
One Certified PA's Motivation for Earning the Certificate of Added Qualifications (CAQ) in Emergency Medicine

A personal challenge. A professional badge of honor. That's what the Certificate of Added Qualifications (CAQ) in Emergency Medicine means to Randy Orsborn, PA-C.

Orsborn decided to earn the Emergency Medicine CAQ in 2011, the program's inaugural year, as a way to challenge himself and to give others confidence in his abilities. Throughout his career, he never thought of being a certified PA as "just a job; it's a passion," says Orsborn. "During my 14 years of practice, I always asked myself, 'What separates me from the other guy? Why should this patient see me instead of someone else?'" For him, the CAQ was the perfect way to document his experience and dedication to the specialty and his patients, showing his employers, coworkers, and patients that he went above and beyond what was expected.



Randy Orsborn, PA-C, (left) and Dr. Brad Smith (right) discuss a patient's case at Knox Community Hospital.

Orsborn joined the Knox Community Hospital emergency department in Mount Vernon, Ohio, in 2008 and helped start the hospital's Urgent Care Center in 2011. There, with his supervising physician, Dr. Brad Smith, Medical Director of the Urgent Care Center, he treats a rural population including a large percentage of people without insurance. In addition to local patients, they treat many vacationers and visitors to local colleges.

The patient volume at the Urgent Care Center has increased over the years. "The Emergency Medicine CAQ has challenged me to stay on top of my game so that I am prepared to handle the patient cases that come through the door," Orsborn says.

In addition to working at the hospital, Orsborn is a mentor to prospective PA students and a preceptor to current PA and NP students. He believes the CAQ helps him when working with them. "I wanted some type of professional badge that I could use to set an example for the students. Plus, studying for the CAQ exam helped me stay current with emergency medicine knowledge and procedures, which is extremely helpful when precepting."

Since earning his CAQ, Orsborn has been able to negotiate more perks in his renewed contract with Knox Community Hospital and was able to secure a higher hourly rate for a new part-time locum tenens position.

"The personal pride alone from earning the CAQ is worth the effort put into it. The additional contract perks and increased hourly rate show me that my employers put value in the CAQ, too."

And certainly, Dr. Smith recognizes and appreciates the value of the CAQ. He says: "Randy was well prepared to achieve this goal, and patients benefit from that. He has great ability to discern whether symptoms point to routine illness or signal an oncoming catastrophic event."

In addition to having earned his CAQ in emergency medicine, Orsborn is a certified Clinical Lipid Specialist. He was one of the first certified PAs in Ohio to earn the CAQ.

Want to prove to yourself, your employer and your patients that you have what it takes to carry this distinction? To learn more about the CAQs NCCPA offers in emergency medicine, cardiovascular and thoracic surgery, hospital medicine, nephrology, orthopaedic surgery, pediatrics, and psychiatry, visit www.nccpa.net/SpecialtyCAQs. Remember, you have six years to complete the requirements (experience, CME, physician attestation and patient cases) before taking the exam, so if you're not ready to take the exam this year, that's alright – you can always start the process now and complete the remaining requirements at a later date!