

# Determining the Value of Specialty Credentials in Respiratory Care

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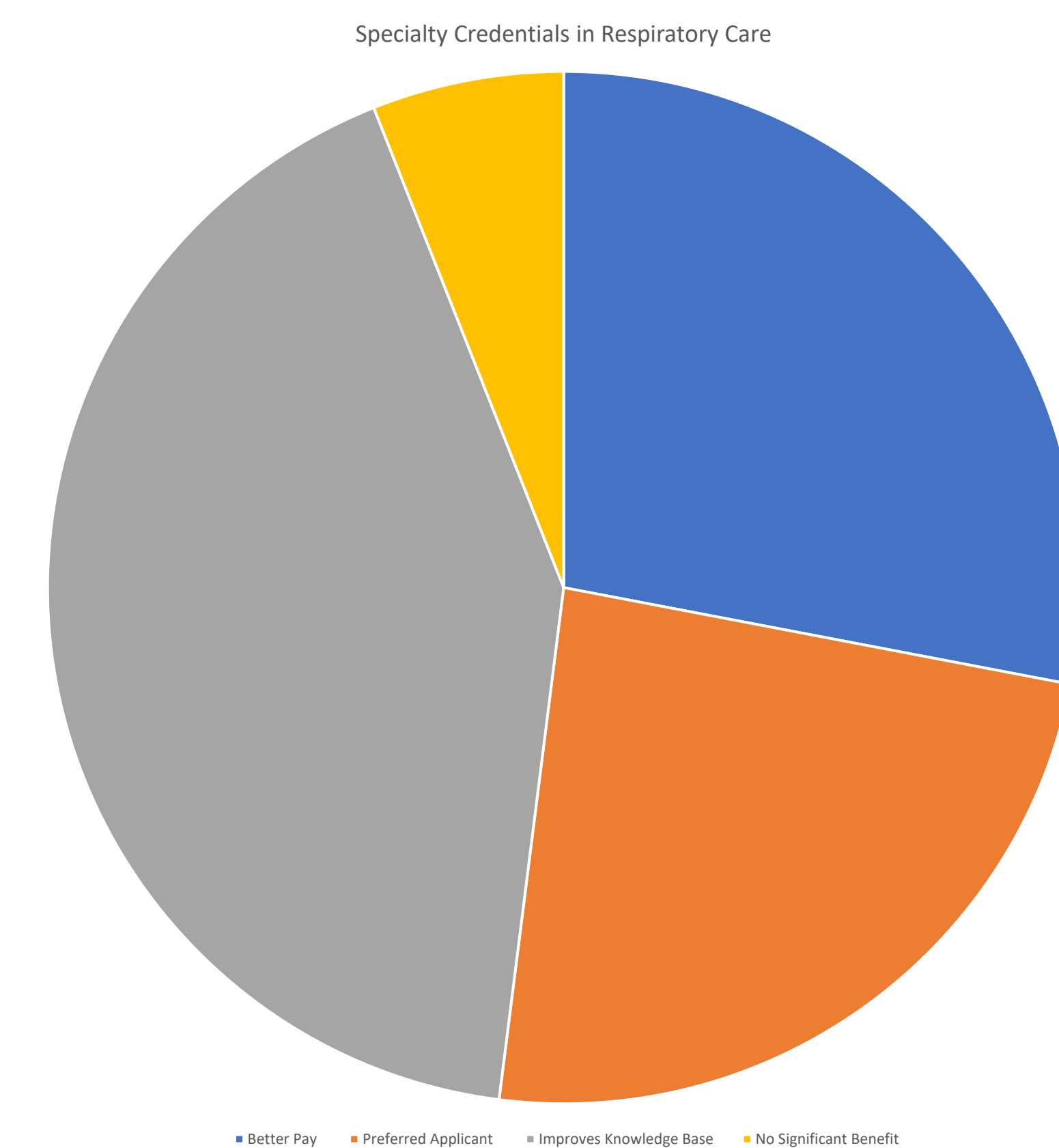
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## Background

The US Bureau of Labor and Statistics reported that by 2032 the respiratory therapy profession will see an increase of 13% in positions available as over 92,000 therapists leave the field for a variety of reasons (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2023). While accredited programs are interested in accommodating the needs of their hospital partners, the main focus is placed on providing students with an education that produces exceptional therapist's. However, respiratory programs are also faced with increasing decline in programmatic enrollment. Across the country, respiratory programs are seeing a 27% decrease in enrollment since 2010 (American Association for Respiratory Care, 2021-2022). This study was conducted to determine if this is an appropriate time for schools to address specialty credentialing in respiratory therapy.

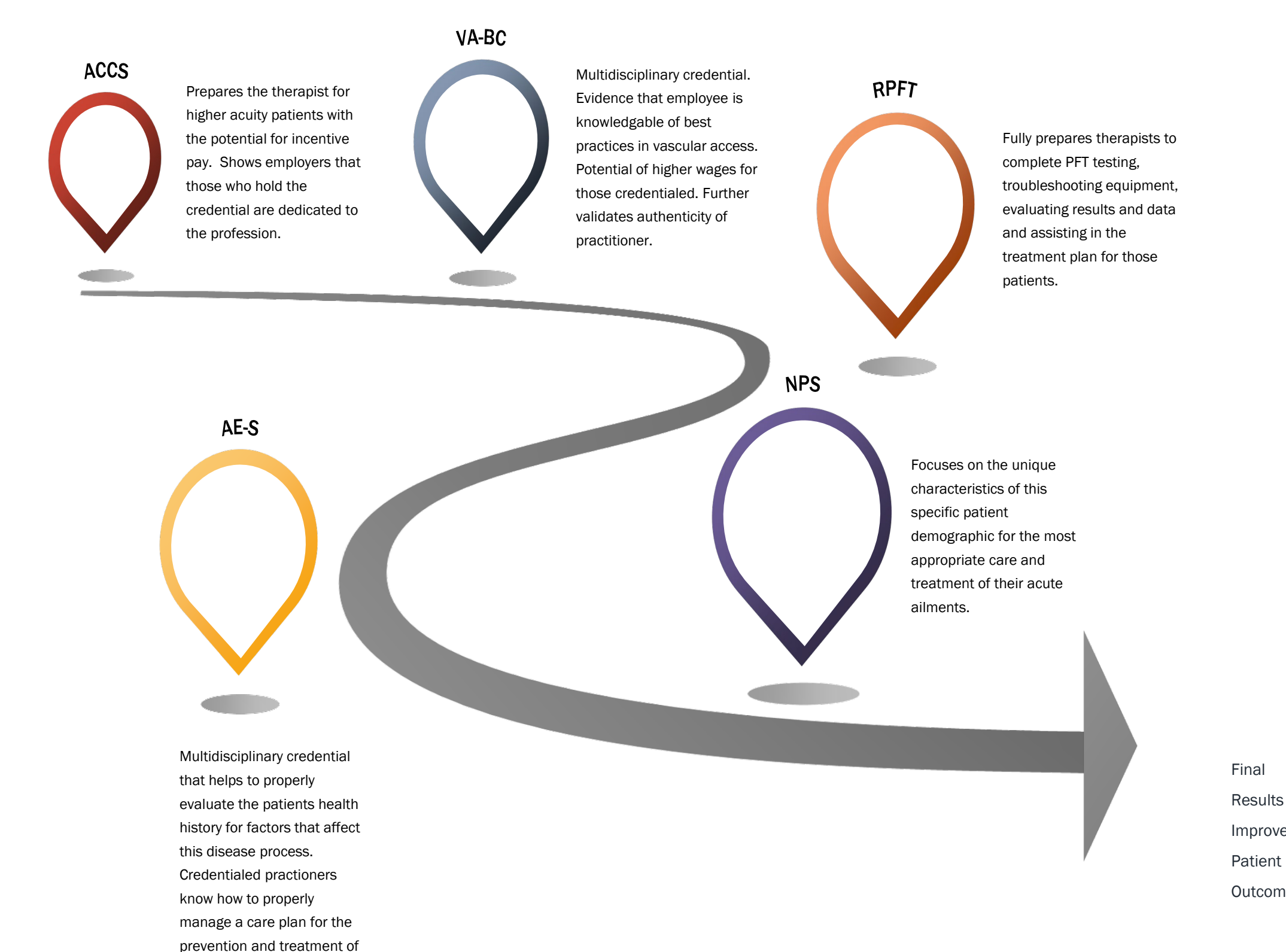
## Methods

- A quantitative research study was performed.
- Respiratory Program Directors were chosen at random and contacted via email to complete a two question survey about the offering of specialty credentialed courses within their programs.
- 175 Respiratory Program Directors across the U.S. from accredited AS & AAS program were contacted, and 74 surveys were completed and returned.
- Data was collected and analyzed to produce the following results.



## Results

A total of 74 respondents completed the survey with three schools indicating that they offered review courses for certification of the following specialty credentials: NPS, PFT, ACCS, VA-BC and AE-C.. Ninety-Two percent of those schools acknowledged that there is benefit for the students to obtain these additional credentials with regard to increase in monetary compensation from employers, quantifiable knowledge, and producing more marketable candidates for employment.



## Conclusions

The need for qualified respiratory therapists continues to grow nationwide. Obtaining specialty credentials helps to assure employers that the therapist is committed to best patient outcomes through high competency measures. Maintaining these credentials also help to ensure employers that the therapist is dedicated to the profession and a lasting relationship with learning.

## References

- Boston Scientific & American Association for Respiratory Care, *The State of Respiratory Therapy: A 2021-2022 Report*, at <https://www.aarc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/the-state-of-respiratory-therapy.pdf> (visited April 16, 2024)
- Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook, Respiratory Therapists*, at <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/respiratory-therapists.htm> (visited April 12, 2024).

## Disclosures

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