

EDUCATION NEWSLETTER

A Special Edition from the Texas Board of Nursing

March 24, 2020

Edition 1, Volume 1

Message to Program Directors:

The Education Consultants have been receiving many questions from nursing programs about how to manage clinical requirements with clinical settings closing their doors to students because of the spread of COVID-19. We appreciate your phone calls and emails, and have taken the opportunity to speak directly to you in the midst of confusion.

The underlying questions are (1) whether programs can use more simulation in place of hands-on patient care and (2) whether moving to an online format would require Board approval. The short answers are Yes and No:

- (1) Yes, this is an emergency and calls for emergency measures. It also points out how important simulation can be as a fill-in until the crisis is over. (This also provides evidence if you are asking for more resources or faculty training to improve your simulation experiences. See Education Guideline [3.8.6.a. Simulation in Pre-licensure Nursing Education](#))
- (2) No, since it is a necessity at this time. Normally, a change in the format of delivery would require Board Staff approval to ensure all resources, faculty training, and technical support services are available. (Other evidences that your school may need to ensure sufficient budget is secured for quality online education.)

Protect Yourself

It is important for the director and faculty to stay abreast of the latest information about COVID-19 and to follow all measures to protect yourselves and your students from COVID-19. Tips commonly stressed for protection from the virus are:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water.
- Practice social distancing as recommended by CDC, DSHS and local public health authorities.
- If you feel sick, definitely stay home.
- Pay attention to a trusted news source.
- Have a supply of food and prescription medications on hand, but only buy what you need.

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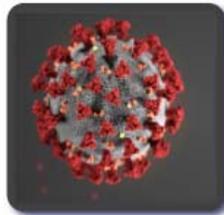
Be Knowledgeable

Valuable sources of information:

- [World Health Organization](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [Texas Department of State Health Services](#)
- [Johns Hopkins University Coronavirus Resource Center](#)
- [Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board](#)
- [Texas Workforce Commission](#)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also offers guidance to colleges and universities here:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/colleges-universities/index.html>



Effects on the Licensing Examination

NCLEX examinations will resume on a limited capacity on March 25, 2020 at 60 Pearson VUE centers with additional sites open on March 28, 2020.

Best practice is to keep checking the NCLEX COVID-19 FAQ Page (<https://www.ncsbn.org/14428.htm>) for the most recent updates/changes.

GOVERNOR ABBOTT WAIVES SEVERAL BOARD OF NURSING RELATIONS AFFECTING NURSING PROGRAMS

Temporary waivers approved by Governor Abbott on March 21, 2020 include:

1. [Rule 217.3\(a\)\(2\)](#) and [\(4\)](#) related to temporary authorization to practice/temporary permits for graduate professional nurses and graduate vocational nurses to practice beyond the current 75 days up to 6 months. This will allow more time for the graduate to take the NCLEX® examination since that possibility is now delayed. This will allow employers to employ graduates who have GN or GVN temporary permits to meet health care demands during the emergency. These individuals must still be supervised by a licensed nurse while they are in their GN or GVN roles. Through this measure, the public will have greater access to care at a time when health care demands are stretched.
2. [Rules 214.10\(e\)\(3\)](#) and [Rule 215.10\(e\)\(3\)](#) related to Clinical Learning Experiences for Vocational Nursing and Professional Nursing Education Programs allows students in their final year of a nursing program to meet required clinical objectives by exceeding the 50% limit on simulated clinical learning experiences. This temporary waiver will permit senior level nursing students who currently are unable to carry out hands-on patient care in health care settings to complete their education by meeting clinical requirements through high-fidelity simulated experiences, thus allowing an on-time graduation of nursing students ready to enter the work force.

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Unplanned Learning Objectives

The current situation also lends itself to being a teachable moment for students to learn first-hand about communicable diseases, public health, population and global health. Use this time for an emphasis on infection control. Students can gather information from print, agencies, and the media and analyze the accuracy and helpfulness for the public.

Students may compare this situation to similar disturbances to normal life and health from the past to see what we have learned and how we are using that knowledge in dealing with this unknown virus.

Another topic for exploration is the importance of community and working together for the good of the whole.

It is not a good time but a learning time: let's make the best of it.

An Example

Here is an example of measures begun in a nursing program jumping in front of the crisis and acting proactively to keep moving ahead:

- Faculty are training during spring break to offer online courses.
- Online group meetings for lecture, pod casts, power point voice-over will be used.
- Labs will be taught using videos with student demonstrations via videos of themselves.
- Moving to simulation for clinical practice will save on resources (masks, gowns, equipment).
- A screening protocol for students who have traveled abroad will be activated.
- The program will use more unfolding case studies to enhance decision-making.

(Lamar College – Port Arthur)

YOUR STORIES

Please document your stories and share with us for a future newsletter.

BOARD STAFF AND WORK-AT-HOME

Most Board Staff have moved their offices to their homes with total access to resources to continue regular work. The Education Consultants are available to take your calls and emails, and will respond quickly. We greatly respect the commitment of Program Directors, faculty, and staff of each program for adapting to change and continuing with the important job of educating nurses. Thank you.