

# Patient Care Technician Certification: Promoting the Technical Expertise of Your PCTs to Improve Patient Care in a Technological World

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## INTRODUCTION

In the dialysis facility the nurse, physician, dietitian, social worker and PCT collaborate to provide patient care. It is the responsibility of the nurse to assess PCT knowledge and skill competency prior to the delegation of dialysis-specific tasks.

The Conditions for Coverage mandate that all PCTs were to be certified by April 15, 2010. In addition, the American Nephrology Nurses Association (ANNA) has a position statement in collaboration with the National Association of Nephrology Technicians (NANT) to support and encourage technicians to become certified.

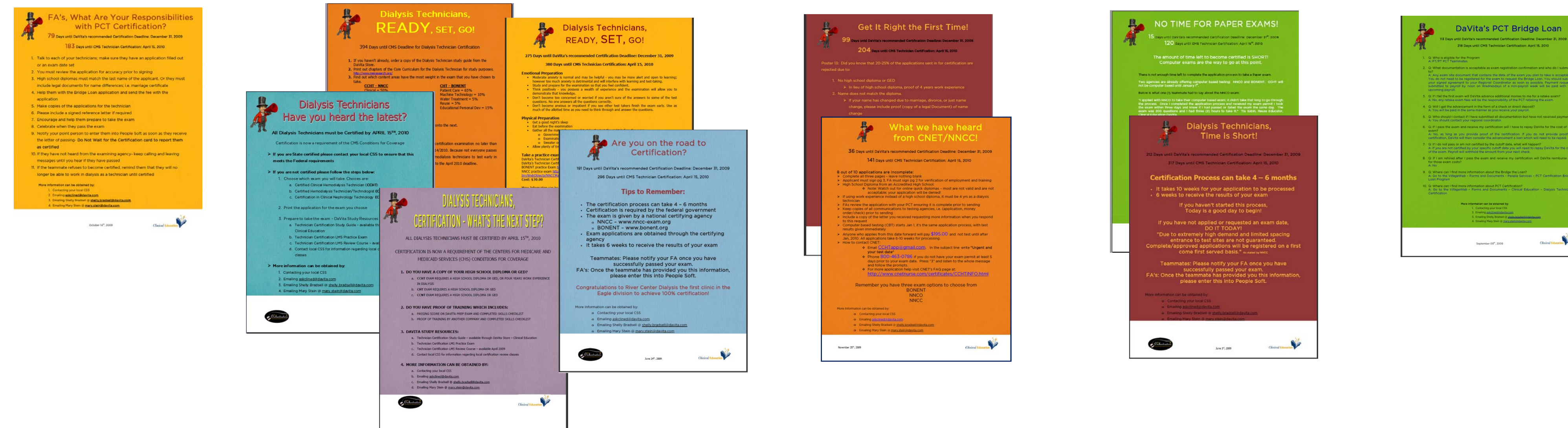
In a large dialysis organization, ensuring that all PCTs obtain certification before the deadline is challenging.

## METHODOLOGY

- Obstacles include direct communication to PCTs, test preparation and a limited number of certification test dates prior to on-line testing.
- To address these challenges, DaVita created a work group to implement a training program for PCT teammates.
- Posters were developed and distributed every two weeks via internal communication channels.
- Offered bridge loans, study materials, and electronic practice exams.

## SOLUTIONS OFFERED to PROMOTE PCT CERTIFICATION

1. Information for facility administrators
2. Provided information on exam providers, study materials and application requirements
3. Guidelines for submitting complete application
4. Provided certification timelines and reminders
5. Bridge loan program to pay for initial exam



## TEAM APPROACH

- Team approach used to encourage study and review through:
  - Study groups
  - Social workers involved in helping to overcome test anxiety
  - Physicians and Nurses testing PCT knowledge by providing informal "pop questions" throughout the shift

## RESULTS

- To date, nearly 7000 PCTs have taken the practice exam.

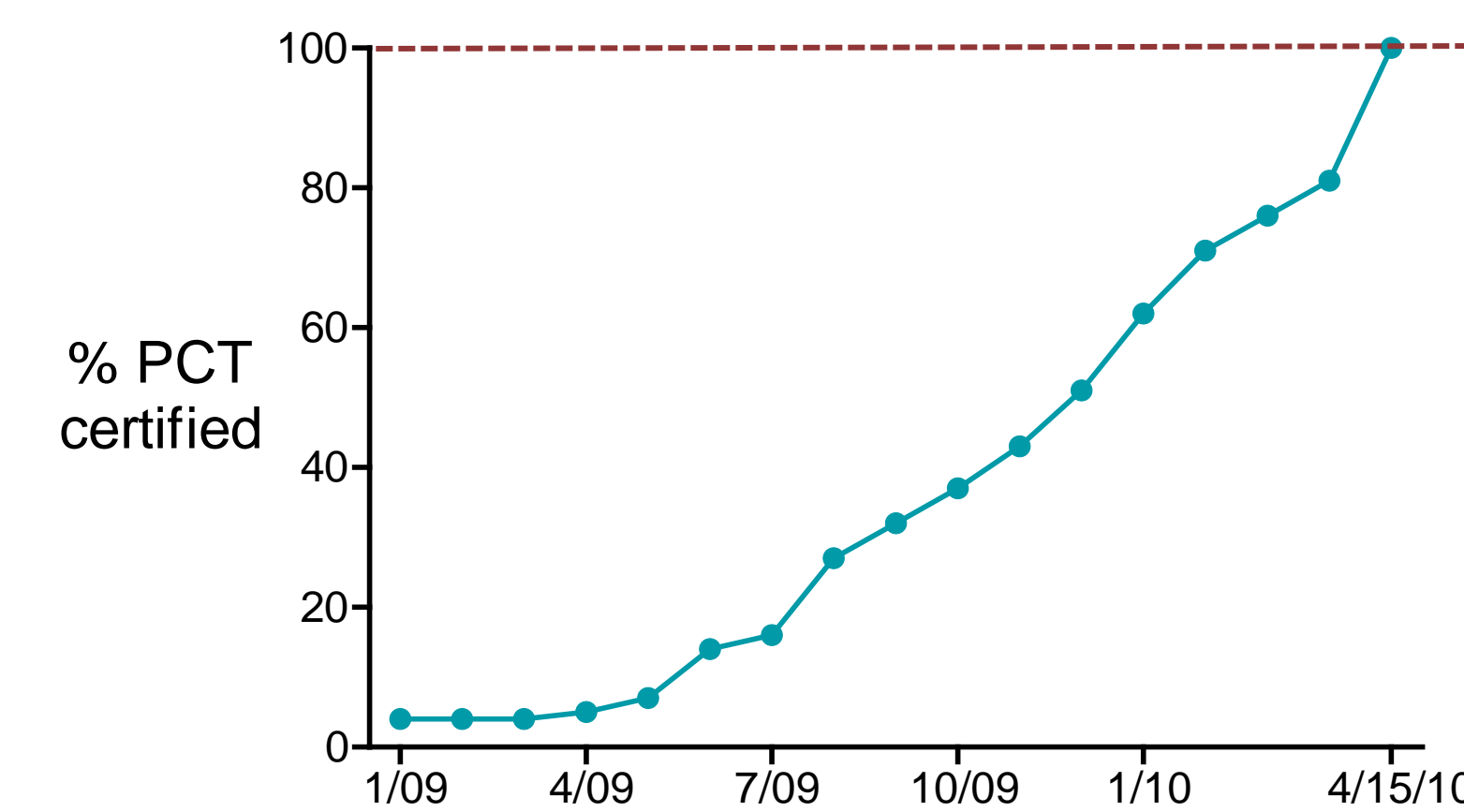


Figure 1. Percent of PCTs certified

## CONCLUSIONS

- Since the beginning of 2009, we have improved communication to PCTs about the certification and provided a number of preparation options, including:
  - a classroom-training program lead by a Clinical Services Specialist,
  - a study guide to prepare the PCT for the exam,
  - an interactive, online learning module, and
  - a practice exam to test knowledge.
- The percentage of PCT certified increased:
  - 23% within 6 months after the training program began and
  - 67% over the first year. (Figure 1)

## KEY LEARNINGS

- ✓ Through these efforts, our PCTs have become certified prior to the deadline, satisfying requirements and earning the confidence of patients, nurses and physicians.

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