes out 2014 with examinations in Behavioral Neurology & Neuropsychiatry, Headache Medicine, and Neural Repair and Rehabilitation, we look ahead to 2015 and 2016. We are offering four examinations in 2015 and we are pleased to be offering a certification examination in the subspecialty of Clinical Neuromuscular Pathology for the first time. In 2016, we administer our first recertification examinations in Behavioral Neurology & Neuropsychiatry and Headache Medicine. The addition of recertification examinations is just one more UCNS accomplishment that I am proud to have been a part of during my term serving the Certification Council. To assist with the process of recertification, the UCNS developed a CME tracker. The online tool will allow diplomates to enter CMEs as they are earned, aiding with management of their credits over a 10-year period.

The Certification Council continues to enhance the certification process and is always interested to hear how it can better serve its diplomates.

Gregory Gruener, MD, MBA

Neuro-oncology Practice Track Pathway Extended

The UCNS Board of Directors has approved extension of the Neuro-oncology practice track through the 2015 examination. This is the final examination for which applicants may apply under the practice track pathway of eligibility. Applications are now available on the UCNS website for the Neuro-oncology certification examination. Please visit <http://www.ucns.org/go/subspecialty/neuro-oncology/certification> for more information.

2014 Certification Examination Schedule

Subspecialty	Application Deadline	Examination Date	Location
Headache Medicine	April 15, 2014	October 6-10, 2014	Pearson VUE
Behavioral Neurology & Neuropsychiatry	May 15, 2014	November 3-7, 2014	Pearson VUE
Neural Repair and Rehabilitation	July 15, 2014	December 14-19, 2014	Pearson VUE

2015 Certification Examination Schedule

Subspecialty	Application Deadline	Examination Date	Location
Neuroimaging	August 15, 2014	January 26-30, 2015	Pearson VUE
Neuro-oncology	January 15, 2015	August 3-7, 2015	Pearson VUE
Clinical Neuromuscular Pathology	February 16, 2015	August 24-28, 2015	Pearson VUE
Neurocritical Care	July 15, 2015	December 7-11, 2015	Pearson VUE

Board Member Highlight

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If you could hope for a breakthrough in neuroscience this year, what would it be?

Effective treatments for neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's disease and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis.

What was your favorite book as a child and why?

"Martín Fierro" (1872/1879), an epic poem by José Hernández, an Argentine journalist, poet, and politician. The poem, published in two parts, earned universal accolades for its earthiness and has been translated into more than 70 languages. I have always been fascinated by the life and individuality of the Gauchos, folk heroes and skilled horsemen, who had a nomadic life and owned nothing of value.

Diplomate Highlight



Robert E. Albright, Jr., MD

Robert E. Albright, Jr., MD is the Director of the Division of Neuro-oncology at the E. K. Hatton Research Institute in Cincinnati, OH, and also practices at the St. Elizabeth Cancer Care Center in Edgewood, KY. Dr. Albright is a 2011 UCNS diplomate in Neuro-oncology.

Why did you choose to practice medicine and go into the field of Neuro-oncology?

I was very fortunate to have exposure during my neurology residency to the field of Neuro-oncology by working with Dr. Cliff Schold and Dr. Henry Friedman in the early 1980s. With the support of those two physicians and Dr. Allen Roses (Neurology Chair), a dedicated Neuro-oncology fellowship program was created and I was the first Neuro-oncology fellow to come through the Duke University Medical Center program. In that time period, Neuro-oncology involved primary brain neoplasms, pediatric Neuro-oncology, and considerable exposure to the neurologic complications associated with medical oncology. In short, it was "general" Neuro-oncology training, which has proven invaluable in the years (and decades) that followed.

Why did you decide to seek UCNS certification?

Aside from the intellectual stimulus, there were two pragmatic reasons that I sought the UCNS certification. First, it was my hope then (and now), that the UCNS certification will ultimately lead to a CMS recognition of Neuro-oncology as a subspecialty. Second, I hoped that the UCNS certification would have direct impact on hospital systems to include Neuro-oncology as a recognized specialty in their electronic medical record (EMR) systems.

How has UCNS certification benefited you?

UCNS Neuro-oncology certification has been recognized by the medical staff offices to allow my delineation of privileges to address oncology services. Unfortunately, it has not been recognized by the hospital systems in regards to their EMR systems. They will only permit CMS-recognized board certifications.

What are the three most significant breakthroughs or advancements in Neuro-oncology in 2014?

I would consider the two Phase III Avastin trials published this year as pivotal, and my third selection would be the Neuro-oncology article regarding sunitinib for refractory meningioma.

- A Randomized Trial of Bevacizumab for Newly Diagnosed GBM. Gilbert MR et al. NEJM 2014; 370(8): 699-708.
- Bevacizumab plus Radiotherapy-Temozolomide for newly diagnosed GBM. Chinot OL, et al. NEJM 2014; 370(8): 709-722.
- Phase II trial of sunitinib for recurrent and progressive atypical and anaplastic meningioma. Kaley TJ, et al. Neuro Oncol (2014) doi: 10.1093/neuonc/nou148.

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Anatomy of a Complete Certification Application Revisited

For the past two years, UCNS has been using an online application system. This has made the application process more efficient and streamlined; however, we are still frequently asked by exam applicants what they can do to ensure that their application is accepted by the Certification Council. Our biggest piece of advice is: **Make sure you have read the eligibility requirements** and that you meet them. Please contact UCNS if you have any questions at all about the eligibility requirements.

The online application system has helped to eliminate many of the difficulties applicants encountered with the previous paper-based application; however, some issues still persist. We recommend that applicants use the template language that UCNS provides on its website for all letters of support. **Please urge your colleagues to use the template language.** The template letters are not to be considered letters of recommendation. They are purely for informational purposes. Using the template language exactly as it is written provides the Certification Council with only the information it needs in the most concise way possible. Letters that do not follow the template may be rejected, and letters that are unclear or confusing may result in your application being denied.

All letters of support must be on the appropriate institution letterhead and contain a signature. UCNS accepts electronic signatures as long as the signature is in the proper format. **UCNS requires that electronic signatures are preceded and followed by the forward slash symbol (/John Doe/).** An example of this format is provided in all of the template letters. Digitized and handwritten signatures are also acceptable. Letters of support should not be mailed to UCNS. Your colleagues should return their completed letters to you to be uploaded into your online application.

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Accreditation News

Letter from the Accreditation Council Chair



Lori Schuh, MD, FAAN

Fall is often a time of transition. We said good-bye to two of our Accreditation Council members in October. Ezgi Tiryaki, MD, completed her second term representing the American Academy of Neurology, and Clifton Gooch, MD, FAAN, has also completed serving as one of the American Neurological Association's representatives. On behalf of UCNS, I thank Dr. Tiryaki and Dr. Gooch for their dedication to UCNS and for sharing their expertise with the Accreditation Council. Their seats will be difficult to fill. Dr. Tiryaki's successor is Holli Horak, MD, FAAN, associate professor and director of the neurophysiology fellowship at the University of Arizona. At this time, Dr. Gooch's successor has not yet been named.

Dr. Tiryaki led a task force for the Accreditation Council to redesign the program and reaccreditation information forms, which were launched June 1, 2014. The Accreditation Council also implemented the revised Autonomic Disorders, Geriatric Neurology, Neurocritical Care, and Neuroimaging program requirements on June 1, 2014. The remaining program requirements under review, Behavioral Neurology & Neuropsychiatry, Headache Medicine, and Neuro-oncology, will be reviewed for approval by the Board of Directors during its fall meeting. With the approval of these documents, UCNS will conclude the required five-year review of program requirements and will have integrated the common program requirements into each subspecialty's program requirements. We thank all of the program directors who submitted comments during the comment period. They helped UCNS to ensure that the program requirements represent the current state of each subspecialty. Without feedback from program directors during projects like this, we would be unable to serve you in the best way possible.

Lori Schuh, MD, FAAN

Program Director Highlight



Matthew B. Maas, MD

Matthew B. Maas, MD, Assistant Professor of Neurology and Anesthesiology, is the program director of the Northwestern University Neurocritical Care fellowship.

Why did you choose to practice medicine and go into the field of Neuro-critical Care?

I came into medicine from chemical engineering. I enjoyed the academic rigor of engineering, but wanted to work in a more social, team-based, dynamic environment. In terms of my specialty, it doesn't get much more dynamic than critical care. I thrive on the high-intensity atmosphere, the mixture of procedural and cognitive skills, and working within a multidisciplinary environment.

Why did you decide to seek UCNS accreditation for your program?

I attended a UCNS-accredited fellowship and saw the value of having an education structure, training standards, and the resulting national recognition of credentials. UCNS accreditation validates the excellent education we offer.

What do you think attracts fellows to your program?

Fellows are attracted to our program by the opportunity to combine rigorous clinical learning with research mentorship. Northwestern is the largest medical center in the Chicago region and the only academic, level 1 trauma center, so our case volume is high and complex. We've worked hard to form an educational collaboration with the other critical care fellowships at our institution. This interdepartmental cooperation provides our fellows with high-quality joint didactics and allows them to experience providing direct patient care in other ICUs. We believe that participation in research complements the clinical education. All of our fellows are assigned a faculty mentor, with whom they select a project and carry it through to publication.

What is your current research?

My research is on bedside neuromonitoring and the effects of circadian disruption on arousal and neurologic fluctuations. Much of my research to date has focused on severe stroke (ischemic and hemorrhagic), but my circadian research is now expanding to patients with sepsis with the support of a young investigator grant award.

Submit Program Changes to UCNS

If you are planning changes in faculty, curriculum, or resources in your UCNS-accredited fellowship, please contact the Accreditation Council. The program change procedure and template letter are available on your subspecialty accreditation page at www.ucns.org.

Apply for UCNS Accreditation by December 1

UCNS is now accepting applications until December 1, 2014. Programs approved following this deadline may be accredited as of June 1, 2015. The next deadline for program applications will be June 1, 2015.

UCNS Accredits New Programs

Congratulations to the following programs that were reviewed during the spring 2014 meeting and received accreditation from UCNS effective June 1, 2014. A complete list of UCNS-accredited programs is available at <http://www.ucns.org/apps/directory/>. Newly accredited programs and fellowship directors are:

Autonomic Disorders	
New York University School of Medicine	Horacio C. Kaufmann, MD
Behavioral Neurology & Neuropsychiatry	
University of California, Davis	John M. Olichney, MD
University of Pennsylvania	David A. Wolk, MD
Vanderbilt University Medical Center	Daniel O. Claassen, MD, MS
Geriatric Neurology	
Montefiore Medical College/Albert Einstein College of Medicine	Jessica Zwerling, MD, MS
Headache Medicine	
Dent Neurologic Institute	Minsoo Kang, MD
Neurocritical Care	
UHS-Wilson Medical Center	Yahia M. Lodi, MD

UCNS Changes the Online Fellowship Directory

UCNS will be changing the way its program information is listed in our online directory. We will no longer send programs a fellowship directory form to fill out after their most recent accreditation cycle has been approved. Instead, we will use the information provided in the program's PIF or RIF submission for the directory listing. Program and institution websites will no longer be listed with program information, so please be sure to include a telephone number and email address that potential fellows can use to reach you for information regarding your program.

Accredited programs are asked to take a moment to review their program's information as it is listed in our [online fellowship directory](#). Any requests for changes can be submitted to applications@ucns.org.

Diplomate Highlight

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Do you have advice for colleagues and fellows?

I have been working in Neuro-oncology for nearly 30 years. The earlier years of that experience was in academia. More recently, I've been in private practice. For anyone currently in a Neuro-oncology fellowship or considering a Neuro-oncology fellowship, there is no question that the career holds endless challenges. Adrenaline will still happen when you see those rare conditions unique to this specialty. The biggest challenge remains building and sustaining a clinical practice when your primary patient population has such a short life expectancy. In wRVU business models, a full-time Neuro-oncology practice is extremely challenging to maintain and will likely require a strategy to work in multiple hospital systems. Today's EMR systems add real complexity to that strategy.

Part-time Neuro-oncology and part-time general neurology may provide an answer. Another consideration is a second fellowship in palliative care, which is currently a one-year commitment. ACGME does allow for the CMS-recognized subspecialty in Hospice & Palliative Medicine.

Anatomy of a Complete Certification Application Revisited

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Be sure to follow the instructions provided in each section. When listing CME as part of your eligibility pathway or for recertification purposes, it is important to **list each CME activity individually**. The Certification Council reviews each CME title for relevance to the subspecialty. Listing only “various topics” in the table is not sufficient, and may result in your application being denied. Fellowship training should never be listed in the Residency Training section. All copies of medical licenses must show the expiration date.

Lastly, applicants must be sure to finalize their applications. This process occurs after you have completed the payment section of the application. You may need to navigate back to the beginning of your application and then click the button that says “Finalize Application.” This button appears above the list of application steps that should all be marked as complete. Simply click the button and your application will be submitted to UCNS for review.

Questions About UCNS?



Becky Swanson
Executive Assistant

Becky Swanson is the UCNS Executive Assistant. Diplomates, applicants, and programs calling with general inquiries will usually start by talking with her. If you have a question you would like answered in this section, email her at bswanson@ucns.org.

Q: I have submitted my online certification application for review. What happens next?

A: When you submit your application, it will be assigned a status of *Initial Review*. UCNS staff will then review your application for completeness. If anything is missing from your application or requires clarification, it will be assigned a status of *Requires Review* with the section(s) that require attention indicated. When your changes have been reviewed and accepted, or if your application was deemed complete after its initial staff review, it will then be assigned a status of *Final Review*. This status indicates that the application is complete and ready to be sent to the Certification Council for its official review. Once the application goes to the Council for review, your application status will then be changed to *Submitted*. The Certification Council’s eligibility decision will only be communicated by mail and its decision will not be reflected in your online application status. Applicants who choose to withdraw their application, or applications that were not completed by the application deadline, will be assigned a status of *Not Submitted*.

Staff

UCNS staff is available Monday-Friday to answer your questions regarding subspecialty membership, accreditation, and certification.

Subspecialty Membership Inquiries

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- Association of University Professors of Neurology
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- Child Neurology Society
www.childneurologysociety.org
- Professors of Child Neurology, see also
www.childneurologysociety.org

SUBMIT STORY IDEAS

Any news or story ideas for UCNS readers?

We would like to hear from you. Submit feedback regarding this issue and/or story ideas for future issues to the UCNS Executive Office.

