



# Meet a CIC

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## Q. WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO BECOME AN INFECTION PREVENTIONIST (IP)?

It's not so much as to *what* inspired me to become an IP so much as to the *who*. I was fortunate to have a friend, Mary, who was a seasoned, knowledgeable IP. She inspired me to pursue a career as an IP. Under her tutelage, she brought her expertise and experience to life. Mary engaged my learning and encouraged every opportunity to enhance my knowledge and skills.

## Q. HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN AN IP?

I have been a nurse for more than 28 years and an IP for eight of those years. It was not until my twentieth year in nursing that I finally found my true passion in infection prevention and control.

## Q. WHY IS MAINTAINING BOARD CERTIFICATION IN INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL (CIC) IMPORTANT TO YOU?

Provision 5 of the Code of Ethics for Nurses stipulates: “maintain competence, and continue personal and professional growth.”

Board certification demonstrates my professional development from a novice to a proficient IP. It validates enhanced knowledge and skills, and is foundational for my credibility as competent IP. Professional growth requires a commitment to lifelong learning, and achieving specialty certification demonstrates commitment to lifelong learning.

Board certification demonstrates my commitment to implementing evidence-based best practices in infection prevention and control.

## Q. HOW DID YOU PREPARE FOR THE CIC EXAM? WHAT HELPED?

My action plans to prepare for the CIC examination involved education, experience, and review. I attended APIC's EPI<sup>®</sup> 101 and EPI<sup>®</sup> 201 by the end of my first year as an IP. I continued to pursue any opportunity to enhance my knowledge: local chapter and national APIC conferences, reading the *American Journal of Infection Control (AJIC)*, and attending webinars. Working full time with a seasoned IP for three years provided experience in identification of the infectious disease process, surveillance and monitoring activities, prevention and control of infectious agents, and outbreak investigation. I purchased APIC's *Infection Prevention Competency Review Guide* and planned on taking the examination after six months of review.

## Q. IN WHAT WAYS HAS YOUR CIC BENEFITED YOU?

Board certification in infection prevention and control has provided me with increased self-confidence. It validates mastery of knowledge and skills. Board certification has opened tremendous employment opportunities since there is an increasing demand and preference for a credentialed IP.

## Q. IN WHAT WAYS HAS YOUR CIC BENEFITED THE CAPTAIN JAMES A. LOVELL FEDERAL HEALTH CARE CENTER?

An *AJIC* article by Crist, Russell, and Farber (2012) indicates that certified individuals outperform those who are noncertified. The article suggests a correlation with certification and delivery of quality care with optimal patient outcomes.

Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center will benefit from my CIC as it can acknowledge to the regulatory agencies that three out of the four of its IPs are board certified. It is confirmation to my commitment to delivering current best practices, implementing evidence-based strategies, and optimizing patient outcomes.

## Q. CAN YOU PLEASE SHARE SOME STUDY TIPS FOR OTHERS WHO WISH TO MAINTAIN OR PURSUE THEIR CIC DESIGNATION?

Create a professional development plan with realistic goals, specific timelines, and resources. Make a commitment to this plan. One of the ways I ensured my commitment was to register for the exam ahead of time. Set a time of the day and specific area of the house dedicated for review. Reviewing after dinner for two to three hours Monday–Friday worked for me. I read chapters of APIC's *Infection Prevention Competency Review Guide*, *APIC Text*, and *Ready Reference for Microbes*. During working hours, I would review all the culture reports and review any microorganism found in the cultures in which I was not familiar. I would also attempt to correlate reviewed materials with work activities. 