CUSON-Led American Board of Comprehensive Care Receives National Accreditation

NEW YORK, NY (January 16, 2012) – The American Board of Comprehensive Care (ABCC), based at the Columbia University School of Nursing (CUSON), is an independent organization founded in 2007 for the purpose of certifying nurse practitioner graduates of Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) programs who have met defined and accepted standards for comprehensive care. The ABCC Diplomate of Comprehensive Care (DCC) program and its certification exam have now been accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies.

With this newly granted historic designation, the ABCC/DCC program becomes the only organization nationally recognized to offer a certifying examination for DNP graduates in the provision of care throughout the life span and across clinical settings.

"The ABCC/DCC program’s accreditation is a major milestone in ongoing efforts to make this Diplomate status a standard for DNP’s nationwide and a symbol of their ability to deliver high-quality, comprehensive clinical care,” said CUSON Dean Bobbie Berkowitz, PhD, RN, FAAN. "Such standardized assessments of clinical competence are essential if the U.S. health care system is to have the supply of highly qualified nurse practitioners it so badly needs in the coming years."

CUSON has been a pioneer in clinical doctoral education, with a 25-year history of building independent faculty practice. The CUSON faculty practice model and findings from the randomized clinical trial that demonstrated equivalency in outcomes of care between advanced practice nurses and primary care physicians (JAMA, 2000), served as the basis for the school’s development of the first nursing clinical doctorate.

The ABCC is an autonomous arm of the Council for the Advancement of Comprehensive Care (CACC), which was established in 2000. The Council is a consortium of distinguished nurse, physician, public policy and academic leaders. CACC’s mission is to develop and promulgate the clinical doctoral role and measurable standards of practice through certification.

In order to distinguish DNP graduates who have achieved a high level of competence in comprehensive care, CACC established the certifying board ABCC, and worked with the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) to develop the ABCC certification exam. The NBME develops and manages a number of competency exams, including the United States Medical Licensing Examination® (USMLE®).

All four ABCC Examinations, through the most current administration in 2011, have been comparable in content, similar in format, measure the same set of competencies and apply similar performance standards as Step 3 of the USMLE, which is administered to physicians as the final component of qualifying for licensure. Those who pass the ABCC exam are awarded a DCC designation.

“As the need for comprehensive care in this country dramatically increases, Diplomates of Comprehensive Care offer the public a nationally recognized standard, which is consistent with the new
Consensus Model for Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Regulation: Licensure, Accreditation, Certification and Education,” said ABCC Board Chair Janice Smolowitz, EdD, DNP, ANP-BC, DCC, Professor of Clinical Nursing and Senior Associate Dean at CUSON.

The ABCC and its programs are supported by grants from foundations and universities, as well as examination fees, and revenues from certification-related activities. ABCC sponsors have included: the federal government, New York State, the Josiah Macy Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the Teagle Foundation, the Commonwealth Foundation, the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations, the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, and many other private donations. For more information about the ABCC, go to www.abcc.org.

About the Columbia University School of Nursing
Since its founding in 1892, the Columbia University School of Nursing (CUSON) has been dedicated to preparing clinically excellent nurses, nurse practitioners, and scholars. As nursing educators and clinical professionals, CUSON faculty focus on addressing the needs of underserved and vulnerable populations, both in practice and research. Today, CUSON has clinical partnerships at more than 200 clinical practice sites throughout New York City and affiliations with three major medical centers. CUSON has a long history of “firsts,” including awarding a master’s degree in a clinical nursing specialty, developing the Doctor of Nursing Practice degree, having its faculty gain full admitting privileges to a major teaching hospital, and being designated a World Health Organization Collaborating Center for Advanced Practice Nursing. CUSON also is among the highest-ranked nursing schools in federal research grants awarded per faculty. www.nursing.columbia.edu.