

Consideration of Request for Charges To The Advisory Committee on Education

Summary of Request:

Consider Staff's request for the Board to approve and issue charges to the Advisory Committee on Education (ACE) regarding rule changes related to approval of enrollment increases, workload for vocational nursing (VN) program directors, and required classroom instruction and clinical practice hours in VN programs.

Historical Perspective:

Several areas of concern related to Board rules and environmental changes have come to the attention of Board Staff recently and warrant consideration for rule changes:

- The number of nursing education programs issued sanctions by the Board for areas of noncompliance, including NCLEX examination pass rates below 80%, has increased over the past few years. Often a drop in program performance is associated with a rapid increase in student enrollments. Under the current rules, program may increase admission points and enrollments without Board Staff approval. Other member boards and national nursing accreditation organizations require approvals when programs plan for an increase in student enrollment of 20% or 25%.
- Rule 215 *Professional Nursing Education* limits the number of hours that Program Directors may teach each week in order to devote sufficient time to administrative responsibilities. Rule 214 *Vocational Nursing Education* places no specified limits on teaching except to state that "a director or coordinator with responsibilities other than the program shall not have major teaching responsibilities." Many VN program directors report that they are expected to carry heavy teaching loads, detracting from the needed time for administrative duties. VN Program Directors request this issue be considered.
- Rule 214 *Vocational Nursing Education* requires the VN program to include a minimum of 1,398 clock hours with 558 hours for classroom instruction and 840 hours for clinical practice. With statutory changes mandated for Associate Degree Programs (ADN) to reduce their semester credit hours to 60 credit hours with reductions that follow, the Multiple Entry-Exit Programs (MEEP) find it impossible to comply with the required hours for their MEEP students to qualify for the NCLEX-PN® examination. It is expected that VN programs will also be required to reduce their semester credit hours to 40 credit hours, resulting in the same quantitative dilemma. Rule 215 *Professional Nursing Education* does not require a specific number of hours for classroom or clinical practice, but expects programs to base the hours upon course objectives. A change for the future is necessary in order for VN programs and MEEP programs to comply with Board rules.

Rationale for Staff Recommendation:

- Board Staff recognize that the currency of these issues indicates a need for study by the ACE Committee to determine evidence suggesting rule changes.

Staff Recommendation:

Move to issue charges to ACE for possible recommendations regarding rule changes related to:

- Board approval for increasing enrollments in nursing programs,
- specific requirements for classroom and clinical practice hours in VN programs,
- and limitations in teaching responsibilities for VN Program Directors.