

**Consideration of Change in Approval Status  
From Full Approval with Warning to Conditional Approval  
Houston Community College in, Houston, Texas  
Vocational Nursing Education Program**

**Summary of Request:**

Consider the proposed change in approval status for Houston Community College (HCC) Vocational Nursing (VN) Education Program in Houston, Texas, from Full Approval with Warning to Conditional Approval based upon the 2016 NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate, findings in the 2015 Self-Study Report, and areas for improvement to align with Rule 214.

**Historical Perspective:**

- The VN Program at HCC began in 1951.
- The VN Program uses a face-to-face instruction model with selected nursing courses as blended/hybrid nursing courses (partially online and partially face-to-face).
- The 12-month program offers two admission points each year in January and August.
- The NCLEX-PN® pass rates for the past five years are reflected in the table below:

<b>Examination Year</b>	<b>BON Approval Status</b>	<b>NCLEX-PN® Examination Pass Rate</b>	<b>Number of First Time Candidates (Passed/Total)</b>
2016	Full with Warning	74.63%	50/67
2015	Full	76.56%	49/64
2014	Full	68.07%	81/119
2013	Full	92.19%	59/64
2012	Full	93.22%	55/59

- Due to the 2014 NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate of 68.07%, the Program Director and faculty were required to submit a Self-Study Report (SSR) in 2015 that would evaluate factors that may have contributed to the graduates' performance on the NCLEX-PN® examination and a description of the corrective measures to be implemented.
- The faculty identified factors in the SSR that may have contributed to the decline in the pass rate including:
  - high number of students failing and repeating courses; and

- high faculty turnover.
- The program planned to review and revise readmission policies and to plan strategies to recruit and retain nursing faculty. In addition, the program planned to improve the faculty orientation and faculty development policies and processes.
- A survey visit was conducted on December 1-2, 2015, to the Houston Community College VN Program to evaluate the success of corrective measures implemented this and to assist the program in identifying other measures for success.
- Board Staff carefully reviewed the records of NCLEX-PN® candidates for 2016 and found most of them took the examination within six months of graduation. Only one student waited more than a year to take the NCLEX-PN® examination following graduation.
- Board Staff engaged the Program Director, VN nursing faculty, and Dr. Phillip Nicotera, President of Houston Community College, in a conference call on Wednesday, February 22, 2017, to discuss measures currently being implemented by faculty to improve the success of the students. Faculty described tutorials and remediation strategies they are providing to assist students in applying nursing knowledge and skills to patient situations.

**Rationale for Recommendations:**

Rule 214.4(c)(3)(B) states: “A program may be placed on conditional approval status if the pass rate of first-time NCLEX-PN® candidates ... is less than 80% for three consecutive examination year.” Rule 214.4(a)(4) states that “Conditional approval is issued by the Board for a specified time to provide the opportunity to correct deficiencies. (A) The program shall not admit students while on conditional approval.”

The program has identified number of factors that may have contributed to the NCLEX® pass rate and have planned corrective measures to promote success of the students. The corrective measures have not contributed to a more successful outcome yet.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Move to change the approval status for the Houston Community College Vocational Nursing Education Program in Houston, Texas, from Full Approval with Warning to Conditional Approval based upon the 2016 NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate, findings in the 2015 Self-Study Report, and areas for improvement to align with Rule 214, and impose the conditions and requirements in the attached letter and Board Order (See Attachment #1).

Draft Letter

April 24, 2017

Deborah Simmons-Johnson, MEd, MSN, BSN, RN, Director  
Vocational Nursing Education Program  
Houston Community College  
1900 Pressler Street, Suite 312  
Houston, Texas 77030

Dear Ms. Simmons-Johnson:

At the April 20-21, 2017, meeting, members of the Texas Board of Nursing (Board) discussed the approval status of the Houston Community College Vocational Nursing Education Program in Houston, Texas, based upon the NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate for 2016, findings in the 2015 Self-Study Report, and areas for improvement to align with Rule 214.

Based upon the discussion and review of information, it was the decision of the Board to change the approval status of the Houston Community College Vocational Nursing Education Program in Houston, Texas, from Full Approval with Warning to Conditional Approval and impose the conditions and requirements in the attached Board Order.

If you have any questions or if we may be of any assistance, please contact Board Staff at [Janice.hooper@bon.texas.gov](mailto:Janice.hooper@bon.texas.gov) or 512-305-6814.

Sincerely,

Katherine A. Thomas, MN, RN, FAAN  
Executive Director

Copy: Dr. Phillip Nicotera, President

**BEFORE THE TEXAS BOARD OF NURSING**

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**ORDER OF THE BOARD**

In the Matter of  
Houston Community College  
Vocational Nursing Education Program  
In Houston, Texas

A public meeting of the Texas Board of Nursing, hereinafter referred to as the Board, was held on April 20, 2017, 333 Guadalupe, Tower II, Room 225, Austin, Texas, to consider the approval status of the Houston Community College Vocational Nursing Education Program in Houston, Texas, pursuant to Section 301.157, Texas Occupations Code and 22 Tex. Admin. Code Chapter 214, based upon the NCLEX-PN® examination pass rate for 2016, findings in the 2015 Self-Study Report, and areas for improvement to align with Rule 214.

After review and due consideration of the materials presented by Staff and filed by Houston Community College Vocational Nursing Education Program in Houston, Texas, the Board hereby CHANGES the approval status of Houston Community College Vocational Nursing Education Program in Houston, Texas from FULL APPROVAL WITH WARNING to CONDITIONAL APPROVAL and imposes the following conditions/requirements:

1. The program shall not enroll students while on conditional approval status.
2. The program shall remain on conditional approval status until the program demonstrates a pass rate for first-time candidates of at least 80% on the 2017 NCLEX-PN® examination. The NCLEX-PN® examination year is January 1, 2017 through December 31, 2017.
3. The program must demonstrate full compliance with Rule 214 prior to consideration of a change in approval status.

Entered this 20<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2017

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Katherine A. Thomas, MN, RN, FAAN  
Executive Director  
On Behalf of the Texas Board of Nursing