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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.

NUCC Taxonomy Code Awarded

On October 1, 2016, the Neurocritical Care (NCC) subspecialty's taxonomy code from the National Uniform Claim Committee (NUCC) became effective. Successfully obtaining a taxonomy code is important for the NCC field. Marc Nuwer, MD, PhD, a professor of clinical neurology at the University of California, Los Angeles, and a member of the American Academy of Neurology's Coding Subcommittee, says that, "With a taxonomy code, many carriers will treat that Neurocritical Care physician as being in a different subspecialty for billing purposes, when compared to other subspecialties. For example, if a patient is seen on the same day by another neurologist for a different part of the patient's care, both the Neurocritical Care physician and the other neurologist will more easily be able to justify their E/M coding as being payable." Nuwer explains, "The CPT book specifically says that two physicians both can be paid for their own E/M services for the same patient on the same day if the physicians are in different subspecialties. Having a taxonomy code is how the computers label a physician's subspecialty."

Recognition of the subspecialty was requested by the NCC sponsoring organizations: the AAN Section on Critical Care and Emergency Medicine, the Neurocritical Care Society, and the Society for Neuroscience in Anesthesiology and Critical Care. At the sponsoring organizations' request, the American Academy of Neurology and UCNS sought to obtain recognition of NCC as a subspecialty of neurology, as well as to create a unique taxonomy code for NCC in the NUCC Health Care Provider Taxonomy code set. While the application was initially denied by the NUCC, an effort to appeal the denial was successful. The application for a NCC taxonomy code was approved by NUCC in May, adding the code and definition as follows:

Neurocritical Care: The medical subspecialty of Neurocritical Care is devoted to the comprehensive, multisystem care of the critically-ill neurological patient. Like other intensivists, the neurointensivist generally assumes the primary role for coordinating the care of his or her patients in the ICU, both the neurological and medical management of the patient. They may also provide consultative services for these patients as requested within the health system.

The process to achieve recognition of the subspecialty by NUCC dates to 2014, when then president of the AAN, Timothy Pedley, MD, appointed a task force with the following charge: "The AAN's United Council for Neurologic Subspecialties Task Force is charged to consider and make recommendations regarding opportunities for, and challenges to, the current and future value of UCNS certification for neurology subspecialties, including 1) the current role, methodologies, and standing of UCNS in providing accreditation and certification for non-ABPN neurology subspecialties; and 2) the need for recognition of UCNS certification by hospitals, physician organizations, state medical boards, and payors, including Medicare and commercial insurers." The Task Force, chaired by John C. Morris, MD, discussed ways in which UCNS diplomate status might be recognized by payors and others.

One result of the Task Force was an invitation from Dr. Pedley to UCNS' subspecialties, offering the Academy's assistance should a subspecialty wish to seek recognition by the NUCC. NUCC is a voluntary organization, chaired by the American Medical Association, that was "created to develop a standardized data set for use by the non-institutional health care community to transmit claim and encounter information to and from all third-party payers."

Important Dates

December 1, 2016

Accreditation application deadline for fall 2016 review

January 17, 2017

NO certification examination application deadline

February 15, 2017

CNMP certification examination application deadline

Letter from the Chair



Ralph F. Józefowicz, MD

It has been an eventful year for UCNS. We have said goodbye to old friends, welcomed new leaders, and launched new initiatives. This summer, John Kohring resigned as Executive Director. John served with distinction since 2008, overseeing the strategic vision for UCNS as it developed from an emerging organization into the organization it is now. UCNS currently accredits 177 fellowship programs and certifies 2,646 physicians in nine subspecialties. UCNS is an organization that has launched innovative programs to be responsive to the needs of our constituents, including the flexible fellowship and faculty diplomate programs. UCNS has obtained recognition from organizations such as the Leapfrog Group and National Uniform Claim Committee. John nurtured UCNS until it could stand on its own. We extend our sincerest gratitude to him and wish him the best in his new endeavors—we know he will succeed.

We also bid Gregory Gruener, MD, MBA, farewell. Dr. Gruener's leadership as Chair of the Certification Council was invaluable. He led the Council through the launch of an online certification application, recertification program, and guided reviews through the largest application cycle since UCNS' inception. On behalf of UCNS, we wish him a grateful thank you and a fond farewell.

With the completion of Dr. Gruener's term, I welcome new leadership to the Certification Council. Matthew Fink, MD, is the new Certification Council Chair, and Michael Schneck, MD, MBA, is the new Vice Chair. Both Dr. Fink and Dr. Schneck began as Certification Council members before accepting their respective roles. We are excited to see their direction of the Council in the years to come.

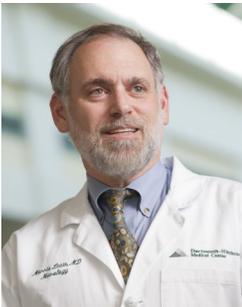
Over the summer, Bruce Levi, UCNS' General Counsel, has served as the interim executive director. It has been a pleasure to work with Bruce and he is working diligently in transitioning the role to Brenda Riggott. Brenda began as UCNS' executive director on November 28, 2016. Most recently, Brenda was the Foundation and Corporate Relations Director for the American Association of Neuromuscular and Electrodiagnostic Medicine. I look forward to working with Brenda in the future.

I want to sincerely thank Todd Bulson, Amanda Carpenter, Becky Swanson, and especially Bruce Levi, for their dedication and great work in running the UCNS during this time of transition. I also want to thank the UCNS Board and the subspecialty representatives for their oversight and thoughtful input into UCNS operations.

I am pleased with this year's successes. Not only have we received recognition for the Neurocritical Care subspecialty, as introduced in the lead article, but we have launched our recertification initiative, and are announcing the implementation of the online accreditation interface. It's an exciting time to be with UCNS, a time I'm proud to oversee.

Ralph F. Józefowicz, MD

Board Member Highlight



Morris Levin, MD

Morris Levin, MD, Dr. Levin serves as chief of the Division of Headache Medicine and director of the Headache Center at UCSF Medical Center. Dr. Levin earned his undergraduate degree at Stanford University, medical degree at Chicago Medical School, and completed a residency in neurology at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York, followed by subspecialty training at the Montefiore Hospital Headache Unit and Michigan Head-Pain and Neurological Institute.

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

A: Medicine was not really a choice for me: from a very young age (my father tells me age 5), I was attracted to this world and I have never regretted my path. I caught the neurosciences bug in freshman psych, and neurology specifically, during my neuro clerkship at Loyola in Chicago.

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Board Member Highlight

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Q: Not only are you a UCNS Board Member, but you are also program director of an accredited program and a Headache Medicine diplomate. As someone familiar with UCNS through all of these roles, how do you think UCNS has benefitted field of neurology?

A: UCNS provides certification for smaller subspecialties, which is really important in validating them and encouraging neurologists to gain special skills.

Q: How do you think UCNS has benefitted Headache Medicine, in particular?

A: Headache Medicine suffered for many years under biases about it being a minor and unimportant area in neurology. This changed gradually thanks to much excellent work in classification, research, and therapeutics. UCNS certification of subspecialists and accreditation of programs was an added very powerful validation.

Q: What are the most significant breakthroughs or advancements in Headache Medicine in 2016?

A: Important 2016 advances in our subspecialty include: 1) Finalization of the new revision of the International Classification of Headache Disorders (ICHD III) to be published in several months, 2) Positive results of Phase 2 studies of TEV 48215 in prevention of episodic migraine and chronic migraine and other very positive data about other new monoclonal anti CGRP antibodies, and 3) Guidelines for the acute treatment of migraine in the ER published in HEADACHE.

Q: When you are not working, what is your favorite vacation destination?

A: Favorite place to vacation - Redwood forests in Northern California.

Request for Comment

On October 25, 2016, the Accreditation Council and Certification Council chairs invited program directors of UCNS-accredited programs, and representatives of its parent and sponsoring organizations to provide comments regarding proposed changes to the accreditation fellow eligibility program requirements and certification application eligibility requirements. The proposed changes to the eligibility criteria will allow for enrollment into fellowship and eligibility to apply for certification examinations for physicians who did not previously meet the eligibility requirements. Comments were due November 28, 2016, and an update regarding any changes to the criteria will be included in the spring newsletter.

Certification News

Letter from the Certification Council Chair



Matthew E. Fink, MD

I start my first letter as the Certification Council Chair by thanking my predecessor, Gregory Gruener, MD, MBA, for his dedicated and exemplary service to UCNS. It was under his steady leadership that the UCNS Certification Council accomplished so much and UCNS certification has prospered as it has. In addition, on behalf of UCNS, I thank Glen Fenton, MD, for his two terms serving as a Council member. His time on the Council included important policy issues and our heaviest application review cycle. His commitment to certification is appreciated.

As we are saddened to wish Dr. Gruener and Dr. Fenton farewell, we are glad to welcome two new Certification Council members: Nimish Mohile, MD, Assistant Professor at the University of Rochester Medical Center, representing the American Academy of Neurology, and Sean Goretzke, MD, Director of Child Neurology at the Saint Louis University School of Medicine, representing the Child Neurology Society.

This year we reach another benchmark in our evolution as we offer our first recertification examinations in Headache Medicine and Behavioral Neurology & Neuropsychiatry. With the application cycles complete, I am happy to report that a high number of physicians due for recertification applied to recertify, which clearly demonstrates that UCNS diplomates continue to find value in their certificates.



Matthew E. Fink, MD

Diplomate Highlight



Marshall C. Freeman, MD

Marshall C. Freeman, MD, is director of the Headache Wellness Center in Greensboro, North Carolina. Dr. Freeman completed his neurology residency and fellowship training at Columbia University. He is board certified in neurology, neuromuscular medicine, and electrodiagnostic medicine. He was part of the inaugural group certified in UCNS Headache Medicine in 2006.

Q: Why did you choose to practice medicine and go into the field of Headache Medicine?

A: I was raised in a family with a strong commitment to social responsibility. The practice of medicine seemed an ideal occupation to fulfill my passions for intellectual stimulation, lifelong learning, and direct and meaningful care to benefit others.

Q: How has UCNS certification benefitted you?

A: The UCNS certification process has created an active community, in which I participate, of like-minded and committed professionals who share the same goal of excellence of headache care. The certification has increased my status as a recognized expert in Headache Medicine, and has led to additional research, publishing, and speaking opportunities.

Q: Why is recertifying your UCNS credential important to you?

A: Recertification has provided me with a formal way to study and revisit core and new material in Headache Medicine. My patients, colleagues, and referral sources have an expectation that I will actively learn and stay updated on all areas involving Headache Medicine.

Q: What new treatments are there in Headache Medicine that you are most excited about?

A: I am most excited about the CGRP-modifying treatments. This is the first time since the introduction of sumatriptan in the early 1990s that unique migraine-specific therapies are being created. It is gratifying to see many of the major pharmaceutical companies have committed significant resources to developing this science.

2016 Examination Schedule

Subspecialty	Application Deadline	Examination Date	Location
Headache Medicine: Initial and Recertification	April 15, 2016	October 17-21, 2016	Pearson VUE
Behavioral Neurology & Neuropsychiatry: Initial and Recertification	May 16, 2016	November 14-18, 2016	Pearson VUE
Autonomic Disorders	July 15, 2016	December 5-9, 2016	Pearson VUE

2017 Examination Schedule

Subspecialty	Application Deadline	Examination Date	Location
Neuroimaging: Initial and Recertification	August 15, 2016	January 30-February 3, 2017	Pearson VUE
Neuro-oncology: Initial and Recertification	January 17, 2017	August 7-11, 2017	Pearson VUE
Clinical Neuromuscular Pathology	February 15, 2017	September 11-15, 2017	Pearson VUE
Neurocritical Care: Initial and Recertification	July 17, 2017	December 4-8, 2017	Pearson VUE

Accreditation News

Letter from the Accreditation Council Chair



Lori Schuh, MD

I am so pleased to officially announce the launch of the online accreditation interface. As mentioned in my previous letters, program directors will now be able to complete accreditation submissions online. More information will be sent specifically to program directors soon, including how to access their program records, how to use the interface, and what to expect in the coming months.

As we complete one project, we move onto the next. I've been honored to lead a subcommittee that has developed the first set of UCNS milestones. The pilot milestones document was reviewed by the Accreditation Council using the Headache Medicine subspecialty and following the format developed by ACGME. We received permission from ACGME to adapt the ACGME Milestones as best needed to suit our subspecialties. This collaboration will ensure that UCNS follows a standard for graduate medical education with which programs are already familiar. We look forward to working with all of the remaining UCNS subspecialties in 2016 and 2017.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L. Schuh".

Lori Schuh, MD

Program Director Highlight



P. James B. Dyck, MD

P. James B. Dyck, MD, is a consultant in neurology and a professor of neurology at the Mayo Clinic College of Medicine. He received his medical doctorate from the University of Minnesota, did a neurology residency at Washington University in St. Louis, MO, and did peripheral nerve, EMG, and research fellowships at the Mayo Clinic. In 1999, he joined the neurology faculty at Mayo Clinic. He is director of the Neuromuscular (Peripheral Nerve) Pathology Laboratory, the head of the peripheral nerve section, a former board member of UCNS, and chair of the UCNS Examination Committee for certification in Clinical Neuromuscular Pathology.

Q: Why did you choose to practice medicine and go into the field of Clinical Neuromuscular Pathology?

A: I am not entirely sure why I selected to become a neurologist. My father is a neurologist and when I was young, I thought that I would do any area of medicine except neurology so I would not compete with him. But as I went, I learned that I enjoyed neuromuscular neurology the most. I am now a clinical neurologist, an electrophysiologist, and a peripheral nerve pathologist. I like Clinical Neuromuscular Pathology because it integrates patient care with the pathophysiology of the disease. I find it very rewarding to see and examine patients, do their electrophysiological studies, and then read their nerve biopsies. One can often see problems clinically with a population of nerve fibers, then see that those fibers are involved both physiologically as well as pathologically. Then I can use the information I learned to treat the patient. I love this integration of the different aspects of my job.

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

A: I wanted to be able to process, read, and interpret nerve biopsies. At Mayo Clinic, we have large and busy muscle and nerve pathology labs. We do not want to have these taken over by pathology, instead we wanted to be able to have them continue to be run by neurology. UCNS accreditation allows us to have these labs and the training fellowship programs run by clinical neurologists with an interest in nerve and muscle pathology.

Q: What do you think attracts fellows to your program?

A: Fellows come to our program because we have an integrated training program where they can see patients with nerve and muscle diseases, learn how to evaluate them by electrophysiological tests, and learn how to process and interpret nerve and muscle biopsies. This is a wonderful opportunity to understand the whole spectrum of a disease and learn how to evaluate the disease, which is not available in most centers.

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Program Director Highlight continued from page 5

Q: What is your current research?

A: I am involved in research on inflammatory neuropathies, especially the inflammatory diabetic neuropathies. I am involved in research on targeted fascicular nerve biopsies and imaging of nerve. I am also involved in research in clinical trials in neuropathy, especially in TTR amyloidosis.

Q: If you had not chosen medicine, what career would you have chosen and why?

A: I had a lot of difficulty deciding to go into medicine. I was interested in being a history or religion professor. I was interested in being an architect. That said, I have been very satisfied with my career in medicine and most specifically in clinical neuromuscular pathology.

UCNS Accredits New Programs

Congratulations to the following programs that were reviewed during the spring 2016 meeting and received accreditation from UCNS effective December 1, 2016. A complete list of UCNS-accredited programs is available at <http://www.ucns.org/apps/directory/>. Newly accredited programs and fellowship directors are:

Behavioral Neurology & Neuropsychiatry	
Indiana University	Liana Apostolova, MD, MS
Neurocritical Care	
University of California, Davis	Hugh Black, MD
Harborview Medical Center/Methodist University Hospital	Pratik Patel, MD
University of Tennessee/Methodist University Hospital	Lucas Elijovich, MD
JFK Neuroscience Institute/Seton Hall University	Jawad Kirmani, MD
Neuroimaging	
Hattiesburg Clinic/University of Mississippi Medical Center	Gabriella Szatmary, MD, PhD
Neuro-oncology	
University of California, Irvine	Daniela Bota, MD, PhD

Apply for UCNS Accreditation by December 1

UCNS is accepting applications until December 1, 2016. Programs approved following this deadline may be accredited as of June 1, 2017. The next deadline for new program applications will be June 1, 2017.

Program Changes Require Approval

If you are planning changes in faculty, curriculum, or resources in your UCNS-accredited fellowship, you **must** receive approval of the change in order to maintain accreditation. The program change request procedure and templates are available on your subspecialty's accreditation page at www.ucns.org. **Failure to submit change requests in a timely manner may result in an adverse accreditation action.** Please contact Amanda Carpenter at acarpenter@ucns.org or 612-928-6065 with questions.

Submit Your News

UCNS wants to promote the accomplishments of its diplomates and program faculty. If you have news you would like to include in our newsletter, please send it to acarpenter@ucns.org.

Questions About UCNS?



Becky Swanson

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: What are the different accreditation fees and when are they due?

A: There are three accreditation fees:

- \$2,000 initial application fee due with the submission of a program information form
- \$1,000 reaccreditation application fee due with the submission of a reaccreditation information form
- \$1,500 annual fee for all accredited programs, which is due every year in July

Depending on when a program is due for accreditation, programs will have to pay both the reaccreditation fee and the annual fee in the same year. These are two different fees for two different services and both must be paid in order to maintain accreditation. Failure to pay the annual fee may result in an adverse accreditation action, which may include withdrawal of accreditation.

Q: Do I need to use the UCNS CME tracker to track my CMEs for recertification?

A: No. You can use any CME tracking method you wish; however, you must clearly indicate which CMEs on the CME report you submit with your application are specific to your subspecialty. The minimum number of subspecialty-specific CMEs to be submitted is 20% of the total CME requirement. You can visit your subspecialty's certification page to view the recertification requirements.

Staff

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

Subspecialty Recognition Inquiries

Brenda Riggott, Executive Director, (612) 928-6106 briggott@ucns.org

Certification Inquiries

Todd Bulson, Senior Manager, Certification, (612) 928-6067 tbulson@ucns.org

Accreditation Inquiries

Amanda Carpenter, Senior Manager, Accreditation, (612) 928-6065 acarpenter@ucns.org

General UCNS Inquiries

Becky Swanson, Executive Assistant, (612) 928-6050 bswanson@ucns.org



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The UCNS is sponsored by five parent organizations:

- American Academy of Neurology
www.aan.com
- American Neurological Association
www.aneuroa.org
- Association of University Professors of Neurology
www.aupn.org
- 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.

