



# Certified Correctional Health Professional Mental Health

SPECIALTY CERTIFICATION FOR CORRECTIONAL MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS



From the Premier National Certification Program for Professionals in Correctional Health Care

## Candidate Handbook

### CCHP Board of Trustees

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[www.ncchc.org/CCHP-MH](http://www.ncchc.org/CCHP-MH)



A Program of the National Commission on Correctional Health Care

# SPECIALTY CERTIFICATION FOR CORRECTIONAL MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

## Professional Recognition

Mental health professionals working in correctional settings face unique challenges. They must provide effective, efficient care to a high need and often high acuity population while navigating strict security regulations, crowded facilities and the myriad legal and public health considerations unique to this specialty. To meet these challenges, continual professional growth is essential. Specialty certification provides formal recognition for practitioners who have engaged in a process of ongoing, focused and targeted professional development in the field of correctional mental health. Specialty certification in correctional mental health is a validation of your dedication to continuing competence and quality service delivery.

## Purpose

The purpose of the CCHP-MH specialty examination is to measure a candidate's knowledge, understanding and application of national standards and guidelines essential to the delivery of appropriate mental health care, legal principles for practicing within a correctional mental health care system, ethical obligations of correctional mental health professionals and the role of mental health professionals in delivering health care in the correctional environment.

## Eligibility

Eligibility is extended to all qualified mental health professionals as defined by NCCHC's *Standards for Mental Health Services in Correctional Facilities* (2015),

MH-A-02: "psychiatrists, psychologists, psychiatric social workers, licensed professional counselors, psychiatric nurses, and others who by virtue of their education, credentials, and experience are permitted by law to evaluate and care for the mental health needs of patients."

Prior to submitting an application, applicants must have:

- Current CCHP certification
- Graduate level (master's and above) degree
- Professional licensure within a U.S. state (for Canada and U.S. territories, credentials will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis)
- Equivalent of three years of full-time practice in a correctional environment

## Application and Candidacy

Elements of the application:

- Copy of professional licensure or proof of license eligibility, e.g., copy of diploma, if license to practice is not required by law in your state
- Completed application and fees

For application deadlines for exams at conferences, see [www.ncchc.org/CCHP/calendar](http://www.ncchc.org/CCHP/calendar).

Once the application, supporting materials and examination fee have been received and approved, applicants will receive acknowledgment of their candidacy to take the CCHP-MH exam. Candidates must register before the registration deadline for the exam they wish to take. Incomplete applications will be

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kept on file for three months, after which time a new application and fees must be submitted. A candidate must take the exam within six months of the application approval date.

### **Deferment and Cancellation Policies**

The exam may be deferred up to six months from the date the application is approved. Deferment must be requested in writing at least 10 business days before the originally scheduled examination date. To cancel the application, a written cancellation request must be received at least 10 business days before the examination date. Application fees will not be refunded.

### **Exam Dates and Locations**

Examinations are offered throughout the year, including at NCCHC's conferences and at partner sites and conferences, Prometric test centers across the country, and online. For a list of exam dates and test center locations, visit [www.ncchc.org/CCHP/calendar](http://www.ncchc.org/CCHP/calendar). For online exam information, visit [www.ncchc.org/online-exams](http://www.ncchc.org/online-exams).

### **Exam Registration and Admission**

Candidates must register for the exam through NCCHC (live locations) or Prometric (test centers or online), confirming the date and location where they wish to take the exam.

**NCCHC Conference and Partner Sites and Conferences:** Approximately two weeks before the scheduled date candidates will receive an admission notice with the address of the site. The admission notice and a valid state photo ID or driver's license are required to gain admission.

**Prometric Test Centers:** Please follow the instructions provided during exam registration.

**Online Exams:** Please follow the instructions provided by Prometric during exam registration.

### **ADA Compliance**

The CCHP Board of Trustees makes every effort to ensure that test centers are in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you require special accommodations, please submit a written request at least 90 days before the examination date.

### **The Examination**

The proctored, written examination is composed of 80 to 100 multiple-choice, objective questions. Candidates are allowed two hours to complete the examination.

**NCCHC Conference and Partner Sites and Conferences:** Report to the exam site as instructed on the admission notice. Candidates arriving late may be admitted, but will not be given additional time to complete the exam.

**Prometric Test Centers:** Report to the exam site as instructed by the test center and adhere to test center regulations.

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No pagers, cell phones, alarms or similar devices may be operative during the exam. Personal digital assistants (PDAs) and other handheld computers also are prohibited. Any person using such devices will be dismissed from the test center and disqualified from the examination. No books, reference materials or study aids of any sort are allowed in the exam room.

NCCHC offers online exams with live remote proctors through Prometric. Take your exam from the comfort and safety of your home or office, at a date and time that is convenient for you. Internet access, a laptop or PC and a web camera are required. There are additional requirements available at [www.ncchc.org/online-exams](http://www.ncchc.org/online-exams). Prior to beginning the exam, candidates will need to complete a system test.

### **Exam Scoring and Reporting**

Examination questions, answers and grading guidelines are developed by the CCHP Board of Trustees and CCHP-MH Subcommittee. The candidate should choose the single best answer to each item. There is no penalty for incorrect answers; it is to the candidate's advantage to answer each item even when uncertain of the correct response. No credit is given for items for which more than one response is selected.

The tests are graded electronically. Candidates will receive the results by email within two weeks. Only a pass or fail will be reported to the candidate. A list of passing candidates may be published; no reference is made to candidates who defer taking the examination or do not attain a passing score.

### **Rescheduling and Reexamination**

**NCCHC Conference and Partner Sites and Conferences:** Candidates who are unable to take the exam as originally scheduled should notify NCCHC in writing at least 10 business days prior to the examination. No additional fees will be assessed to reschedule. If notification is not received, however, a \$45 reregistration fee will be assessed when the candidate reschedules. If the candidate does not pass the exam and wishes to take it again, the reexamination fee is \$45.

**Prometric Test Center Registrants:** Candidates who are unable to take the exam as originally scheduled should see the FAQs on the test center website for instructions on how to reschedule or cancel.

**Prometric Online Exam Registrants:** Candidates who are unable to take the exam as originally scheduled should see the FAQs on the Prometric website for instructions on how to reschedule or cancel.

Candidates who do not attain a passing score on their first attempt may retake the exam two additional times within one year of the application approval date.

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## **Content Outline**

Exam questions are written by experienced correctional mental health professionals and reviewed by professionals who have attained CCHP certification. They are reviewed for construction, accuracy and appropriateness by the CCHP Board of Trustees. The content of the examination is described in the content outline on the following pages. The 11 major content areas are weighted (reflected in the percentages) according to the established test plan.

This content outline identifies the 11 knowledge areas covered on the examination. Each knowledge area includes, but is not limited to, the study topics listed below.

For details about study materials, see [www.ncchc.org/CCHP-MH-study-materials](http://www.ncchc.org/CCHP-MH-study-materials).

## **CCHP-MH Exam Content Outline**

### **I. GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION (5%-10%)**

Access/barriers to care	Emergency response plan
Responsible health authority	Privacy of care
Clinical autonomy	Grievance mechanism
Administrative meetings and reports	Inmate death procedure
Interdisciplinary collaboration	Documentation of suicide risk
Policies and procedures	Communication on patients' mental health needs
Continuous quality improvement program	

### **II. SAFETY (3%-7%)**

Infection control	Staff safety
Federal sexual assault reporting regulations	
Patient safety	

### **III. PERSONNEL AND TRAINING (7%-12%)**

Clinical performance enhancement	Mental health staffing
Credentialing	Mental health liaison
Mental health training for correctional officers	Managing the mentally ill from a corrections administrator's perspective
Training for mental health staff	
Medication administration training	
Inmate workers	

### **IV. MENTAL HEALTH CARE SERVICES AND SUPPORT (5%-10%)**

Mental health pharmaceutical operations	Clinic space, equipment and supplies
Medication services	Diagnostic services
Inpatient psychiatric care	

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## **V. INMATE CARE AND TREATMENT (12%-18%)**

Information on mental health services	Emergency services
Receiving screening for mental health needs	Segregated inmates
Transferred inmates	Patient escort
Mental health assessment and evaluation	Discharge planning
Clinical assessment	Continuity of mental health care during incarceration
Multicultural assessment and treatment issues	Correctional treatment
Nonemergency mental health services	

## **VI. HEALTH PROMOTION (3%-7%)**

Mental health education and self-care	Healthy lifestyle education and promotion
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## **VII. SPECIAL NEEDS AND SERVICES (12%-18%)**

Basic mental health services	Substance abuse services
Mental health programs and residential units	Behavioral consultation
Correctional treatment	Substance abuse and co-occurring disorders
Treatment plans	Managing disruptive inmates
Suicide prevention program	Severe and persistent mental illness
Suicide risk assessment	Assessment and treatment of sex offenders
Suicide factors	Responding to the needs of diverse inmates
Suicide lethality	Mental health needs of female inmates

## **VIII. CLINICAL RECORDS (4%-8%)**

Format and content	Access to custody information
Confidentiality	Management of mental health information

## **IX. MEDICAL-LEGAL ISSUES (10%-15%)**

Restraint and seclusion	Executions
Emergency psychotropic medication	Legal issues in suicide litigation
Forensic information	Landmark cases
Informed consent and right to refuse	Litigation pitfalls in mental health
Research	

## **X. CORRECTIONAL MENTAL HEALTH: PAST AND FUTURE (4%-8%)**

Criminal justice and mental health systems	Correctional and community mental health service models
A best-practices future	

## **XI. JUVENILES (8%-12%)**

Developmental issues	Suicide
Self-injury	Substance abuse



The Certified Correctional Health Professional (CCHP) program  
is sponsored by the National Commission on Correctional Health Care.



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