



COMMISSION ON ACCREDITATION FOR  
RESPIRATORY CARE

November 14, 2014

Michael Madison, MBA, RRT, RCP  
President  
California Society for Respiratory Care  
1961 Main Street #246  
Watsonville, CA 95076

Dear Mr. Madison,

This letter is the response of the Commission on Accreditation for Respiratory Care (CoARC) to the petition from the California Society for Respiratory Care (CSRC), dated September 20, 2014. The following comments are intended to serve as points of clarification as well as provide a more accurate description of accreditation services provided by the CoARC:

**CSRC Petition #1**

**That the CoARC recognize “states who have adopted the National Board for Respiratory Care (NBRC) Registered Respiratory Therapist (RRT) Credential [as] “Advanced Credential States.”**

**CoARC comment:**

Since 1962, the *Accreditation Standards for the Profession of Respiratory Care* (the “Standards”) have been the minimum requirements to which all accredited respiratory care programs in the U.S. are held accountable. As noted in your request, the current *Standards* mandate that all accredited programs prepare students with knowledge and competencies consistent with those required by the national credentialing examination for RRTs. As a national accrediting agency recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), the CoARC cannot establish *Standards* or policies specific to particular states or institutions. Accordingly, recognition of “advanced credential states”, as referenced in the CSSR’s resolutions, is outside the scope and purpose of the CoARC’s mandate.

**CSRC Petition #2**

**That the CoARC require “schools within those “Advanced Credential States” to achieve and maintain a minimum student pass rate on the NBRC RRT Exam.”**

**CoARC comment:**

As a point of clarification, the CoARC does not require programs to achieve minimum pass rates (i.e., the number passing divided by the number attempting) for the NBRC examinations. Rather, it requires programs to report credentialing success (i.e., the number of graduates earning the credential divided by the total number of graduates).



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A key component of the mission of the CoARC is to ensure that respiratory care education programs successfully prepare students for entry into the profession, which as noted above, is at the RRT level. To assess this outcome, the CoARC has relied on the results of several program outcome measures, including results of national credentialing examinations administered by the NBRC following graduation. Historically, there have been separate examinations for the Certified Respiratory Therapist (CRT) and the Registered Respiratory Therapist (RRT) credentials. As noted in your petition, the NBRC will soon be administering the new Therapist Multiple-Choice (TMC) Examination whereby graduates of all CoARC-accredited programs will take one written examination with two cut scores rather than two separate written examinations. Candidates that achieve the higher of the two cut scores will have passed the first part of the two-part process for achieving the NBRC RRT credential. According to Standard 3.01, all CoARC-accredited programs must have the minimum goal of preparing graduates *“with demonstrated competence in the cognitive (knowledge), psychomotor (skills), and affective (behavior) learning domains of respiratory care practice as performed by registered respiratory therapists (RRTs).”* The TMC will provide an outcome metric which directly assesses this goal, i.e., the number of program graduates that achieve the higher cut score. The CoARC will be discussing the implications of these new data at its upcoming meetings and we will update our communities of interest on any decisions related to this.

Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to respond. I hope that these comments address the issues raised in your petition. Feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kathy J. Rye". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "K" and "R".

Kathy J. Rye, EdD, RRT, FAARC, President

C: Tom Smalling, CoARC Executive Director  
Jack Bierig, CoARC Chief Legal Counsel at Sidley Austin, LLP  
George Gaebler, AARC President  
Carl Haas, NBRC President