

**Consideration for Change of Approval Status from Initial to Full Approval
Fortis College (formerly MedVance Institute) in Houston, Texas
Vocational Nursing Education Program**

Summary of Request:

Consider the request for change of approval status for Fortis College (formerly MedVance Institute) in Houston, Texas, from initial to full approval based upon compliance with Board rules, the 2010 NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate, and summary report of survey visit (Attachment #1).

Historical Perspective:

The Vocational Nursing Education Program at Fortis College was granted Initial approval by the Board in October 2008.

- Fortis College is the new name of the former MedVance Institute in Houston, Texas, as of July 1, 2011. The name change has been documented by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), and Commission on Occupational Education (COE).
- The 2010 NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate for the first class was 81.25% (13/16).
- Board staff conducted a survey visit to the program on June 24, 2011.
- A summary of the survey report is included in Attachment #1.

Findings from the Survey Visit:

Pros:

- The director and nursing faculty demonstrated competence in their role and commitment to the success of the program.
- The college administration expressed strong support for the program and an interest in establishing an Associate Degree Nursing Education program on their campus.
- Students spoke positively of the curriculum and of the instruction. There is open communication between the faculty and students.
- The director and faculty utilize an online learning system for student testing, test review, test analysis, and ongoing student progression data.
- A wide variety of clinical experiences is available to the students.
- Expansion of the nursing facilities is planned with anticipated growth of the program in 2012, assuming the shift to Full Approval by the Board of Nursing.

Cons:

- The nursing program is presently located in space shared with other allied health programs. The space is currently sufficient, but additional space is needed for planned growth.
- Board Staff cautioned nursing and upper administration, along with faculty, against too rapid growth without sufficient planning for human and physical resources to meet increased enrollment and program expansion.

Suggested Requirement:

Rule 214.9, related to Program of Study: Faculty and nursing administration shall review and update the curriculum and clinical evaluation instruments to reflect inclusion of the Differentiated Essential Competencies (DECs) in the program of study.

Staff Recommendation:

Move to change the approval status of the Fortis College Vocational Nursing Education Program in Houston, Texas, from Initial to Full, accept the report of the June 24, 2011 survey visit, and issue the requirement in the attached letter (See Attachment #2).

**Summary of Survey Visit
Fortis College in Houston, Texas
Vocational Nursing Program**

Overview:

- A survey visit to Fortis College (formerly MedVance Institute) in Houston, Texas, Vocational Nursing Education Program was conducted June 24, 2011, by Paul Waller, Nursing Consultant for Education.
- A previous survey visit was conducted on June 24, 2008, prior to admitting students to the program.
- A summary of the focal areas of the June 24, 2011 visit follows:

Rule 214.1: General Requirements:

The director and faculty demonstrated accountability for staying abreast and complying with the Board's rules and regulations and the Nursing Practice Act. These documents are available to faculty and they are familiar with the Board's web site. The current Director, Vivian L. Bradley, MN, RN, assumed the role on April 18, 2011 and will attend the next New Director Orientation in September 2011.

Rule 214.6: Administration and Organization:

The Fortis College administration provides adequate financial support and resources to operate the program. The director indicated that the needs for resources for the program are met. Expansion of the physical facilities is planned for the program, including additional skills/simulation lab, classroom, and office space. The Director is responsible for faculty evaluations; having only recently joined the organization, she is assisting the former Interim Director with evaluations currently due. She does not currently carry a specific teaching assignment, but assists with modules as needed, most recently in leadership, jurisprudence, and scope of practice.

Rule 214.7: Faculty:

The director and two full-time faculty provide the instruction for the program. An additional part-time faculty member joined the team the day prior to the survey visit; she will be assigned to clinical learning experiences. The director and faculty described the clinical experiences and student progression in meeting clinical objectives. Faculty members collaborate to provide educational and clinical opportunities to meet the learning needs of individual students. The director and faculty are engaged in ongoing evaluation of program processes and making changes as required. There is an orientation process for all new faculty hires.

Rule 214.8: Students:

There are currently 27 students in the program (second cohort) who will complete the program in late August. The cohort began with 30 students. Admission and progression policies are in place, are enforced, and have the support of the administration. Students indicate the program is challenging and one cannot fully anticipate the challenges. They are excited about the opportunities to represent the student body in faculty committees. It was evident that they have open access to the director and nursing faculty. It was also clear from the student-faculty and student-director interactions observed, as well as from their remarks in the student meeting, that the students respect the faculty and appreciate their expertise.

A new cohort of 30 students will be admitted in September (from 41 currently-identified qualified candidates), with an additional cohort (N=30) planned in six months. An interview with the Director or delegate is currently included in the admissions process. A proposal to eliminate that interview has been submitted to Texas Workforce Commission based on an Admissions department request, but the nursing program is reconsidering whether to proceed with that plan.

Nursing and upper administration, along with faculty, were cautioned against rapid growth of the program, and all verbalized an understanding of the need for careful planning and assurance that human and physical resources are adequate to serve the student body.

Rule 214.9: Program of Study: and 214.10 Clinical Learning Experiences.

The nursing program is presented in four terms. The required curriculum meets rule requirements and prepared the first cohort to achieve an NCLEX-PN pass rate of 81.25% (13/16). Multiple and diverse clinical experiences provide clinical learning opportunities. The director and faculty continually seek out new clinical facilities to further enhance the program. The available skills/ simulation lab is sufficient to meet the current needs of the program. Additional simulation equipment and mannequins are on order for planned expansion of the program.

The need for more space is recognized by faculty and administration, and expansion is planned as the program achieves Full Approval from the Board and adds enrollment. The Clinical Learning Experiences evaluation tools are based on the former Differentiated Entry Level Competencies (DELCS), which were recently supplanted by the Differentiated Essential Competencies (DECs). The Director and one faculty member attended the recent DECs workshop hosted by BON Education Staff and they will be working to assure full incorporation of the DECs within the program.

Rule 214.11: Facilities, Resources and Services:

Board staff discussed the need for more space for the nursing program, including expanded skills/ simulation lab space and dedicated classrooms. Nursing faculty offices are tight with the recent addition of a third faculty member and all three faculty currently housed in a single small room. A Learning Center to house the small paper library and a small number of computers is currently being developed and staffed. Additional space is targeted for expansion and planning is underway to accommodate additional enrollment in 2012. Board staff strongly recommended that the director and nursing faculty be included in planning the reconstruction and allocation of space. Again, Board Staff cautioned against too rapid growth without planning to accommodate all aspects of the program. The college is also planning to seek approval to establish a new Associate Degree in Nursing program, and this would also require the additional space.

Rule 214.12: Records:

Records are kept in locked cabinets in locked rooms. Admissions files are retained by the admissions office and nursing records are maintained by the nursing administrator. Files are well organized and include the documentation required by Rule 214.

Rule 214.13: Total Program Evaluation:

The Total Program Evaluation is implemented with evidence of decision making based on data obtained. Administration recognizes this as an excellent contribution to the ongoing strategic planning of the program.

Conclusion:

The new vocational nursing program at Fortis College has been in compliance with Board rules. Their first graduating class achieved 81.25% pass rate on the NCLEX examination (13 of 16 first-time candidates passed the exam). Students almost unanimously indicate a desire to continue their education and asked questions about the process and timing for possible LVN to ADN program at Fortis College. Since this is a small program, the director and nursing faculty have a strong commitment to the success of the individual students. While the Director has recently joined the organization, it is apparent that relationships have been well-established with upper administration, faculty, and the student body.

DRAFT LETTER

Vivian L. Bradley, MN, RN, Director
Vocational Nursing Program
Fortis College
6220 Westpark, Suite 180
Houston, Texas 77057

Dear Ms. Bradley:

At their July 21, 2011 meeting, the Texas Board of Nursing discussed the approval status of the Fortis College Vocational Nursing Education Program in Houston and the report of the June 24, 2011 survey visit. Based upon the 2010 NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate, the program's compliance with the Board's rules and regulations, and the survey visit report, the Board changed the approval status from Initial to Full approval, and issued the following requirement:

Requirement:

1. Rule 214.9, related to Program of Study: Faculty and nursing administration shall review and update the curriculum and clinical evaluation instruments to reflect inclusion of the Differentiated Essential Competencies (DECs) in the program of study.

Please provide a written response to this requirement by June 1, 2012.

The Board offers congratulations and best wishes to the Vocational Nursing Program at Fortis College in their continued success to serve their community.

Sincerely,

Kristin K. Benton, MSN, RN
President

Paul R. Waller, PhD, RN
Nursing Consultant for Education

copy: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB)
Texas Workforce Commission (TWC)
Commission on Occupational Education (COE)