

## Key Elements to a Bigger Paycheck

Certification • Experience • Location

**A**s part of our ongoing review of school nurses' salaries, in this issue we take a look at the effects of certification, years in practice, and geography.

### Does It Pay to Be Certified?

A review of school nurses' salaries as they relate to certification clearly shows that the answer to this question is a resounding yes! Regardless of which organization provides certification, the average pay of a certified school nurse is a minimum of 30% more than that of non-certified colleagues.

As to which agency provides this credential, it seems that the stature of the ANA as the oldest and best known nursing organization still puts it foremost when it comes to being paid — its credential still translates into the highest pay for school nurses. However, as the data show, the premium for this credential is lessening and reflects the greatest decline when compared with our 2000 survey. Required State certification ranks second in furthering school nurse earnings and, in the current survey, was the only category to show an increase in annual wages. These nurses are usually on teacher's scale.

Optional NCSN certification continues to be of least value in terms of incremental pay.


### Experience

Not surprisingly, the greater your length of practice, the more you earn. An encouraging note: 1 in 4 school nurses who have been in practice for more than 15 years report an annual income of more than \$55,000.

Approximately 25% of respondents who have been in practice for fewer than 5 years earn the average salary of \$35,000 we reported in a previous issue. This percentage rises to 37% for nurses in practice between 5 and 10 years. Once you've been in practice for 11–15 years, 61% of nurses earn at least this \$35,000 average.

### Geography

School nurses in the western United States and in the Pacific and Atlantic continue to be at the top of the pay scale, earning an average of \$44,418 annually. This is almost 20% more than colleagues in the Northeast, the second-best paid region of our country.

Sadly, and hard to believe, school nurses in the East South Central region report an annual income less than half that of the best-paid school nurses, earning on the average \$21,450 a year. We can all bet that the motivation of these school nurses is more than just earning a living. 

### AVERAGE ANNUAL SALARY BASED ON CERTIFICATION

	2001	2000
State certified	\$41,825	\$41,263
NCSN certified	\$37,395	\$38,747
ANA certified	\$42,750	\$45,521
Non-certified	\$28,709	\$29,107

### ANNUAL SALARY BASED ON YEARS IN PRACTICE

Salary	<5	5-10	11-15	15 +
Under \$15,000	9%	5%	3%	1%
\$15,000 – 20,000	13	9	4	2
\$20,001 – 25,000	21	13	8	6
\$25,001 – 30,000	14	19	11	8
\$30,001 – 35,000	18	19	13	15
\$35,001 – 40,000	14	15	13	8
\$40,001 – 45,000	6	13	14	17
\$45,001 – 50,000	2	4	14	8
\$50,001 – 55,000	2	2	9	11
Over \$55,000	1	2	11	23
Average Salary	\$27,981	\$31,457	\$39,071	\$42,872

### AVERAGE ANNUAL SALARY BASED ON PRACTICE LOCATION

Northeast – CT, ME, MA, NH, NJ, NY, PA, RI, VT	\$37,483
East North Central – IL, IN, MI, OH, WI	\$33,144
West North Central – IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD	\$27,235
S. Atlantic – DE, DC, FL, GA, MD, NC, SC, VA, WV	\$29,276
East South Central – AL, KY, MS, TN	\$21,450
West South Central – AR, LA, OK, TX	\$32,720
Mountain – CO, ID, MT, NM, NV, UT, WY	\$33,613
West and Pacific – AK, CA, HI, OR, WA	\$44,418