

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

Summary of Request:

The purpose of this agenda item is informational only to update the Board on the implementation of the KSTAR Nursing Program.

Historical Perspective:

In October 2013, the Board approved a two-year pilot program with the Texas A&M Rural and Community Health Institute (ARCHI) and the College of Nursing (CON) to offer the KSTAR Nursing Pilot Program as an option to nurses with practice violations that result in a disciplinary sanction of a warning and below. KSTAR Nursing is 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.

The KSTAR Nursing Pilot Program enrolled its first cohort of nurses in November 2014. Feedback from this initial cohort of nurses was used to make necessary program improvements prior to formal research. In April 2015, the Board approved continuation of the KSTAR Nursing Pilot Program and directed Board Staff to continue to offer KSTAR as an alternative method of discipline to a maximum of four (4) nurses per month who meet inclusion criteria.

At the July 2015 quarterly Board meeting, Board Staff provided the Board with updates to the KSTAR Nursing Pilot Program leadership team including the addition of Debra Matthews, PhD, RN, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at Texas A&M CON and Dr. Susan Moreland, PhD, MSN, RN, KSTAR Nursing Program Manager, as well as plans to apply for approval to the Texas A&M University Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct the research aspect of the pilot. Following the July 2015 Board meeting, ARCHI established an agreement with the CON to ensure nursing faculty participate in the KSTAR Nursing assessments including simulation, individualized teaching plans, evaluations, and biweekly teleconferences with Board Staff to discuss participant progress and any program issues.

In October 2015, the Board approved a 2-year extension of the pilot to continue through October 2017. In January 2016, the Board approved Board Staff to offer a referral to the KSTAR Nursing program by agreed order to up to eight (8) nurses per month who meet eligibility criteria.

The KSTAR Nursing ARCHI, CON and BON team received approval from the Texas A&M Health Science Center IRB to conduct research to evaluate the effectiveness of the KSTAR program on November 17, 2015, the research cohort enrollment began in January 2016. In May 2017, the study was approved for continuing review through May 15, 2018. The KSTAR team at ARCHI has enrolled nurses in the research study through September 30, 2017.

At the July 2017 quarterly Board meeting, a summary of the research outcomes was presented and the Board approved KSTAR Nursing as a permanent disciplinary option for nurses meeting eligibility criteria as set out in [Board rule 213.35 relating to Targeted Assessment and Remediation Pilot Program](#). The KSTAR team at ARCHI committed to maintaining the current tuition, dedicated

resources, collaborative partnership, and personnel, including CON faculty. Additionally, should any changes be made to the program, a formal request for Board approval would be required.

On August 31, 2018, Dr. Susan Moreland, PhD, MSN, RN, retired from her position as KSTAR Nursing Program Manager and Walter Page, MS, BSN, RN is now managing the KSTAR Nursing Program. The program continues to partner with the college of nursing to ensure nursing faculty are participating in the program.

At the October 2018 Board meeting, Board Staff reported that Staff from ARCHI, the CON and the Board presented a poster describing the KSTAR pilot study at the 2018 National Council of State Boards of Nursing Scientific Symposium in Chicago, IL on October 24, 2018. Board Staff also reported a summary provided by ARCHI of KSTAR Nursing Program participants' responses to program evaluation surveys that were overwhelmingly positive.

Following the October 2018 NCSBN Scientific Symposium, Tammy Wagner, BBA, RN, CPHQ, IQCI, Chief Nurse Officer and Director of Quality and Patient Safety for A&M Rural and Community Health Institute and Kristin Benton, DNP, RN, Director of Nursing, Texas Board of Nursing presented an overview of the KSTAR Nursing Program and Pilot Study to the Washington State Department of Health Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission at its January 11, 2019 Commission Meeting in Tumwater, WA. Ms. Wagner, Dr. Mathews and Dr. Benton presented to the Washington Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission and Washington area nurse educators by webinar on April 22, 2019. An article entitled, "Addressing Nursing Practice Breakdown: An Alternative Approach to Remediation" describing KSTAR nursing was published in the April 2019 issue of the *Journal of Nursing Regulation*.

Current Perspective:

As of December 18, 2020, 273 agreed Board orders for the KSTAR program have been ratified. Additionally:

- 265 nurses have enrolled or are in the process of enrolling in the KSTAR Nursing program;
 - 177 nurse participants have successfully completed the program;
 - 66 nurse participants are in the process of enrolling and completing the program;
 - 22 nurse participants were referred back to the Board for unsuccessful completion;and
- 8 nurses failed to enroll in the KSTAR Nursing program.

The KSTAR ARCHI, CON, and BON Team continues to meet virtually on a monthly basis to review and discuss participant enrollments, progress, and evaluations. The KSTAR Nursing Program is currently able to accommodate up to six nurses at each remediation session. During the pandemic the program shifted temporarily to virtual operations while the Texas A&M simulation lab closed. The KSTAR Team has kept Board staff apprised of campus plans and are working diligently to keep KSTAR Nursing operations running smoothly.

The KSTAR Nursing program sends out surveys to nurses following completion as a means of quality improvement. Overall, the results of the surveys are positive and indicate the program is well-administered. As of November 23, 2020, a total of 190 nurses have been surveyed. With a 57% response rate, a majority of the 108 nurses responded to items favorably with an average rating of 3.75 using a Likert scale with "0" being least favorable and "4" being most favorable.

Some excerpts from the open-ended comments offered by nurses include:

"It is my pleasure to report I found the KSTAR Program and the KSTAR Team to be a very professional learning environment. I found the program to be challenging as well as an overall positive experience. I would like to give special thanks to Walter, Angie, Debbie and Professor Hutton for guidance, advice and for assisting me to a successful outcome. I would also like to thank the Texas Board of Nursing for providing me this opportunity."

"I felt this program was a great benefit to me and my nursing skills. It was challenging yet I felt that the information provided to me by the program was very thorough and reliable to achieve my goals and the expectations of me. I was a bit nervous starting this program and when we had to do it virtually I was very concerned as I am a hands on and a face to face learner, however the testing and simulation was easy for me to do as I felt that I had the proper training and resources to ensure my success in this program. Mr. Page was especially helpful to be in answering any questions that arose and also with any technical difficulties with my computer. I feel like I greatly benefited from this program and it has helped me learn and grow as a nurse and I will be able to carry the information and training I received over into my nursing practice."

"The program was extremely educational and helpful and prepared me to be able to pursue my career knowing how to avoid further mistakes."

"I believe the program was straight forward and clear when it came to expectations and outcomes. I was given all the resources needed to identify and fill in any gaps in my competencies."

The KSTAR Nursing program uses participant feedback to inform any needed program improvements. In addition to the many changes made to adapt the program to a virtual environment, additional improvements made include:

- Developing new scenarios to the expand the possibilities of nursing specialties;
- Creating dashboards to "tell the KSTAR story" to facilitate understanding of this unique program;
- Planning to add new CON faculty with the potential for a second faculty member to assist with education and remediation;
- Developing "evidence-based" training documents to help each nurse prepare for the pending assessment;
- Structuring one-on-one focused remediations to include two hours of "formative" time and two hours of "summative" time; and
- Adding an enhanced focused remediation to include a 6-hour option for nurses who have not met multiple benchmarks and require additional coaching.

Recommended Action: This is a non-action item for informational purposes only.