Accredited programs of study in respiratory care award the associate or baccalaureate degree upon completion. A task force appointed by the national professional association for respiratory care has recommended a policy change that would prevent respiratory care programs from awarding the associate degree beginning in 2020, despite the fact that approximately 92% of individuals who applied to challenge respiratory care credentialing examinations in 2011 did so after having earned the associate degree. The effect of academic degree on respiratory care credentialing examination results is has not been studied. This quantitative study analyzed an existing data set to identify the effect of academic degree on respiratory care credentialing examination results. The study employed a statistical technique that reduced bias associated with the fact that individuals self-selected into academic degree programs. Results of this study did not identify a statistically significant effect of academic degree on respiratory care credentialing examination results. This study concludes that implementation of the proposed policy change is likely to threaten public health by limiting the future workforce readiness of respiratory care professionals.