

Consideration of Request for Charge To The Advisory Committee on Education

Summary of Request:

Consider Staff's request for the Board to approve and issue a charge to the Advisory Committee on Education (ACE) to study possible rule changes related to required hours for instruction and clinical practice in Vocational Nursing Education (VN) programs.

Historical Perspective:

Recently, concerns expressed by ACE members related to Board rules and environmental changes have again come to the attention of Board Staff and warrant reconsideration of Board Rule 214.9(a)(1) related to *Vocational Nursing Education Program of Study*:

- Rule 214.9(a)(1) related to *Vocational Nursing Education Program of Study* 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. The Board issued a charge for ACE to consider rule changes related to required classroom instruction and clinical practice hours at the October 2015 quarterly Board Meeting. This charge was based upon the likelihood that VN programs may in the future be required to reduce their semester hours similar to the statutory changes mandating Associate Degree Programs (ADN) to reduce their semester credit hours to 60 credit hours. This change has already affected the Multiple Entry-Exit Programs (MEEP) who must comply with the VN rule requirements for clinical/didactic hours while reducing credit hours in order for their MEEP students to qualify for the NCLEX-PN® examination. It was anticipated that VN programs may also be required to reduce their semester credit hours to 40 credit hours, resulting in a 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 with a suggested ratio of one (1) contact hour of didactic to three (3) contact hours of associated clinical learning experiences.
- Following ACE meetings in 2015 to address this charge, ACE recommended no changes to Board Rule 214.9(a)(1) to the Board at the January 2016 quarterly Board Meeting. This recommendation was based upon review and discussion of reported program hours, educator survey input, program outcomes, and requirements of other boards of nursing.
- Following the January 2016 Board Meeting, Board Staff invited VN programs to submit innovative pilot proposals to request a waiver of the rule requirements in order to establish evidence for decreasing the current number of hours required. To date, only one pilot has been received and approved and outcomes have yet to be determined.
- During the June 22, 2017 ACE meeting, Rule 214.9(a)(1) was discussed as it relates to evaluating whether out-of-state board approved programs that do not include the minimum number of hours required in Texas may be considered as substantively equivalent to Texas Board approved programs for licensure purposes. This discussion culminated in a request from ACE members for the Board to issue a charge to revisit this rule.

Rationale for Staff Recommendation:

- Board Staff recognizes that the currency of this issue indicates a reasonable rationale for reconsideration by the ACE Committee to determine whether evidence suggest rule changes.

Staff Recommendation:

Move to issue a new charge to the Advisory Committee on Education for a recommendation regarding changes to Board Rule 214.9(a)(1) related to specific requirements for classroom and clinical practice hours in vocational nursing education programs.