

American Association for Respiratory Care

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Position Statement

Respiratory Therapist Education

It is the position of the American Association for Respiratory Care (AARC) that in order to prepare entry level respiratory therapists for clinical practice and to prepare clinical leaders for services requiring complex, cognitive abilities and complex patient management skills:

- The minimum education required to practice respiratory care is completion of an associate degree in respiratory care.
- Programs for the education of respiratory therapists, managers, researchers, faculty, and professional leaders should be accredited by a body recognized by government, and through a rigorous and ongoing process which assures the quality of their programming.
- Respiratory therapists completing such education, advanced training, and/or experience should be eligible for credentialing to reflect their didactic preparation and clinical skills required for practice in the respective area of specialization. Credentialing should be encouraged in related areas of specialization to include Neonatal/Pediatric Care, Adult Critical Care, Sleep Disorders, Pulmonary Function Testing and others which may be added as the field evolves.

The AARC also encourages the development of accredited, advanced degree programs in Respiratory Care at the bachelor's, masters and doctoral levels; and encourages therapists to pursue such higher education as a means of expanding career opportunities and advancing the Respiratory Care profession.

Effective 1998

Revised 03/2009

Revised 04/2012