Report on Implementation of the Knowledge, Skills, Training, Assessment and Research (KSTAR) Pilot

Summary of Request:

This agenda item is for informational purposes only and is intended to update Board members regarding the implementation of the KSTAR Pilot Program.

Historical Perspective:

In October of 2013, the Board approved a two-year pilot program with Texas A&M Health Sciences Center College of Nursing and the Rural and Community Health Institute (RCHI) to offer the KSTAR program for nurses with practice violations that result in a disciplinary sanction of a warning and below. KSTAR is the acronym for Knowledge, Skills, Training, Assessment and Research, a comprehensive program that utilizes an individualized assessment of the nurse with practice breakdowns, to design a personalized remedial education plan aimed at correcting any knowledge deficits that may exist. Monitoring and follow-up are built into the program.

At the April 2015 quarterly Board meeting, Board staff apprised Board members of recent changes to the pilot and sought future direction. Board staff expressed concern regarding pilot feasibility primarily as a result of pilot leadership turnover that led to question of whether or not the college of nursing would continue to participate in pilot operations requiring nursing faculty expertise to lead the educational and research aspects of the pilot. At the April 2015 Board meeting, RCHI staff addressed the Board and offered assurances that plans were in place to invite the Texas A&M Health Sciences Center College of Nursing to participate in the pilot research design, implementation and evaluation. The Board approved continuation of the KSTAR Pilot Program and directed Board staff to continue to offer KSTAR as an alternative method of discipline to a maximum of four additional nurses per month who meet inclusion criteria.

Current Perspective:

Since the April 2015 Board meeting, RCHI staff announced that the Texas A&M College of Nursing has named Debra Matthews, PhD, RN, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs to be the principal investigator to lead the research arm of the pilot. Dr. Matthews is an experienced nurse educator, administrator and researcher. Dr. Matthews is in the process of working with RCHI staff to assign college of nursing faculty to assist with the simulation aspects of the pilot. Additionally, Dr. Matthews is working closely with RCHI and BON staff to prepare the research submission to the Texas A&M Institutional Review Board. Weekly phone calls began in July and a face to face meeting is scheduled with Dr. Matthews, RCHI staff and Board staff on July 20, 2015.

Board staff continue to meet biweekly via teleconference with the RCHI KSTAR team and now, Dr. Matthews to discuss implementation of the pilot. These teleconferences provide for team discussion of each nurse participant's progress including review of assessment reports, individual education plans and final assessment reports. Recently, discussion has focused on the level of detail in the assessment and evaluation reports, as well as the process for determining successful completion of the KSTAR program for nurses. As of June 24, 2015, a total of 23 nurse participants have enrolled in the KSTAR for nurses pilot program. Twelve of the 23 nurse participants have completed the two day individualized assessment and training component. One nurse participant was referred back to the Board following the initial assessment. Three nurse participants have completed the KSTAR for nurses pilot program. Two of these three nurse participants completed the program successfully and one of the participants will be required to complete additional remediation.

Pros and Cons: None noted.

Staff Recommendation: No action is necessary. This item is for informational purposes only.