

**Report of Survey Visit  
Cephas Center for Health Sciences in Dallas, Texas  
Vocational Nursing Education Program**

**Summary of Request:**

Consider the report of the April 27, 2017 survey visit to the Cephas Center for Health Sciences (CCHS) Vocational Nursing (VN) Education Program in Dallas, Texas, pursuant to the April, 2017 Board Order.

**Historical Perspective:**

- The VN Program at CCHS was approved by the Board in April 2012 and began enrolling students in May 2012.
- CCHS is a private institution owned by Peninnah (Penny) Ihemelu, RN, BSC, who also serves as Director of the program.
- The program is designed to be delivered in a 12-month format (four quarters).
- The most recent prior survey visit was conducted on March 15, 2012 by Robin Caldwell, PhD, RN.
- The program was placed on Conditional Approval status at the April 2017 quarterly Board meeting.
- The president/director has been unresponsive to Board staff e-mails on several occasions in the past, but communication has greatly improved since April 2017.
- The NCLEX-PN® examination pass rates for the past three years are provided 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                    | Initial with Warning       | 40.00%                                 | 8/20  |
| 2015                    | Initial                    | 43.75%                                 | 7/16  |
| 2014                    | Initial                    | 28.57%                                 | 6/21  |
| 2013                    | New Program                |  |   |

- The program submitted a Self-Study Report (SSR) in 2015 for the 2014 NCLEX-PN® pass rate in which they identified the following areas for correction:
  - revise admissions criteria as students were being admitted with test scores for math, English, reading, and science below the national mean;
  - strengthen student policies related to remediation; and
  - strengthen the use of standardized testing throughout the program.
- The program evaluated the effects of corrective measure in 2016 with the following findings:
  - admission criteria revised to include higher scores on entrance exams;
  - graduation requirements revised to include a standardized exit exam six weeks before graduation;
  - students who fail will be retested and if still not successful on the second attempt, will not graduate;
  - transfer students will be held to the same admission requirements; and

- remediation and study time will be regularly scheduled for each course with instructor availability.

### **Summary of Survey Findings:**

- Findings from the survey visit indicate an area in which the program is not in compliance with Board Rule 214 (See Attachment #1).

### **Pros and Cons from Survey Visit:**

#### **Pros:**

- The facilities are adequate to meet the current needs of the program and students verbalize that they feel supported by faculty and staff.

#### **Cons:**

- The president is also the director of the nursing program.
- Admission standards have not always been enforced.
- The program admits many transfer students. There are currently seven transfer students in the program and the previous graduating class had 11 transfer students.
- Students who fail a final exam are given the opportunity to take a different final exam for a maximum grade of 75%.
- Clinical learning experiences are either at a long-term care facility (95%) or at a Head Start facility for pediatrics (5%). There is no opportunity for clinical learning experiences in either an acute care setting or in a maternity/nursery setting.

### **Staff Rationale:**

Board Staff has provided rationale for the requirement in the attached letter.

### **Staff Rationale for Requirement #1:**

Rule 214.9(f) 3 states: "Clinical learning experiences shall be sufficient in quantity and quality to provide opportunities for students to achieve the stated outcomes."

**Therefore**, the program shall submit to Board Staff a plan to provide opportunities to achieve the stated outcomes as they pertain to maternal/newborn as well as clinical affiliation agreements that indicate students have experience in maternal/newborn no later than September 1, 2017.

### **Staff Recommendation:**

Move to accept the report of findings of the survey visit to the Cephas Center for Health Sciences (VN) Education Program in Dallas, Texas, and impose the requirements/conditions indicated in the attached letter and Board Order (See Attachment #2).

**Summary of Survey Visit  
Cephas Center for Health Sciences in Dallas, Texas  
Vocational Nursing Education Program**

**Purpose of Survey visit:** Board required survey visit

**Date of Visit:** April 27, 2017

**Board Staff Conducting Visit:** Education Consultants Gayle Varnell, PhD, RN, CPNP-PC

**Education Consultant met with:**

Peninnah (Penny) Ihemelu, RN, BSC, Owner/President/Director

Geoffrey Ndungu, RN, VN Faculty

Timothy Kikoworie, VN, VN Faculty

Randall, Whittman, ADN, RN, VN Faculty

Oleyde Folakemi, VN, VN Faculty

**Education Consultant:**

- reviewed the curriculum and all syllabi;
- reviewed the Student Handbook and Faculty Handbook;
- reviewed exams and clinical evaluation tools;
- toured campus and facilities housing the nursing program;
- interviewed 33 VN students;
- held initial conference with President/Director;
- met with four faculty members;
- reviewed records and documents including: student and faculty files, minutes of faculty meetings, and the Total Program Evaluation (TPE) Plan; and
- conducted exit interview with VN President/Director and faculty.

**Summary of Findings:**

Administration:

- Administration indicated the nursing program is in alignment with the school's mission, vision, and values. The program adds worth to the school and meets a need for nurses in the local community.
- In addition to the VN Program, CCHS offers a Certified Medical Assistant (CMA) program.
- Penninah Ihemelu, RN, has served as the director of the VN Program since 2013.
- There is strong administrative and faculty support for the VN program.
- The Director carries a teaching load of one course.

Program of Study:

- The program is one year in length and consist of four quarters. There are 568 didactic hours, 256 skills lab hours, and 720 clinical hours in the program of study. The students spend the first quarter learning skills in the lab and are scheduled for clinicals during the last three quarters.
- The program of study is well-organized and includes all Board required content.

- *The Differentiated Essential Competencies (DECS) (2010)* have been fully incorporated into the curriculum.
- Current admission policies lack rigor for transfer and readmitted students.
- In reviewing the Student Handbook, it states that each student is allowed to have one make-up exam for each failed grade per quarter. The director stated that this meant that if a student fails the final exam for a course, they are allowed to take another final. If successful, the maximum grade that they may receive for the final exam is a 75%.
- In reviewing graduate records, the majority of transfer students were not successful on the NCLEX-PN® exam.
- All VN students are required to take a standardized exit exam. If unsuccessful, students do not receive authorization to apply for licensure until satisfactory performance on the exit exam. Remediation mechanisms are in place and the policies are stated in the Student Handbook.

Faculty:

- In addition to the Program Director, two full-time faculty members and four part-time faculty members teach in the VN Program. The faculty meets Board qualifications and offers diversity in their cultural, educational, and clinical backgrounds. Faculty members are all experienced nurse educators.
- Faculty verbalized that there is low turnover in administration and faculty
- Faculty meetings are held on a regular basis and review of faculty meeting minutes revealed documentation for actions.

Students:

- The program is on Conditional Approval status until the program demonstrates a pass rate for first-time candidates of at least 80% on the NCLEX-PN® examination.
- Currently, the total enrollment is 50 students.

| Cohort | Graduation Date | Total Number Enrolled | Number of Transfer Students |
|--------|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| #4     | April 29, 2017  | 18                    | 4                           |
| #5     | October 5, 2017 | 10                    | 3                           |
| #6     | May 5, 2018     | 22                    |                             |

- Students reported they enrolled in the VN Program because of the excellent reputation of the program and the individualized support from the faculty.
- Students stated the program of study is preparing them for clinical practice. They cited clinical learning experiences as a highly rewarding part of the program.
- Student policies are well-defined and are written to include all Board required content.
- Student files are maintained with required documentation.
- Students have input into the program via course, faculty, and program evaluations.

Clinical Learning Experiences:

- The program has active clinical contracts at long-term care and rehabilitation facilities as well as Head Start for pediatric clinical learning opportunities. There are no clinical facilities contracts for either acute care or maternal/newborn.
- Skills lab and simulation lab activities are utilized prior to hands-on patient care experiences in Quarter #1.

- Observation of both a classroom and a skills lab indicate that students are active learners and engaged in the course work of skills lab experience.
- Clinical learning activities are incorporated into Quarters # 2-4.
- Faculty provides supervision during all clinical learning experiences.
- Board-required faculty-to-student ratios are maintained.
- The clinical evaluation tools are based upon the DEC's and measure progression of the student according to level objectives.
- The skills/simulation lab is open to students for practice.

Facilities, Resources, and Services:

- The facilities housing the VN Program are spacious and equipped with numerous audio-visual equipped classrooms, student study areas, and a computer lab.
- There is a five-bed skills lab as well as a two-bed high-fidelity lab.
- The Program Director/Administrator has a fully furnished private office and the faculty have furnished cubicles.
- The program has full-time clerical and secretarial support.

Records and Reports:

- Student records are maintained for five years and are kept in a fire-proof cabinet located in a locked office.
- The Total Program Evaluation (TPE) Plan, copies of NEPIS, CANEP, and Faculty minutes are kept in the program director's office in a locked fireproof cabinet.
- Faculty files contain all documents required by Rule 214.7(c).
- Clinical affiliation agreements are current and easily accessible.
- Storage of files meets the requirement of Rule 214.12.

Draft Letter

July 21, 2017

Penninah Ihemelu, RN, BSC  
Vocational Nursing Education Program  
Cephas Center for Health Sciences  
4563 South Westmoreland Road  
Dallas, TX 75237

Dear Ms. Ihemelu:

At the July 20-21, 2017 meeting, members of the Texas Board of Nursing (Board) considered the report of the survey visit to the Cephas Center for Health Sciences Vocational Nursing Education Program in Dallas, Texas. It was the decision of the Board to accept the report of the survey visit and impose the requirement/condition as indicated in the attached Board Order.

If you have any questions or if we may offer assistance, please contact Board Staff at 512-621-5179 or [gayle.varnell@bon.texas.gov](mailto:gayle.varnell@bon.texas.gov).

Sincerely,

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

Copy: Texas Workforce Commission

**BEFORE THE TEXAS BOARD OF NURSING**

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**ORDER OF THE BOARD**

**In the Matter of:**

Cephas Center for Health Sciences  
Vocational Nursing Education Program  
In Dallas, Texas

A Public meeting of the Texas Board of Nursing, hereinafter referred to as the Board, was held on July 20-21, 2017, 333 Guadalupe, Tower II, Room 225, Austin, Texas to consider the survey visit to the Cephas Center for Health Sciences Vocational Nursing Education Program in Dallas, Texas, based upon Board action at the April 2017 meeting pursuant to Section 301.157, Texas Occupations Code and 22 Tex. Admin. Code Chapter 214 and based upon findings from the April 27, 2017 survey visit.

After review and due consideration of the filed materials, as well as the presentation by representatives from Cephas Center for Health Sciences in Dallas, Texas, and other interested parties, if any, the Board hereby ACCEPTS the report of the survey visit to the Cephas Center for Health Sciences Vocational Nursing Education Program in Dallas, Texas, and imposes the following requirement:

1. The program shall submit to Board Staff a plan to provide opportunities to achieve the stated outcomes as they pertain to maternal/newborn as well as clinical affiliation agreements that indicate students have experience in maternal/newborn no later than September 1, 2017.

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

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