



Perinatal Mental Health Certification Program

Candidate Handbook

2023

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About Postpartum Support International

Postpartum Support International (PSI) is the world's largest non-profit organization dedicated to helping women and families suffering from perinatal mood and anxiety disorders, including postpartum depression, the most common complication of childbirth. PSI was founded in 1987 to increase awareness and support public and professional communities to address the mental health risks and difficulties during pregnancy and postpartum.

In August 2018, the first Certification in Perinatal Mental Health became available through Postpartum Support International.

PMH-C Certification Purpose

The Perinatal Mental Health Certification Program creates a structure for professional education and evaluation, and a standardization of training and experience to inform families and payers of perinatal mental health specialists. Professional certification indicates that candidates have demonstrated a predetermined minimum level of knowledge, skill, and competency in a specialized area that makes them qualified to provide specialized care. The PMH-C certification curriculum requirements build on professional experience working with the perinatal population, on existing evidence-based perinatal mental health certificate training and add an advanced-training component. Upon successful completion of the certification program requirements, including passing the PSI PMH-C exam, the candidates earn the certification in perinatal mental health and are eligible to use the credential PMH-C. Having a true certification program in perinatal mental health, including the PMH-C as the universal symbol for specialists, highlights the importance of the need for specialty care in this field.

PMH-C Certification Development

PSI has worked with internationally-known certification company, Pearson VUE, to develop, publish, and continually evaluate a computer-based certification exam. Pearson VUE has 30 years' experience providing test delivery and administration services to professional certification organizations. They have more than 250 company-owned testing centers in the US and nearly 20,000 authorized test centers globally. The Perinatal Mental Health Certification exam has been available since August 2018, and as of the June of 2023, 3701 providers have earned their PMH-C.

To learn more about our PMH-C, please visit

www.postpartum.net/professionals/certification

Certification Specialties

The Perinatal Mental Health Certification is available for three groups:

- **Mental Health / Psychotherapy**
- **Psychopharmacology**

Prescribers; including all professionals who prescribe medication including Advanced Practice Nurses

- **Affiliated Professions**

Peer Supporters/Peer Specialists, Nurses, Doulas, Lactation, Support Group Leaders, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, Speech Language Pathologists, Advocates, Peer Support Providers, Community Health Workers, Dietitians, and others

Candidate Eligibility Requirements Prior to Taking PMH-C Exam

- **Professional Practice**

Minimum 2 years' work experience in your profession, working with the Perinatal population.

- **Education and Credentials**

- Psychotherapy: Graduate degree
- Psychopharmacology: Medical Degree/Advanced Practice Nursing Degree
- Affiliated Professional: Professional Credential and/or Specialized Training

- **Perinatal Mental Health Training**

Completion of evidenced-based perinatal mental health certification trainings:

- Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Certificate Course - minimum 14 hours live, interactive online, or in-person
- PLUS 6-hours advanced training specific to the candidate's specialty. Also needs to be a live, interactive online training, or in-person.

For more specific information on approved trainings see <https://www.postpartum.net/professionals/certification/>

Steps to Certification

All information available at:

<https://www.postpartum.net/professionals/certification/>

STEP 1:

Complete One Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Certificate Course (14-hour certificate course) Required for All Tracks (Psychotherapy, Psychopharmacology and Affiliate). **Choose ONE** of the following to fulfill this requirement:

- **PSI 2-day Perinatal Mood Disorders: Components of Care Course** ● **Maternal Mental Health Webinar Certificate Course** by PSI and 2020 Mom ● **Seleni Institute: In Person Maternal Mental Health Intensive (16 hours - in person)**
- **Seleni Institute: online BUNDLE of Maternal Mental Health Intensive and Perinatal Loss and Grief**
- **Maternal Mental Health Now: “Bringing Light to Motherhood: Onsite or Online Training on Maternal Mental Health**
- **Perinatal Support Washington (PS Washington): Prevention, Identification and Treatment of Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders: Best Practices**
- **2021 Perinatal Mental Health Training Conference for Black Birth Workers, Clinicians, and Providers**

Other evidence-based courses by approval can be submitted for review as an approved alternative training. *Information available at*

<https://www.postpartum.net/professionals/certification/>

STEP 2:

Complete One Advanced Certificate Training Specific to Your Track

Note: *At this time, we are considering online Advanced training on a case-by-case basis. They must be attended live, and have an interactive component to be considered eligible. They must meet the additional requirements as usual. To submit a training, please email certification@postpartum.net.*

Online PSI Advanced training is approved for the Step 2 requirement.

Psychotherapy/Mental Health Track

- PSI Advanced Psychotherapy certificate courses will be scheduled in various locations throughout the year. Refer to <https://www.postpartum.net/professionals/certification/>
- You can submit other advanced in-person evidence-based courses for approval of the 6 hours advanced requirement. To request approval for an advanced course, write to certification@postpartum.net

Psychopharmacology Track

- PSI's in-person advanced psychopharmacology course is offered throughout the year.

Refer to <https://www.postpartum.net/professionals/certification/>

- You can submit other advanced in-person evidence-based courses for approval of the 6 hours advanced requirement. To request approval for an advanced course, write to certification@postpartum.net

Affiliated Professionals

- PSI Advanced Psychotherapy certificate courses will be scheduled in various locations throughout the year. Refer to

<https://www.postpartum.net/professionals/certification/>

- Affiliate professionals can take the PSI Advanced Psychotherapy to meet this qualification.
- ALL breakout sessions at PSI annual conferences fulfill the requirement (minimum 6 hrs)
- You can submit other advanced in-person evidence-based courses for approval of the 6 hours advanced requirement. To request approval for an advanced course, write to certification@postpartum.net.

STEP 3:

Apply to Take the Exam

Apply for PMH-C exam at:

<https://postpartum.app.neoncrm.com/np/clients/postpartum/survey.jsp?surveyId=5&>

[Please download the Employment/Volunteer Verification Form](#). On page 2 of the form, you can find the Private Practice Attestation Form. Please have an employer/manager complete the Employment Verification Form. If you are in private practice, please fill out the Private Practice Attestation Form on page 2.

If you have an accommodation request, please indicate the type of accommodation on your application or email certification@postpartum.net so we can arrange your accommodation request before you register for the exam.

After you have completed the application, please submit copies of your certificate of completion and the Employment Verification Form/Private Practice Attestation Form on this link: <https://form.jotform.com/231154477872058>

Once your application has been submitted, the approval process can take up to 3-4 weeks. If you do not hear back in 3-4 weeks, email certification@postpartum.net.

If you have just completed a PSI training, it may take extra time to receive participation confirmation.

STEP 4:

Register to Take the Exam When You Receive Approval

You will receive an email from Pearson Vue upon approval of your application. Email will include registration instructions and your PSI ID#. If you do not receive this in 3-4 weeks, email certification@postpartum.net.

Exam appointments are made in advance subject to availability. The exam/appointment testing time limit noted on Pearson VUE web pages reflects the total appointment time, including an NDA, exam time, and survey.

Find a nearby Pearson VUE testing site at <https://home.pearsonvue.com/psi>

STEP 5:

Prepare to Take the Exam

- As preparation for the PSI Certification exams, recommended study materials are available. For more information, please visit <http://www.postpartum.net/professionals/certification/certification-faqs/>. The purchase of the study materials is optional.
- Study the materials from your 14-hour Perinatal Mood & Anxiety certificate course (Step 1 of this process) and track a specific 6-hour advanced certificate training course (Step 2 of this process).
- Review the PMH-C exam *Blueprint*. The test blueprint contains the content areas for the exam and the distribution of test items across the content areas. Exam Blueprint available at <https://www.postpartum.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/PSI-Blueprint-2018.pdf>
- For more information, write to us at certification@postpartum.net

Questions?

Refer to the Certification FAQs for Perinatal Mental Health Certification at <https://www.postpartum.net/professionals/certification/certification-faqs/>

Join the PSI Certification team on a monthly Zoom call where we can answer any questions you may have. First Friday of the month at 1pm PST/4EST. Registration available at <https://www.postpartum.net/professionals/certification/>

PSI Nondiscrimination and Fairness Policy

Postpartum Support International does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status, in any of its activities or operations. These activities include, but are not limited to, hiring and firing of staff, selection of volunteers and vendors, and provision of services. We are committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our staff, board of directors, volunteers, subcontractors, vendors, and clients.

Postpartum Support International is an equal opportunity employer. We will not discriminate and will take affirmative action measures to ensure against discrimination in employment, recruitment, advertisements for employment, compensation, termination, upgrading, promotions, and other conditions of employment against any employee or job applicant on the bases of race, color, gender, national origin, age, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation,

gender identity or gender expression.

Requesting Test Accommodations

In reviewing testing accommodation requests of PHM-C candidates, PSI certification personnel follow the ADA's specified Testing Accommodation guidelines available at www.ADA.gov.

To make a testing accommodation request, the candidate must email certification@postpartum.net prior to registering for the PMH-C exam. This allows the PSI certification personnel to review and coordinate requested accommodations with the testing entity (Pearson Vue) in a timely manner in order to ensure equal opportunity for the applicant.

PMH-C Exam Rescheduling Policy

You must contact Pearson VUE or access your online Pearson VUE account to reschedule your exam at least a minimum of 48 hours prior to your appointment. Exams cannot be rescheduled less than 48 hours prior to your appointment. Failure to reschedule in time or failure to appear for your appointment will result in the forfeiture of your exam fee.

PMH-C Exam Cancellation Policy

You must contact Pearson VUE or access your online Pearson VUE account to cancel your exam at a minimum of 48 hours prior to your appointment. Exams cannot be canceled less than 48 hours prior to your appointment. Failure to cancel in time or failure to appear for your appointment will result in the forfeiture of your exam fee.

PMH-C Exam Details

Postpartum Support International Certification exams are components of the PSI Certification in Perinatal Mental Health program. The exams are computer-based assessments of knowledge, competencies, and skills related to disciplines such as Perinatal Mental Health Risks, Protective Factors, and Interactions and use a multiple-choice format. The exam is 125 multiple choice questions, and you have 3 hours to complete the exam. The questions will be a mixture of statement-based and case examples with multiple questions for each case. There are no essay questions. The exam is pass/fail. As preparation for the PSI Certification exams, recommended study materials are available. For more information, please visit <http://www.postpartum.net/professionals/certification/certification-faqs/>.

Terms & Conditions

Prior to starting the PSI Certification exam in Perinatal Mental Health, you will be asked to sign the following non-disclosure and general terms of use agreement.

The exam is confidential and is protected by trade secret law. It is made available to you, the examinee, solely for the purpose of becoming certified in the technical area referenced in the title of this exam. You are expressly prohibited from disclosing, publishing, reproducing, or transmitting this exam, in whole or in part, in any form or by any means, verbal or written, electronic or mechanical, for any purpose, without the prior express written permission of Postpartum Support International.

Day of the Exam

Frequently asked questions regarding what to expect on the day of testing at Pearson Vue testing sites is available at

<https://home.pearsonvue.com/Test-takers/Resources.aspx#what-to-expect>. You will be required to present one form of original (no photo copies), valid (unexpired) government-issued ID that includes your name, photograph, and signature. To view the full ID policy, including any additional allowances to the policy, visit <http://www.pearsonvue.com/policies/1.pdf>.

We ask that you arrive 15 minutes prior to your appointment time. This will give you adequate time to complete the necessary sign-in procedures. If you arrive more than 15 minutes late for your appointment, you may be refused admission and the exam fees will be forfeited. The “appointment length” may include time for non-scored sections such as surveys or tutorials. The appointment length does not necessarily reflect the total amount of time allotted for the actual exam.

Test Results

Upon completion of the PMH-C exam, you will be notified of your test results at the Pearson VUE testing site.

Confirmation of certification:

You will receive an email from the PSI certification team with a copy of your certificate and additional information about the PMH-C Certification the month following successful completion of the PMH-C exam.

Retesting

For candidates who have failed the PMH-C exam:

Once a candidate has been approved to sit for the exam, they are eligible to retake the exam as many times as they choose. There is a three-month waiting period in between subsequent tests required. However, it is recommended that the candidate review the courses in preparation for the re-examination. An additional fee must be paid each time the candidate registers for the exam. However, the candidate is not required to resubmit the initial prerequisite application materials necessary to sit for the exam. Furthermore, participants are recommended to wait 6 months prior to retaking the PMH-C exam.

It is the vision of PSI that every woman and family worldwide will have access to information, social support, and informed professional care to deal with mental health issues related to childbearing. PSI promotes this vision through advocacy and collaboration, and by educating and training the professional community and the public. The Institute for Credentialing Excellence states “Testing indicates what an individual already knows and where new or remedial education should be concentrated. Feedback to test takers can direct their correct answers and additional study resources” (n.p.). The opportunity to retake the PMH-C exam allows the candidate to further study identified areas in need of remediation to meet the knowledge, competencies, and skills required to achieve certification in perinatal mental health.

The Use of the PMH-C Mark

PMH-C is designated by trademark as the universal symbol for specialists certified in perinatal mental health that have successfully completed specific eligibility requirements and passed the PHM-C exam. PSI has worked with internationally-known certification company, Pearson VUE, to develop and publish a computer-based certification exam for the specialized field of perinatal mental health. The PMH-C certification mark indicates a perinatal mental health specialist to PSI coordinators, women and families seeking specialized care, other healthcare providers, and insurance companies.

The PMH-C certification mark cannot be used by any person who did not fulfill successful completion of all of the PMH-C certification program requirements (specifically, but not limited to, meeting all of the candidate requirements, applying to take the exam, or successfully passing PMH-C exam). Furthermore, certificates are ineligible for use of the PMH-C certification mark if they fail to comply with the certification maintenance requirements (i.e. CEU completion, submission, and/or auditing).

In cases of inappropriate PMH-C certification mark use, the PSI PMH-C Certification Program personnel will notify the individual of inappropriate use of the PMH-C certification mark and require the ineligible individual to stop. Unauthorized use of the PMH-C certification mark is classified by the United States Patent and Trademark Office as trademark infringement and the ineligible individual will be held liable if there is failure to comply.

Resources:

Postpartum Support International. (2021). *Certification in perinatal mental health*. Retrieved from <https://www.postpartum.net/professionals/certification/>

United States Patent and Trademark Office. (2021). *About trademark infringement*. Retrieved from <https://www.uspto.gov/page/about-trademark-infringement>

Reconsideration of Adverse Certification Decisions

By creating and maintaining the PMH-C certification program, PSI remains committed to ensuring that providers are given the proper up-to-date baseline knowledge, competencies, and skills in perinatal mental health in order to provide competent care for pregnant and postpartum mothers and families, and for those planning to become pregnant. The structure of the PMH-C program includes specific criteria including applicant eligibility (including professional practice requirements, education and credentials, and additional evidenced-based certificate training in perinatal mental health - foundational and advanced), computer-based proctored testing for candidates, and the certificants' continuing education requirements to maintain certification.

Applicants, candidates, and certificants may request reconsideration of adverse certification decisions by emailing certification@postpartum.net. The reconsideration request will be reviewed by the certification program personnel (administrator and director). The certification personnel will directly follow up with the individual seeking reconsideration in a timely manner. Adverse certification decisions may include, but are not limited to, denial of eligibility, denial of recertification, or disciplinary actions (including inappropriate use of PMH-C mark).

PMH-C Recertification

The PSI PMH-C certification program is committed to ensuring the public that individuals with the PMH-C certificate are maintaining up-to-date requirements for continued competence and lifelong professional learning in the field of perinatal mental health. As an ever evolving and rapidly changing healthcare specialty, the PSI PMH-C certification program requires that all certificants renew their certification every 2 years to demonstrate continued competence relative to the specific knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to the field of perinatal mental health.

PSI PMH-C certification program follows the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (I.C.E.) recertification standards. In order to renew the PMH-C, certificants are responsible for completing 12 **approved** professional continuing education training (CEUs) specific to the field of perinatal mental health and submitting evidence of those CEUs to the PSI recertification document link on PSI website every 2 years from initial certification.

Approval of eligible CEUs is necessary to evaluate whether continuing education training supports continuing competence in their learning-oriented quality, relevance of content, effectiveness of delivery method, and noncommercial or sponsorship bias). Approved CEUs are required to be completed and can be viewed on the PSI recertification document link on the PSI website:

CE submissions are reviewed and approved monthly. January, April, July, October. The renewing certificate will hear back from PSI PMH-C certification program personnel regarding their renewal status.

Certificants who do not comply with the PSI PMH-C recertification requirements are not eligible to use the PMH-C mark, and the certification will be discontinued for non-compliance.

Failure to renew will result in the automatic placement of the certification in “Suspended” status and the inability to use the PMH-C credentials. Renewal of the PMH-C requires the submission of 12 CEs related to their PMH-C track. The renewal will be good for two years. If the certification status remains “Suspended” for more than six (6) months, the certification will be classified as “Expired”. The candidate will have to reapply for a single 6-month extension of the recertification deadline to complete the requirements. The application for an extension and a \$75 extension fee must be received before the recertification deadline and the certification expiration date. To apply for an extension, please complete the following form: <https://form.jotform.com/231702095527050>. To pay the extension fee, please visit this webpage: <https://postpartum.app.neoncrm.com/np/clients/postpartum/product.jsp?product=138&>

The PSI Certification staff will respond in writing via email that the extension has been granted. The extension is only for submitting the recertification application. The next certification period expiration date is based on the date of initial certification. Failure to renew the certification a year after the initial certification expires will require a re-examination.

Certificants with questions, reporting of data errors, appeals, or requests for reconsideration for adverse recertification decisions may contact certification@postpartum.net.

For further information, refer to <https://www.postpartum.net/professionals/certification/>

Resources:

Institute for Credentialing Excellence. (n.d.). *Common myths of continuing certification*. Retrieved from <https://www.credentialingexcellence.org/Resources/Common-Myths>

Postpartum Support International. (2021). *About us*. Retrieved from <https://www.postpartum.net/about-psi/>