

5 Things to Know About Certification

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If you're thinking about a profession in allied health, or you're already in the field and ready to advance your career, you've probably started looking into certification.

There's a lot of information out there and it can seem overwhelming. Just one Google search can leave you confused and frustrated. Do you even need a certification? Does it matter which certification? How do you begin?

We've simplified your search and explained — in plain English — the five most important things to know about the importance of allied health certification.





What is certification?

A certification is an official confirmation that you have certain qualifications and expertise. Essentially, it's a hard-earned piece of paper that validates your competencies in core areas of the allied health field. Employers, especially in the allied health fields — where lives are literally at stake — need to be confident in their team members, which is why most prefer, if not require, certification.



WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A “CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION” AND A “CERTIFICATION CREDENTIAL?”

Many people confuse a certificate of completion awarded by a training program with certification. It’s important to note that these are two different things, serving very different purposes:

- A certificate of completion proves you completed your training.
- A certification proves that you retained the most important knowledge from that training.

Not all training programs are the same. Your program may have required multiple courses covering a wide range of topics, or it may be more condensed. This means that not all certificates of completion are seen as equal in the eyes of employers.

A nationally recognized certification demonstrates that no matter what path of training you took, you obtained the core knowledge expected by your potential employers. By successfully passing a certification exam, you earn a credential that employers throughout the country understand and respect. Many people choose to have both a certificate of completion and a certification.

NHA has awarded over 500,000 allied healthcare certifications.

	CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION	CERTIFICATION
Recognized nationally		•
Proves you retained core competencies		•
May be required by an employer	•	•
Requires continuing education		•
May be based on local requirements	•	

WHY DO BOTH?

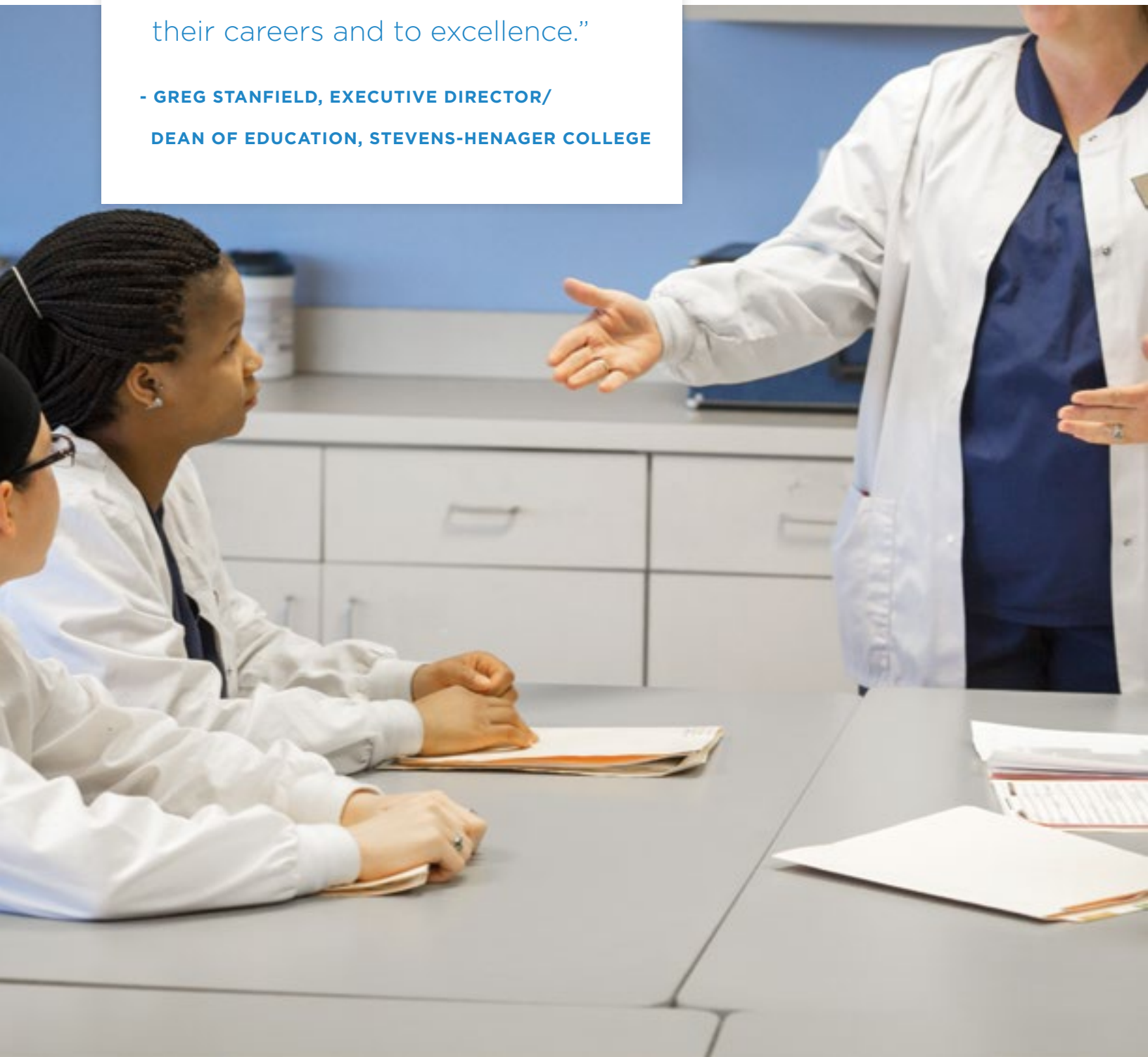
Unless you decide to further your education, once you receive your training certificate of completion you don't need to do anything more to keep that certificate. But, as we know, allied health fields keep evolving. When practicing in a field that's ever-changing, it's vital for you to stay current. By getting and maintaining your certification, you prove that not only did you achieve a certain standard of excellence,

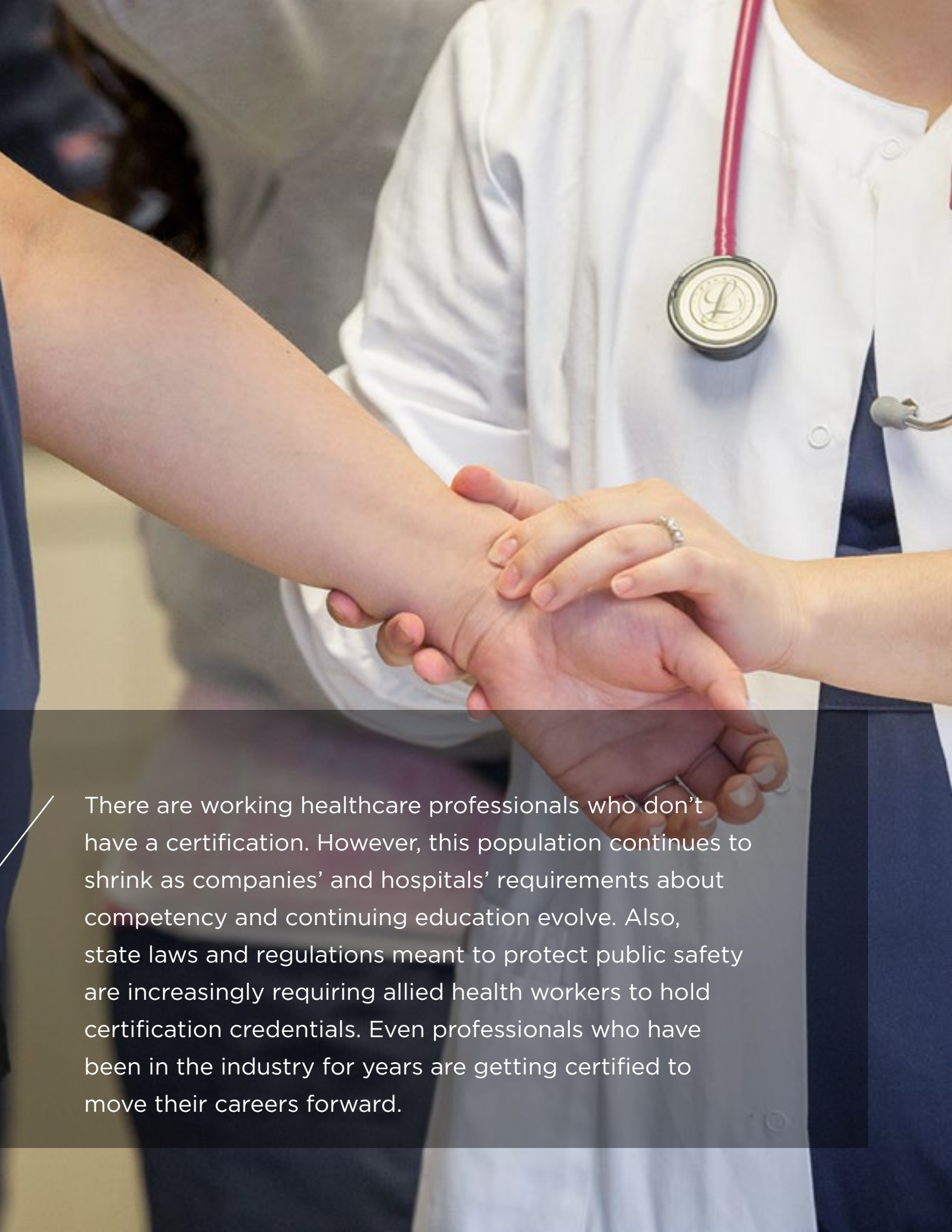
but that you continue to stay aware of the changing medical industry. This can be extremely valuable, both to your employer and to you. All certifications from NHA are accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA), a nationally recognized third party agency that accredits certification programs which are able to meet and comply with its rigorous standards. It's a seal of approval, if you will, that health care professionals seek out and can trust.

Why does it matter if I get certified or not?

“Employers see credentialed candidates as more committed to their careers and to excellence.”

- **GREG STANFIELD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/
DEAN OF EDUCATION, STEVENS-HENAGER COLLEGE**





There are working healthcare professionals who don't have a certification. However, this population continues to shrink as companies' and hospitals' requirements about competency and continuing education evolve. Also, state laws and regulations meant to protect public safety are increasingly requiring allied health workers to hold certification credentials. Even professionals who have been in the industry for years are getting certified to move their careers forward.



Can I get a job without a recognized credential? Perhaps. But that might change in the near future. In fact, it's already changing. Ask yourself this:
If you were hiring someone to care for your patients, wouldn't you prefer someone who has proven expertise?

Getting certified tells employers that:

- You are committed to success.
- You have demonstrated a high standard of knowledge and expertise in your field.
- You are a hard worker.
- You go above and beyond the “minimum.”

THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTINUING EDUCATION

It's no secret that the healthcare industry is changing rapidly (just turn on the news!). Because it's such an ever-changing field, continuing education is imperative in order to grow in your allied health career.

To maintain your NHA certification, you must complete a minimum of 10 continuing education credits every two years.* This investment in yourself, your career and your patients can keep you moving up the professional ladder to achieve your professional dreams.

A credential is a small line on your resume that carries a lot of weight — it can translate to better jobs, improved pay and career advancement.

An NHA credential proves that not only are you prepared for the challenges of today — you're ready for the challenges of tomorrow.

**Different requirements apply to ExCPT/CPhT certificate holders.*

[Visit our website for more details.](#)

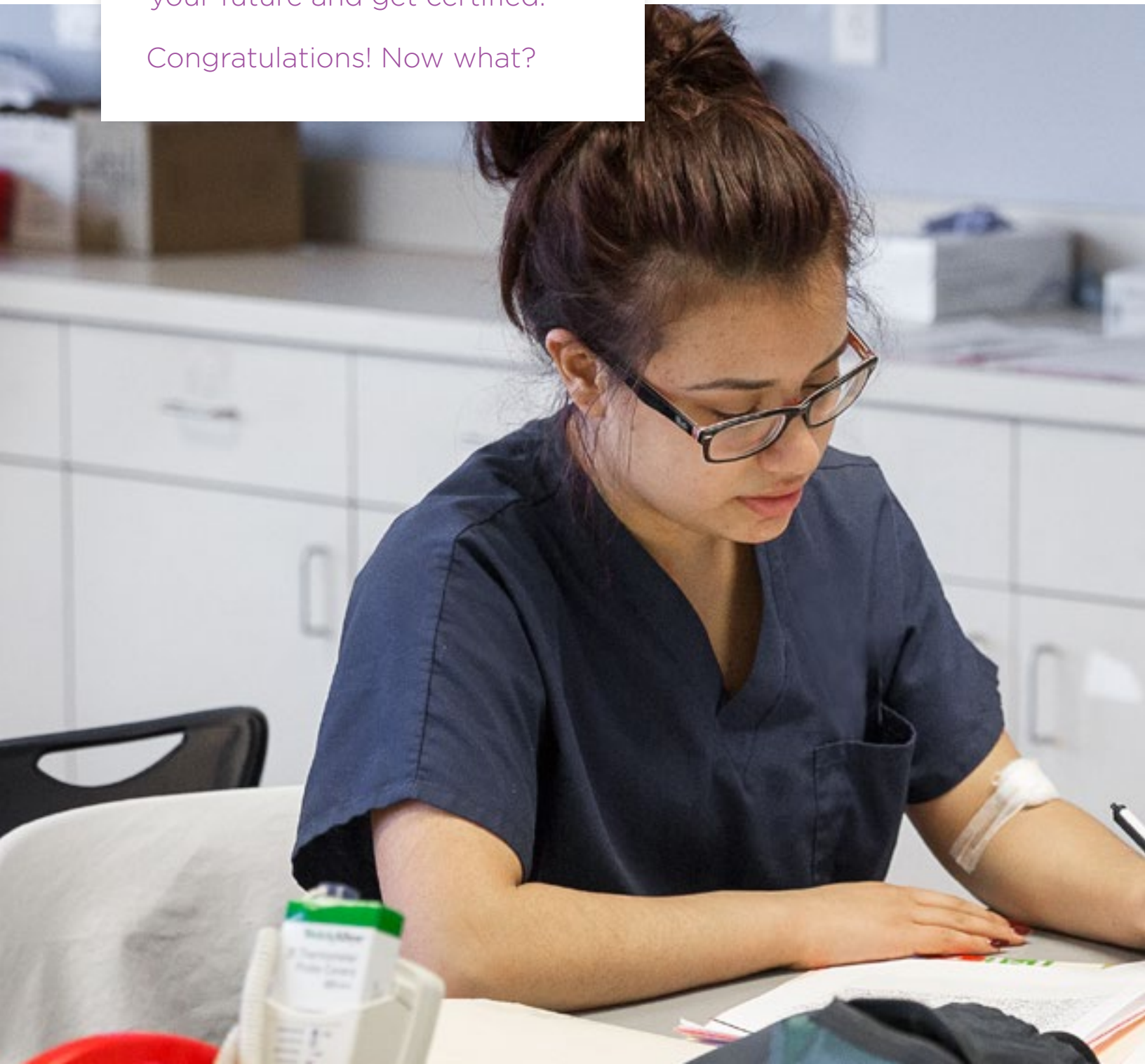
WHAT GETTING CERTIFIED TELLS EMPLOYERS ABOUT YOU:

In some cases, your certification is a requirement to get your foot in the door. But even if it's not required, it can give you a competitive edge over other job candidates.

How do I get my certification?

So you've decided to invest in your future and get certified.

Congratulations! Now what?



NHA Certifications



Clinical Medical Assistant
(CCMA)



EKG Technician
(CET)



Medical Administrative Assistant
(CMAA)



Billing and Coding Specialist
(CBCS)



Pharmacy Technician
(CPhT)



Electronic Health Record
Specialist (CEHRS)



Phlebotomy Technician
(CPT)



Patient Care Technician/
Assistant (CPCT/A)

PICK A CERTIFICATION PROVIDER

When doing so, you want to be sure the provider is accredited by a reputable, independent accrediting organization. All certifications from NHA are accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA), a nationally recognized third party agency that accredits certification programs which are able to meet and comply with its standards.

To earn an NHA certification and add those valuable credentials to your name, you must meet certain

criteria, and, as your final step, sit for a certification exam.

ENSURE YOU MEET THE MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

Before starting the process of certification, make sure you meet the minimum requirements. The requirements vary depending on the certification, but all require at least a high school diploma (or equivalent) and either a specialized training program or relevant work experience. Learn more about the specific requirements of each certification on our [FAQS PAGE.](#)

1. REGISTER FOR THE EXAM

Once you've met the prerequisites for the credential you're seeking and you've brushed up on your knowledge, you are ready to take the exam! Simply register online and study until it's time to put all your hard work to the test.

If you are testing through your school or employer, be sure to work with them to understand how to register for your exam. Here's [more information](#) on registering and taking your exam.

2. PREPARE FOR THE EXAM

They say success is when preparation meets opportunity. NHA provides study materials and resources that are aligned with the certification exam blueprint to help you prepare for your opportunity.* You can also find study tips and tricks on the NHA blog to help you maximize your study time.

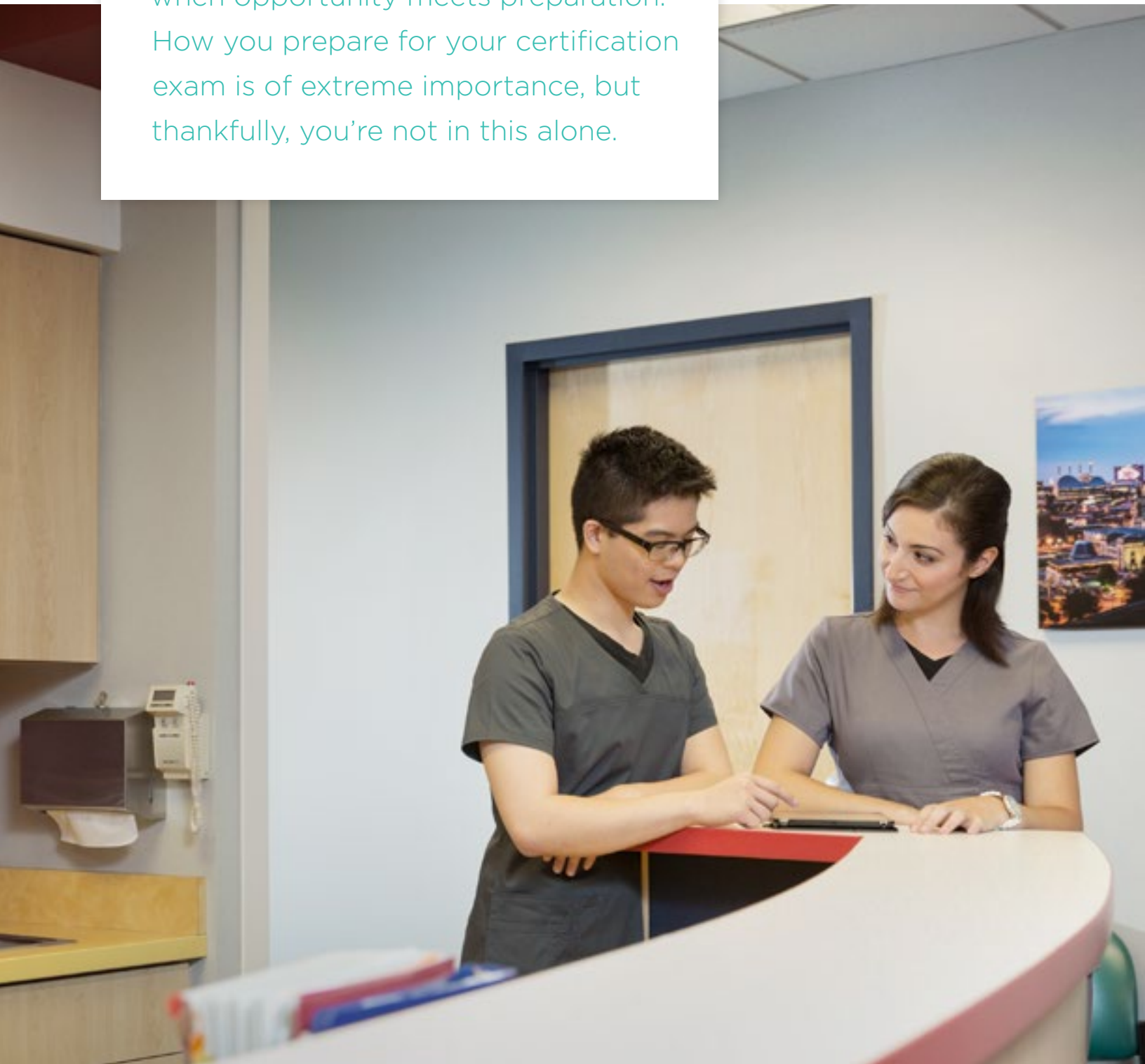
** The purchase of NHA certification exam preparation materials is not required to sit for any NHA certification exams, nor does the use of such products guarantee success on the exam.*

3. TAKE THE EXAM

NHA exams are taken online, which makes it really easy to test through your school or one of our partner testing centers. For more details about the exam process, see our [Candidate Handbook](#).

How do I prepare for my certification exam?

As Zig Ziglar said, “Success occurs when opportunity meets preparation.” How you prepare for your certification exam is of extreme importance, but thankfully, you’re not in this alone.



Test-Taking Tips

- Make a study plan several weeks out — and stick to it (no cramming!).
- Know the format of the test before hand so there are no surprises.
- Get plenty of sleep the night before.
- Don't rush — review each answer before moving on.
- Stay positive! Confidence goes a long way.

STUDY THE RIGHT MATERIAL

You know that feeling when you open a textbook and the words start to blend together? You aren't sure what to focus on and, before you know it, hours have passed and you haven't made any progress.

You can find more study resources and study tips on NHA's site, and connect with other students on NHA's [website](#), [blog](#), [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#) pages. We're not just here to administer a test. We're here to help support you and empower you with resources to help you succeed.

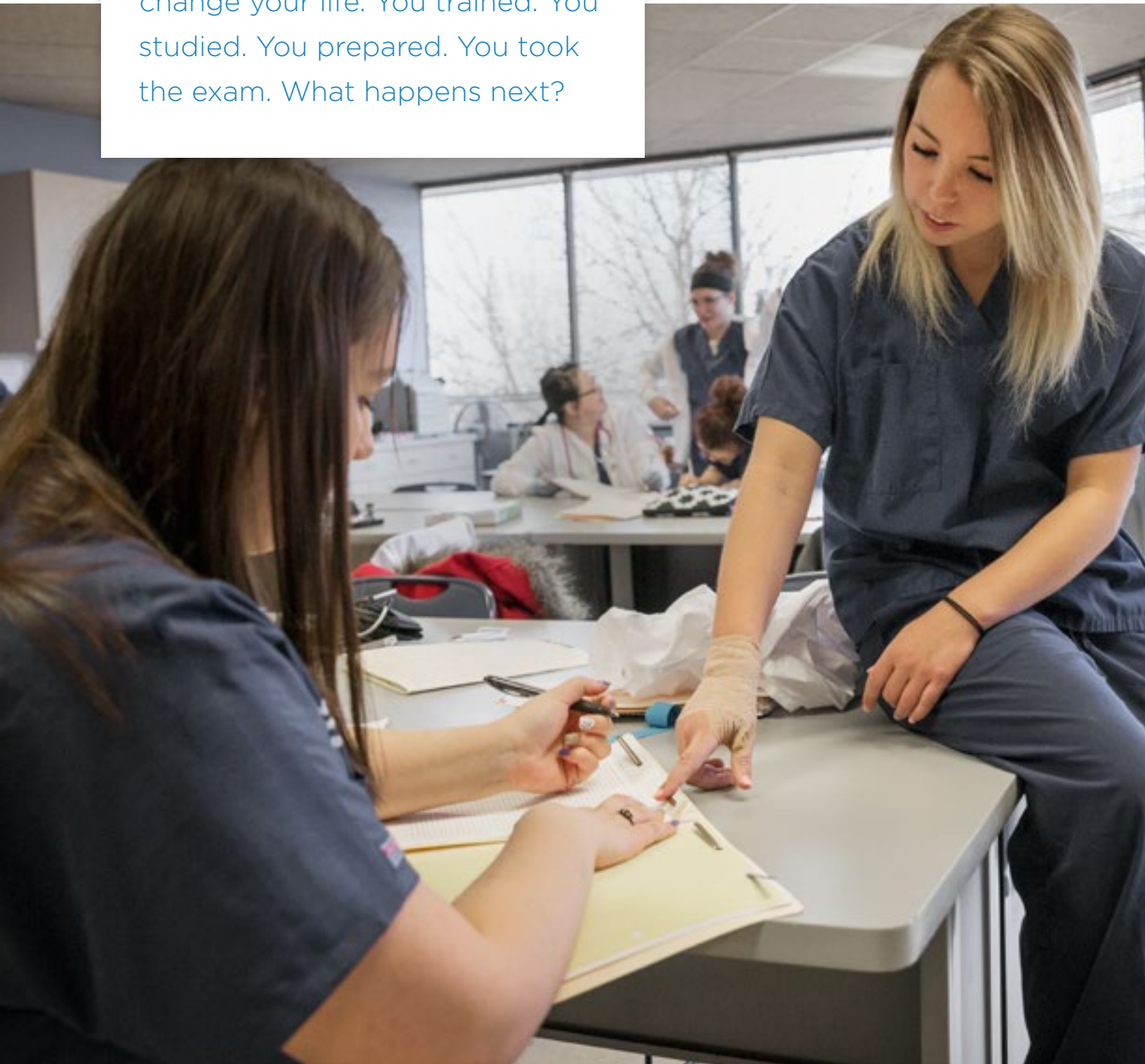
That's why NHA created online study [materials](#) to help maximize your study time:

- Online study materials based on the actual exams to help you focus your study efforts
- Engaging, rich media instructional lessons
- Practice drills and case study videos
- Practice exams that direct you to content you still need to focus on (Focused Review[®] remediation)

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What happens after I take the exam?

You made a decision that can change your life. You trained. You studied. You prepared. You took the exam. What happens next?





GET YOUR EXAM RESULTS

Waiting — especially when it's for news that can change your life — can be stressful. Here's some good news: you'll get your online exam results within 48 hours! In some cases, you might even get your results immediately so you don't have to waste a moment worrying.



RECEIVE YOUR PROOF OF CERTIFICATION

Once you've passed your exam, your certification and certification wallet card are provided directly

to you safely and securely. It's important to keep this verification for employment purposes. (And you might want to hang it somewhere prominent — you should be proud of your accomplishment!).

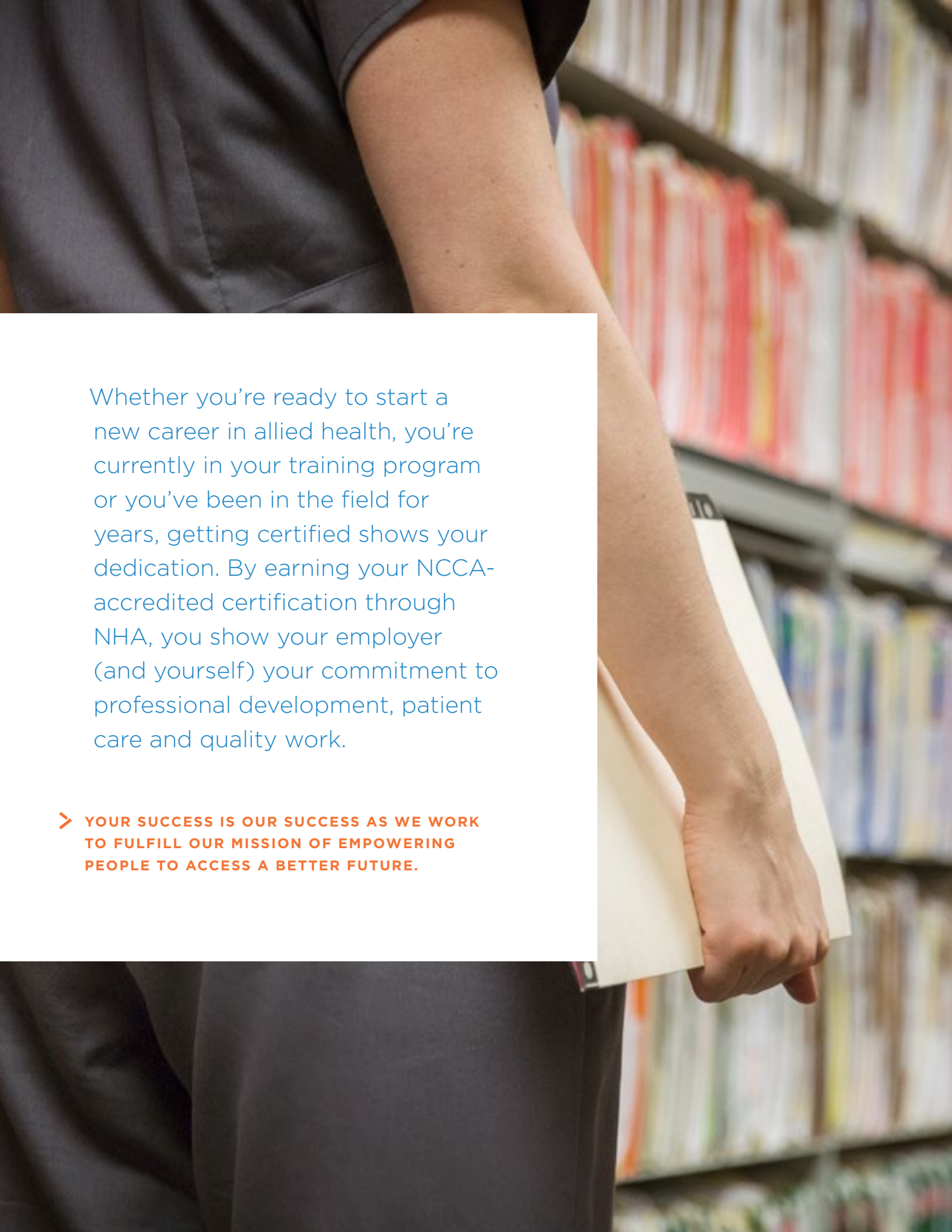


STAY CONNECTED & CONTINUE TO GROW

You can network with other NHA alumni on our blog and social media channels to stay connected and informed about important updates.

As an NHA alum, you'll have access to resources to elevate your career:

- Allied health job board.
- Continuing education resources (You must complete 10+ hours every two years to maintain certification).
- Instructions to help you add your credentials to LinkedIn so your professional profile will stand out.
- Information about other certification that may help you advance in your career.



Whether you're ready to start a new career in allied health, you're currently in your training program or you've been in the field for years, getting certified shows your dedication. By earning your NCCA-accredited certification through NHA, you show your employer (and yourself) your commitment to professional development, patient care and quality work.

> YOUR SUCCESS IS OUR SUCCESS AS WE WORK TO FULFILL OUR MISSION OF EMPOWERING PEOPLE TO ACCESS A BETTER FUTURE.