

Texas Competency Consortium

Summary of Request: The purpose of this report is to update the Board on activities of the Texas Nurses Association Competency Task Force, a member of the Texas Competency Consortium.

Historical Perspective/Background Information:

The committee met on March 8 - 9 to discuss new methods (other than continuing education units) to ensure ongoing nursing competency for safe practice. The following report to the Board provides an outline of the meeting and preliminary directions discussed by the committee. The final report from the committee will go to the Texas Nurses Association House of Delegates in April, 2007.

During the meeting, there was a long discussion about methods to evaluate continued competency for nurses. Two approaches were debated. Should competencies be developed that are related to the nurse's specific role/practice in their work environment or should broad-based competencies for all nurses be developed? The NCSBN has also debated this issue and is moving forward with testing a core set of broad-based competencies for all nurses. The TNA Competency Task Force decided to follow NCSBN's direction and identified four domains of competencies that are germane to all nurses. These include:

Domain #1: Clinical judgment in the provision of holistic and safe care

Domain #2: Organization and management of safe care

Domain #3: Personal, professional, ethical development and practice

Domain #4: Communication with others

Every nurse would provide evidence of competency in two domains. One domain would be identified by the Board and one domain would be selected by the nurse. For example, all nurses who provide patient care would have to provide evidence of competency in Domain #1: Clinical judgment in the provision of holistic and safe care. They would also select any other domain that they felt was pertinent to their practice.

Competencies would be demonstrated through different venues such as performance evaluations, testing centers and portfolios. How these venues would be operationalized has not been determined, however Board staff clarified that additional resources may be needed to implement new methodologies. In addition, LVN stakeholders will need to have input into any new process for continued competency.

Pro's: The development of new methodologies to evaluate continued competency to ensure safe nursing practice is an ongoing issue of national debate and discussion. Texas is moving forward and on track to develop more comprehensive methodologies.

Con's: New methodologies to evaluate continued competencies may require additional funding and necessitate additional Board resources. In addition, tracking a nurse's role and specialty in order to determine appropriate domains may prove difficult.

Staff Recommendations: None. This report is for information.