

CERTIFIED HYPERTENSION CLINICIAN EXAMINATION

Handbook for Candidates

Application Deadline	Examination Window
February 4, 2019	March 2 – March 16, 2019
July 31, 2019	August 31 – September 14, 2019

SPONSORED BY:

AMERICAN HYPERTENSION SPECIALIST CERTIFICATION PROGRAM*

*Formerly the ASH Specialists Program, Inc.



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This handbook contains necessary information about the Certified Hypertension Clinician (CHC) Examination. Please retain it for future reference. Candidates are responsible for reading these instructions carefully. This handbook is subject to change.

PURPOSE OF THE EXAMINATION

The Certified Hypertension Clinicians Program was formed by the American Hypertension Specialist Certification Program (AHSCP), formerly the ASH Specialist Program, in 2014 in response to the growing recognition that the hypertension problem requires the coordinated effort of front-line health care providers with documented expertise in managing hypertension. The American Hypertension Specialist Certification Program created the Certified Hypertension Clinician (CHC) designation for the specific purpose of identifying and recognizing health care providers with expert skills and knowledge in the management of clinical hypertension.

ADMINISTRATION

The CHC Examination is administered for AHSCP by the Professional Testing Corporation (PTC). Questions concerning the examination should be referred to PTC at the following address:

Professional Testing Corporation
1350 Broadway – Suite 800, New York, NY 10018
(212) 356-0660

ptcny@ptcny.com www.ptcny.com

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

1. Two years of direct patient care experience in hypertension is recommended.
2. Candidates must meet one of the following eligibility requirements:
 - NURSE PRACTITIONERS**
Currently is licensed or certified as a nurse practitioner in the United States. **Please submit a copy of your current license or certification with your application.**
 - CLINICAL NURSE SPECIALISTS**
Currently is licensed or certified as a clinical nurse specialist in the United States. **Please submit a copy of your current license or certification with your application.**
 - PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS**
Currently is licensed or certified as a physician assistant in the United States. **Please submit a copy of your current license or certification with your application.**
 - PHARMACISTS**
Currently is licensed as a pharmacist in the United States and has completed at least one year of residency (PGY-1) or equivalent patient care training, or three years of direct patient care practice experience (requires a signed attestation from current supervisor). **Please submit a copy of your Pharmacist license as well as proof of completion of residency and/or an attestation from your current supervisor confirming three years of direct patient care practice with your application.**
 - PHYSICIANS**
Currently is licensed as a Doctor of Medicine (MD) or Doctor of Osteopathy (DO) in the United States and has completed residency in Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Pediatrics or Gynecology. **Please submit a copy of your current license and proof of completion of residency (or primary board certification) with your application.**
3. Complete and file the online application for the Certified Hypertension Clinician Examination.
4. Pay the required fee.

APPLYING FOR THE EXAMINATION

Step 1 – Complete Application

Go to www.ptcny.com/clients/AHSCP to view examination testing periods, application deadlines, and link to the online application. You must complete the examination application in full, using your name exactly as it appears on your current government issued photo ID such as a driver’s license or a passport. Applications are not considered complete until all information has been provided. The completed application can be submitted and paid for online. Retain the link to the application and your login information.

Please note, for new applications you will be asked to create a PIN number. This PIN will be used when going into your existing application.

Step 2 - Submit Application for Review

Receive email from PTC stating that your application has been received.

Step 3 – Receive Approval of Application

Receive email from PTC stating that your application has been approved.

Step 4 – Submit Payment for Examination Application

Return to your online application and submit payment. The payment must be submitted when the approval notice is received.

Step 5 – Receive Scheduling Authorization and Schedule Testing Appointment

Within six (6) weeks prior to the start of the testing period, candidates will receive a Scheduling Authorization from PTC via email from notices@ptcny.com. The Scheduling Authorization includes an eligibility number and information on how to set up your examination location, date, and time through PSI. Retain this document.

You must present your current driver’s license, passport, or U.S. Military ID at the testing center at the time of your examination appointment or you will be refused admission. The name on the ID must exactly match the name on the Scheduling Authorization.

EXAMINATION FEES

Please note that the fee is NOT refundable.

Examination Fee for the CHC: \$600.00

Fee must be submitted in U.S. dollars
Visa, MasterCard, and American Express are accepted.

Please make checks and money orders out to: PROFESSIONAL TESTING CORPORATION

REFUNDS/TRANSFER POLICY

There will be no refund of fees. **Please be advised: PSI does not have the authority to grant transfers or refunds. All requests must be made through PTC.**

Candidates unable to take the examination during their scheduled testing period may request a **ONE-TIME** transfer to the immediate next testing period. **There is a transfer fee of \$250.00.** After you have transferred once by paying the \$250.00 fee, you will need to pay the full examination fee in order to transfer a second time; so, ***please plan carefully.***

Please note: requests to transfer to a new testing period must be received within 1 month of your originally scheduled testing period.

Candidates wishing to transfer to a new testing period need to follow the steps below.

1. Go to <http://secure.ptcny.com/apply>.
2. Click "Start New Application."
3. Choose AHSCP-CHC in the first drop down menu; then choose the new examination period in the second drop down menu and fill out the rest of the information on the page.
4. Fill out the application completely and upload your current medical license (the remainder of the required documentation is not needed).
5. In the "Comments" section, type a note saying your transferring from your original testing period (Month and Year) to the next testing period (Month and Year).
6. Click "Submit Application".
7. PTC Support will send you an email letting you know your new application was approved and that you can log back into your application and pay the \$250.00 transfer fee.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING TRANSFERRING TO A NEW TESTING PERIOD

- **Call 212-356-0660 if you have any questions regarding the transferring process.**
- **If candidates are unable to attend the examination on the date for which they registered and elect not to transfer to another testing period, the application will be closed and all fees will be forfeited. There will be no refund of fees.**
- **The transfer fee is based on cost and is not punitive in nature. The transfer fee must be paid at the time the request for transfer is approved. The candidate is responsible for contacting PSI and canceling the original examination appointment, if one was made.**
- **Exams may only be transferred to a new testing period once; please plan carefully.**

- **Transferring your examination only refers to instances when a candidate is unable to take their exam during a testing period for which they have already applied. Candidates who did not pass their examination and are retaking the examination need to pay the full Examination Fee.**
- **If you need to reschedule within the same testing period please see “Changing Your Examination Appointment” on page 6.**

EXAMINATION ADMINISTRATION

During the established testing periods, the CHC Examination is administered daily (Monday through Saturday), excluding holidays, at computer-based testing facilities managed by PSI. PSI has several hundred testing sites in the United States, as well as Canada. Scheduling is done on a first-come, first-serve basis. To find a testing center near you, visit www.ptcny.com/cbt/sites or call PSI at (833) 207-1288. Please note: Hours and days of availability vary at different centers. **You will not be able to schedule your examination appointment until you have received a Scheduling Authorization from PTC.**

ONLINE TESTING SOFTWARE TUTORIAL

A free Testing Software Tutorial can be viewed online. This online tutorial can give you an idea about the features of the testing software. Please visit: www.ptcny.com/cbt/demo to access this tutorial.

SCHEDULING YOUR EXAMINATION APPOINTMENT Once your application has been received and processed, and your eligibility verified, you will be emailed a Scheduling Authorization from notices@ptcny.com. The Scheduling Authorization will indicate how to schedule your examination appointment as well as the dates during which testing is available. Appointment times are first-come, first-served, so schedule your appointment as soon as you receive your Scheduling Authorization in order to maximize your chance of testing at your preferred location and on your preferred date.

A candidate not receiving a Scheduling Authorization or other correspondence at least three (3) weeks before the beginning of the two-week testing period should contact the Professional Testing Corporation by telephone at (212) 356-0660. See below for more information regarding the Scheduling Authorization.

You MUST present your current driver’s license, passport, or U.S. military ID at the test center. Temporary, paper driver’s licenses are not accepted. The name on your Scheduling Authorization must exactly match the name on your photo I.D. PTC recommends candidates bring a paper copy of their Scheduling Authorization as well as their PSI appointment confirmation email. After you make your test appointment, PSI will send you a confirmation email with the date, time, and location of your examination. Please check this confirmation carefully for the correct date, time, and location. Contact PSI at (833) 207-1288 if you do not receive this email confirmation or if there is a mistake with your appointment.

- **It is your responsibility as the candidate to contact PSI to schedule the examination appointment.**
- **It is highly recommended that you become familiar with the testing site prior to the scheduled test date.**
- **Arrival at the testing site at the appointed time is the responsibility of the candidate. Please plan for weather, traffic, parking, and any security requirements that are specific to the testing location. Late arrival may prevent you from testing.**

CHANGING YOUR EXAMINATION APPOINTMENT

If you need to cancel your examination appointment or reschedule to a different date within the testing period, you must contact PSI at (833) 207-1288 no later than noon, Eastern Standard Time, of the second business day PRIOR to your scheduled appointment. Examination appointments can only be rescheduled to a different date within the same testing period and are subject to the availability of appointments.

PSI does not have the authority to authorize refunds or transfers to another testing period.

Please note: Canceling your examination appointment will result in a forfeit of examination fees. Be sure to choose your examination period carefully before applying for the examination.

RULES FOR THE EXAMINATION

1. You must present your current driver's license, passport, or U.S. Military ID at the time of your scheduled appointment. Candidates without their valid ID will NOT be permitted to test. It is recommended you also bring paper copies of your PTC Scheduling Authorization and PSI Appointment Confirmation emails.
2. All Electronic devices that can be used to record, transmit, receive, or play back audio, photographic, text, or video content, including but not limited to, cell phones, laptop computers, tablets, Bluetooth devices; wearable technology such as smart watches; MP3 players such as iPods, pagers, cameras and voice recorders are not permitted to be used and cannot be taken in the examination room. The test center may have lockers or you may be asked to lock your personal items in your car. For this reason, we suggest that you do not bring personal items with you, other than what is specifically needed for your examination.
3. No papers, books, or reference materials may be taken into or removed from the examination room.
4. No questions concerning content of the examination may be asked during the examination session. The candidate should read carefully the directions that are provided on screen at the beginning of the examination session.
5. Candidates are prohibited from leaving the testing room while their examination is in session, with the sole exception of going to the restroom.
6. Bulky clothing, such as sweatshirts (hoodies), jackets, coats and hats, except hats worn for religious reasons, may not be worn while taking the examination.
7. All watches and "Fitbit" type devices cannot be worn during the examination. It is suggested that these items are not brought to the test center.

SPECIAL TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS

AHSCP and PTC support the intent of and comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). PTC will take steps reasonably necessary to make certification accessible to persons with disabilities covered by the ADA. Special testing arrangements may be made upon receipt of the Application, examination fee, and a completed and signed Request for Special Needs Accommodations Form, available from www.ptcny.com or by calling PTC at (212) 356-0660. This form must be uploaded with the online application at least EIGHT weeks before the testing period begins. Please use this form if you need to bring a service dog, medicine, food or beverages needed for a medical condition with you to the testing center.

Only those requests made and received on the official Request for Special Needs Accommodations Form (found at www.ptcny.com) will be reviewed. Letters from doctors and other healthcare professionals

must be accompanied by the official Form and will not be accepted without the Form. Information supplied on the Request for Special Accommodations form will only be used to determine the need for special accommodations and will be kept confidential.

INTERNATIONAL TESTING

Candidates outside of the United States and Canada must complete and submit the Request for Special Testing Center Form found on the www.ptcny.com homepage. This form must be uploaded to your application no later than 8 weeks prior to the start of the chosen testing period. Fees for testing at an international computer test center (outside of the United States and Canada) are \$100.00 in addition to the examination fee. PTC will arrange a computer based examination at an international test center for you.

All examinations are administered in English.

REPORT OF RESULTS

All candidates will be notified in writing by PTC, of their official scores (scores on the major areas of the examination and on the total examination will be reported) within approximately four weeks of the close of the testing period. Please note that this time is necessary to allow for the psychometric review and administration time required to ensure accurate and reliable scores.

Please note that official scores will not be released at the testing center but will be sent via mail within four weeks following the close of the testing period.

Please notify PTC as soon as possible regarding any address changes to ensure that you will receive your official test scores.

REEXAMINATION

The CHC Examination may be taken as often as desired upon filing of a new application and fee. There is no limit to the number of times an examination may be repeated, however, candidates may not retest during the same testing period.

ATTAINMENT OF CERTIFICATION AND RECERTIFICATION

Eligible candidates who pass the Certified Hypertension Clinician Examination are eligible to use the designation CHC after their names and will receive certificates from AHSCP. A registry of Certified Hypertension Clinicians will be maintained by AHSCP and may be reported in its publications.

Certification as a CHC is recognized for a period of ten years at which time the candidate must retake and pass the current Certified Hypertension Clinician Examination or meet such alternative requirements as are in effect at that time in order to retain certification.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF EXAMINATION SCORES

1. The American Hypertension Specialist Certification Program will release the individual examination scores in writing ONLY to the individual candidate.
2. Any questions concerning test results should be referred to the Professional Testing Corporation, at 212-356-0660.

CONTENT OF THE EXAMINATION

1. The Certified Hypertension Clinician Examination is a computer-based examination composed of a maximum of 175 multiple-choice, objective questions with a total testing time of three (3) hours.
2. The content for the examination is described in the Content Outline provided in this handbook.
3. The questions for the examination are obtained from individuals with expertise in clinical hypertension and are reviewed for construction, accuracy, and appropriateness by the AHSCP.
4. The AHSCP prepares the examination with the advice and assistance of the Professional Testing Corporation.
5. The Certified Hypertension Clinician Examination covers five content areas and will be weighted in approximately the following manner:

I.	Scientific Foundations	15%
II.	Assessment and Diagnosis	15%
III.	Secondary Hypertension	10%
IV.	Treatment	40%
V.	Special Populations and Conditions	20%

CONTENT OUTLINE

I. SCIENTIFIC FOUNDATIONS

- A. Physiology (e.g. hemodynamics, renin-angiotensin-aldosterone system, sympathetic nervous system)
- B. Pathophysiology
- C. Epidemiology (e.g. risk, prevalence, importance of systolic hypertension, control rates)
- D. Clinical Trials
- E. Principles of Drug Action (e.g. Pharmacology)

II. ASSESSMENT AND DIAGNOSIS

- A. Blood Pressure Measurement/Monitoring
- B. History and Physical Exam Findings
- C. BP Classification
- D. Diagnostic Testing
- E. Target Organ Damage

III. SECONDARY HYPERTENSION

- A. Renal Parenchymal Disease
- B. Renovascular
- C. Endocrine
- D. Obstructive Sleep Apnea
- E. Pharmacologic (e.g. prescription, non-prescription, illicit, complementary therapies)
- F. Vascular (e.g. coarctation)

IV. TREATMENT

- A. Prevention
- B. Population Health and Screening (e.g. Million Hearts, Healthy People Initiatives)
- C. Lifestyle Modification
- D. Goals of Therapy (e.g. targets, evidence based therapy, guidelines)
- E. Drug Therapy (e.g. drugs, combination therapy, approaches)
- F. Drug Interactions
- G. Adherence
- H. Barriers to Treatment and Control (e.g. psychosocial, socioeconomic issues)
- I. Ongoing Management
 - 1. Referral, Frequency of Follow-up (visits and labs)
 - 2. Self-measurement and Out of Office Monitoring
 - 3. Team Based Care (handoffs, review with collaborating team)
- J. Cardiovascular Risk Factor Assessment and Management

V. SPECIAL POPULATIONS AND CONDITIONS

- A. Hypertensive Crisis/Emergencies/Urgencies/Malignant Hypertension
- B. Difficult to Treat/Resistant Hypertension
- C. Orthostatic Hypotension
- D. Co-existing Kidney Disease (e.g. proteinuria, diabetic nephropathy, renal failure, transplant)
- E. Co-existing Heart Disease (e.g. coronary artery disease, myocardial infarction, heart failure)
- F. Co-existing Vascular Disease (e.g. aortic aneurysm, stroke, peripheral arterial disease)
- G. Treatment of Hypertension in Hospitalized Patients (e.g. perioperative)
- H. Hypertension in Pregnancy (e.g. drug choice, when to refer)
- I. Vulnerable Populations (e.g. indigent, frail elderly)
- J. Environmental Situations (e.g. altitude, noise)
- K. Psychiatric Disorders (e.g. panic)
- L. Children and Adolescents

SAMPLE EXAMINATION QUESTIONS

The following are samples of the types of questions that may appear on the Certified Hypertension Clinician Examination. These sample questions are intended for candidates to view how test questions are structured. Please note these are samples and these specific questions will not appear on the examination.

1. As men and women age from 20 to 80 years, the average level of systolic blood pressure generally
 1. increases.
 2. decreases.
 3. stays the same.
 4. plateaus then decreases.

2. Doxazosin in combination with other drugs is the most appropriate treatment for patients with hypertension and
 1. heart failure.
 2. mild depression.
 3. benign prostatic hypertrophy.
 4. chronic obstructive lung disease.

3. Patients adherent to the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) diet typically show
 1. weight gain.
 2. increased sodium excretion.
 3. reduction of systolic and diastolic blood pressure.
 4. blood pressure reduction only when combined with pharmaceutical therapy.

4. A hypertensive emergency would most likely be produced by an abrupt withdrawal of
 1. prazosin.
 1. atenolol.
 2. lisinopril.
 3. clonidine.

ANSWER KEY	
Question #	Answer
1	1
2	3
3	3
4	4

REFERENCES

The CHC Task Force has developed a Study/Reference List for the Certified Hypertension Clinicians (CHC) Examination. The CHC Study/Reference List can be downloaded at <http://www.ahscp.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/CHC-Study-Guide.pdf>. Those who are preparing to take the Examination for the CHC Certification may find this a useful document. However, the CHC Study/Reference List may not include all relevant material and references; nor is it suggested that the Examination will be exclusively based on the CHC Study/Reference List.