

**Consideration of Change of Status for Program on Conditional Approval  
 St. Michael's School of Nursing and Technology in Weslaco, Texas  
 Vocational Nursing Education Program**

**Summary of Request:**

Consider the change of status for St. Michael's School of Nursing and Technology Vocational Nursing Education Program which has been on Conditional Approval status since April 2010, staff recommendation based upon the 2010 NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate, and Board Rule 214.

**Historical Perspective:**

- St. Michael's School of Nursing and Technology (St. Michael's) was approved by the Texas Board of Nursing (Board or BON) to begin operation of a vocational nursing education program in Weslaco, Texas on July 19, 2007.
- The following table presents a chronological overview of the NCLEX-PN® examination pass rates:

<b>Exam Year</b>	<b>NCLEX-PN® Pass Rate</b>	<b>Number of First-Time Candidates (Passed/Total)</b>	<b>BON Approval Status</b>	<b>Date of Change in Approval Status</b>
2010	65.22%	15/23	Pending	April 2010
2009	40.00%	8/20	Initial with Warning	October 2009
2008	58.33%	7/12	Initial	

- The program's approval status was changed from Initial to Initial with Warning at the October 2009 Board meeting based upon the 2008 pass rate of 58.33% and ongoing, serious student complaints regarding multiple issues at St. Michael's.
- In accordance with Board Rule 214.4(c)(2)(A-B), a Self-Study Report was completed by the nursing program director and presented to Board staff during the August 2009 focused survey visit. The Self-Study Report provided a thorough evaluation of factors that may have contributed to the graduates' performance on the licensure examination, as well as an overview of proposed corrective measures.
- The program's approval status was changed from Initial with Warning to Conditional at the April 2010 Board meeting based upon the 2009 pass rate of 40.00%. Conditional Approval requires that no new students be admitted without Board approval.
- Since initial approval in July 2007, St. Michael's has enrolled seven cohorts and all students have completed the program of study, including didactic and clinical learning experiences.
- There are currently no students enrolled in the program.
- However, there continue to be students from the four most recent cohorts who are pending NCLEX-PN® examination testing: 1 student from the May 6, 2010 cohort; 5 students from the June 30, 2010 cohort; 5 students from the December 16, 2010 cohort; and 8 students from the February 3, 2011 cohort.
- Since mid-December 2010, Board staff have entertained multiple complaints from students who expressed concern about not being allowed to take the licensure examination, although the students have completed all graduation requirements that were in place when they were admitted to the program of study.
- Although corrective measures may have been implemented following completion of the Self Study Report and focused survey visits, it is not possible to evaluate the outcomes of these measures as the students are not being allowed to take the licensure examination due to extensive remediation efforts mandated by the school.

- Since the program began in 2007, there have been three directors of the vocational nursing program.
- Continuing issues that may have impacted student success are a lack of experienced nursing faculty and ongoing and multiple student complaints to Board staff.

Board staff have conducted survey visits to St. Michael's in 2007, 2008, 2009, and 2010.

On March 24, 2011 Board staff met with administration of St. Michael's to review and discuss the issues related to the approval status. Representatives of St. Michael's who attended the meeting:

- Ms. Hermelinda Bolling, RN, Director of Vocational Nursing
- Ms. Martha Montelongo, Administrator/Owner
- Mr. Macario Montelongo, CEO/Owner

Although the program has continued to identify areas for correction and to implement measures to improve the success of the students, the program has not been able to achieve an NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate of 80% or higher since the program of study was approved by the BON in 2007.

Rule 214.4(a)(5) states that "The Board may withdraw approval from a program which fails to meet legal and educational requirements within the specified time. The program shall be removed from the list of Board-approved vocational nursing educational programs."

Withdrawal of approval from a program would require that the program make academic provisions for students to complete remedial education to facilitate student success on the NCLEX-PN® licensure examination.

**Pros and Cons:**

Pros of Withdrawal of Approval:

- The mission of the BON is to protect and promote the welfare of the people of Texas by ensuring that each person holding a license as a nurse in this state is competent to practice safely.
- The Board fulfills its mission through the regulation of the practice of nursing and the approval of nursing educational programs.
- Students and potential students of the program may be at risk for receiving an inadequate educational preparation to practice safely.
- It is incumbent upon every Board approved program of study to provide a rigorous educational experience based upon sound educational principles designed to prepare graduates to be successful on the licensure examination.
- Although the program has implemented a variety of corrective measures since 2007, it appears that the program lacks a cadre of experienced individuals who possess the knowledge, skills, and expertise to successfully operate a vocational nursing education program.
- When a proposed program of study is granted Initial Approval by the Board, the expectation is that students will be provided a rigorous and sound educational experience appropriate to ensure successful completion of the licensure examination. It is not anticipated that all students in the program of study would need remediation.

Cons of Withdrawal of Approval:

- Corrective measures that have been implemented may be appropriate to address students' needs; however, as all completers of the program of study have not been allowed to take the NCLEX-PN® examination, it is not possible to evaluate these measures.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Board staff propose the following recommendation:

Based upon the history of the program being unable to achieve an 80% NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate since the time of initial program approval in 2007 and consistent with Rule 214.4(a)(5), move to withdraw approval from St. Michael's School of Nursing and Technology Vocational Nursing Educational Program in Weslaco, Texas, and to remove the name of the program from the list of Board-approved vocational nursing education programs as stated in the attached letter (See Attachment #1).

DRAFT LETTER

May 2, 2011

Hermelinda Bolling, RN  
Director, Vocational Nursing Education Program  
St. Michael's School of Nursing and Technology  
3001 North Westgate  
Weslaco, Texas 78596

Dear Ms. Bolling:

At the April 28-29, 2011 meeting, the Texas Board of Nursing discussed a change of approval status for St. Michael's School of Nursing and Technology Vocational Nursing Education Program related to the persistent low NCLEX-PN® examination pass rates since 2008 and St. Michael's failed efforts to implement corrective measures to ensure graduates' success. The Board wishes to thank you and <<INSERT AS NEEDED>> for being present to answer questions.

Rule 214.4(a)(5) states that "The Board may withdraw approval from a program which fails to meet legal and educational requirements within the specified time. The program shall be removed from the list of Board-approved vocational nursing educational programs."

After much deliberation, the Board has decided to withdraw approval from St. Michael's Vocational Nursing Program and to remove the program from the list of Board-approved vocational nursing education programs effective immediately. Since this will constitute a closure of the St. Michael's Vocational Nursing Program, St. Michael's School of Nursing and Technology is issued the following requirements:

Requirement No. 1: St. Michael's Vocational Nursing Program shall make academic provisions for students to complete remedial education to facilitate student success on the NCLEX-PN® licensure examination.

Requirement No. 2: St. Michael's Vocational Nursing Program shall make provisions for access to and safe storage of vital school records, including transcripts of all graduates.

Requirement No. 3: St. Michael's Vocational Nursing Program shall ensure methods to be used to maintain requirements and standards until the program closes.

Rule 214.3(d)(2) states that "The program shall continue within standards until all students enrolled in the nursing educational program at the time of the decision to close, have graduated. In the event this is not possible, a plan shall be developed whereby students may transfer to other approved programs."

Please provide the plan for teach-out and closure to board staff by July 1, 2011.

If you have questions, please contact board staff at [virginia.ayars@bon.state.tx.us](mailto:virginia.ayars@bon.state.tx.us) or 512-305-7660.

Sincerely,

Kristin K. Benton, MSN, RN  
Board President

Virginia D. Ayars, MS, RN  
Nursing Consultant for Education

copy: Michael De Long, Texas Workforce Commission