Purpose
To demonstrate that the RN retention rate is increased with:

• Nurses who become CRRN’s.
• Nurses who are validated and rewarded through recognition and incentive programs.
• Nurses who feel that their competence and professionalism are enhanced through CRRN certification.

Background and Data
Changes in Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) regulations require acute rehabilitation facilities to include on the treating team, “a registered nurse with specialized training and experience in rehabilitation services” (CMS, 2012, p.3).

HealthSouth recently implemented a companywide policy asking all RN’s to sit for their CRRN exam.

As a HealthSouth IRF, we employ 105 registered nurses for over 20 years. When asked, 80% of our nurses felt more professional and competent after passing the CRRN exam.

Our Pathway to Rehabilitation Excellence and Nurse Retention
Florence Oppong, RN, BSN CRRN®
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Program Elements
EDUCATION
• Two-day exam preparation course based on The Core Curriculum
• Study and review sessions
• Self study resources
• HealthStream/online courses

REIMBURSEMENT
• Education course provided at no charge
• Staff is paid education time to attend the course and study sessions
• The facility pays for the cost of the exam and the ARN membership fee
• Reimbursement of exam fee for up to two attempts.
• Reimbursement of certification renewal each five years

FINANCIAL INCENTIVE
• Bonus given once the RN passes the exam
• $1,000 one-time bonus for full-time employees and $500 for part-time employees
• $2,000 one-time annual equivalent pay increase added to hourly pay

RECOGNITION
• CRRN lanyard
• CRRN designation pin from ARN
• Professional pictures are taken and hung on a CRRN Wall of Honor on each unit
• Annual luncheon during Nurse’s Week
• Recognition of nurses who passed the exam in our newsletter and the local newspaper
• Facility-wide recognition award celebration event twice a year
• Letter from hospital CEO and CNO

Results
Nursing turnover amongst CRRN’s is very low: in 2012, two CRRN’s retired, and so far in 2013, one CRRN changed to per diem status. Length of service among our CRRN’s ranges from 43 years to two years, with five of our CRRN’s working here as rehab nurses for over 20 years. When asked, 80% of our nurses felt more professional and competent after passing the CRRN exam.

Discussion
When we asked our CRRN’s about their motivation to become a CRRN their number one reason was to improve their ability to provide expert patient care. The majority of our CRRN’s feel more competent and professional once they passed the exam and 80% of our CRRN’s feel more invested in remaining here. The national figures for direct care RN turnover is 11.5%. Our turnover rate is 3.4%.

Conclusion
RN’s, who obtain a specialty certification such as the CRRN, have been found to have increased job satisfaction and retention (Craven, 2007). A company who promotes, facilitates and recognizes the nurses who show this commitment, will see the benefit in reduced turnover rates and increased patient satisfaction. As one of our nurses observed, her patient really enjoyed finding her nurses’ picture on the “CRRN Wall of Honor” (see below).

References