

Texas A & M Health Sciences Center Rural and Community Health Institute
Alternative to Discipline Pilot Project

Summary of Request

The purpose of this report is to provide an up-date to the Texas Board of Nursing (BON) regarding on-going discussions with Texas A&M Health Science Center Rural and Community Health Institute (RCHI) and the College of Nursing, regarding the development of a Knowledge, Skills, Training, Assessment and Research (KSTAR) Pilot Program for nurses.

Historical Perspective

In 2007, RCHI developed a successful assessment program for physicians that needed to demonstrate their clinical skills and knowledge base. The KSTAR program offers customized training and educational opportunities for a physician once an individualized assessment of knowledge and expertise has been performed. Appropriate resolutions that benefit both the physician and the healthcare institution are determined, if the problems perceived are specifically related to a physician's performance. Two key factors that distinguish the KSTAR program from other programs in the U.S. that assess physician competency are the mini-residencies and ongoing monitoring. Physicians desiring to re-enter practice have also experienced success with the program.

Since 2010, Texas A&M Health Science Center has committed to improving the quality and safety of nursing practice in Texas through RCHI and the College of Nursing's Nursing Quality and Safety Collaborative (NQSC). This program offers nursing peer review (NPR) services to numerous rural hospitals in over 100 communities in Texas. Through nursing peer and quality reviews, the NQSC offers educational opportunities, supportive services, and case-based learning.

Given the success of the KSTAR program for physicians, RCHI and the College of Nursing would like to apply this unique evidence-based program as an alternative to discipline for nurses. BON staff has entered into on-going discussions with RCHI and the College Nursing in order for all parties to understand the challenges of the disciplined nurse in demonstrating competency and the applicability of the KSTAR program to nursing practice.

Pros and Cons

Pros:

Partnering with RCHI and the College of Nursing creates an opportunity for the BON to have input into the design a non-punitive, alternative to discipline for nurses with practice-related errors.

A more individualized approach to education and demonstration of competency may enhance the BON's ability to reassure the public that a nurse's practice has been remediated.

A non-punitive approach to discipline may increase the likelihood a nurse who has been remediated remains in the workforce.

A KSTAR program for nurses may assist nurses who choose to re-enter nursing practice after an extended absence of four or more years.

The knowledge gained from this type of evidence-based program will inform nursing regulation and future public policy.

Cons:

None noted at this time.

Recommendation:

This item is for informational purposes only. No action is required.