

Respiratory Care Organizations: Who We Are And What We Do

The Respiratory Care Board of California (RCB) receives calls from applicants, licensees, and other stakeholders who are unsure about licensure versus credentialing, and the roles and responsibilities of the various respiratory care organizations. Questions range from, “How is this respiratory care practitioner (RCP) working without a credential?” to “Do I need my license if I already have my credential?”

It may be difficult to tell if an entity is a professional association or a regulatory agency at first glance. Professional associations are organizations comprised of professionals in a field who give a voice to the profession, advocate on behalf of members, and advance the interests of the profession. Whereas, RCB exists to license respiratory care practitioners in California to protect the public from the unlicensed and unqualified practice of respiratory care.

Although they serve distinct purposes, many of the goals, interests, and activities of the professional organizations can be similar. However, there are some very distinct differences between RCB and other respiratory care associations:

- Licensure by a regulatory body such as the RCB is **mandatory** to work in California. Membership in professional associations such as the American Association for Respiratory Care (AARC) and the California Society for Respiratory Care (CSRC) is encouraged by RCB, but membership is almost always **voluntary** for professionals.
- RCB issues the RCP **license**, which is required to legally practice respiratory care in the California. Professional organizations such as the National Board for Respiratory Care (NBRC) offer **credentials** that are generally recognized by the industry and most often required by employers, but credentials alone do not authorize the legal practice of respiratory care in California.
- Both RCB and the respiratory care associations participate in the policy-making process. RCB does so to protect the **public**, while the professional associations lobby to benefit the **profession**.

- RCB administers the Respiratory Care Practice Act (RCPA) and has the authority to take action against a licensee for violations of **law**. Professional organizations can adopt **ethical standards**, but the power of associations to enforce these standards are limited.

Here are some respiratory care organizations, including the mission of each:

Respiratory Care Board of California (RCB)

www.rcb.ca.gov

- Regulates the respiratory care profession in California in the interest of California’s respiratory care consumers.
- Sets the minimum qualifications needed to practice, and issues and renews respiratory care practitioner licenses required to legally practice in California.
- Takes disciplinary action when a licensee violates the law.

Mission: To protect and serve consumers by licensing qualified respiratory care practitioners, enforcing the provisions of the Respiratory Care Practice Act, expanding the availability of respiratory care services, increasing public awareness of the profession, and supporting the development and education of respiratory care practitioners.



Breathing Matters

RESPIRATORY CARE BOARD OF CALIFORNIA

MAY 2023

National Board for Respiratory Care (NBRC)

www.nbrc.org

- Issues various credentials for the respiratory care profession nationwide.
- Assesses minimum competency for entry into practice and administers credential examinations.

Mission: Promote excellence in respiratory care by awarding credentials based on high competency standards.

American Association for Respiratory Care (AARC)

www.aarc.org

- National professional membership organization for students and practitioners.
- Provides education, advocacy, clinical practice guidelines, and more.
- Provides a voice for practitioners at a state and national level.

Mission: Advance professional excellence and science in the practice of respiratory therapy, serving the profession, patients, caregivers, and the public.

California Society for Respiratory Care (CSRC)

www.csrc.org

- California professional membership organization and the state affiliate of the American Association of Respiratory Care (AARC).
- Advocates the value of respiratory care practitioners and the profession as a whole, and the care and treatment of individuals who suffer from respiratory diseases.
- Collaborates across the health care continuum with other professional organizations that share similar missions and visions in the highest standards in the provision of care, education, and regulation standards in the respiratory care profession.

Mission: To represent and support our members through public and legislative advocacy, educational opportunities, and to continuously strive for excellence in the cardiopulmonary profession. By these means, the CSRC is committed to health, healing, and disease prevention in the California community.

Upcoming RCB Board Meeting

June 22, 2023:
Pechanga Resort Casino
Temecula



Respiratory Care Board of California

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