

**Report of Findings Related to Time Allowed for Nursing Graduates to Take the
NCLEX Examination Following Program Completion**

Background:

Rule 217.2(c) states that "An applicant for initial licensure by examination shall pass the NCLEX-PN or NCLEX-RN within four years of completion of requirements for graduation." This allows new graduates to wait as long as four years before taking the examination or to take the examination multiple times over a four-year period.

- From time to time, programs complain that an "outlier" (a graduate who completed the nursing program one or more years before taking the NCLEX examination for the first time) caused their examination pass rate to fall below 80%.
- The Board has discussed the length of time allowed graduates following program completion to take the NCLEX examination.
- A review of other Member Boards' policies indicated that though some Boards limit the time for graduates to take the exam to two (2) to (3) years, others have no time limit at all.
- If graduates wait beyond the four (4) years to take the NCLEX for a Texas license, they have the option of taking the licensing examination in another state with more flexible rules, and then endorsing into Texas.
- There are no time restrictions from NCSBN regarding when a candidate may apply to take the NCLEX examination, but research indicates that a candidate's success rate on the NCLEX examination decreases as the time elapses after graduation.
- In 2012, Board Staff conducted a careful review of all NCSBN Summary Reports for professional nursing programs from the 2011 examination year and determined that only thirty-four (34) of nine thousand five hundred eighteen (9,518) first-time candidates had graduated as far back as 2007-2009. This represented only .003% of the total number of first-time applicants.
- The number of first-time candidates was so small that it did not seem to indicate a need for rule changes that in turn would have implications for other Board rules. (For example, a time frame of four (4) years is also applied to the need for a refresher course after a nurse with an expired license has been away from practice.)
- In view of these findings, the rationale for changing Rule 217.2 (c) is very weak and does not warrant action.

This report is for information only.