

### **Report on Communication Activities With Nursing Education Programs**

This agenda item is reserved to report the formal communication activities of the Nursing Consultants for Education with Texas pre-licensure nursing education programs and stakeholders.

#### **New Director Orientation –**

The Education Consultants provided a virtual orientation workshop for new Program Directors on June 3, 2021, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. There were -- attendees for the program and --met requirements for CNE credits. The agenda included:

- Welcome and Introduction – Kristin Benton
- Board Overview, Clinical Learning Objectives – Virginia Ayars
- Program of Study, Total Program Evaluation – Jan Hooper
- Designing an Assessment Toolkit – Gayle Varnell
- Providing Successful Leadership – Jan Hooper
- Examination Application, Blue Card Process – Francely Rogers, Operations
- Petition for Declaratory Order – Skylar Caddell, Enforcement
- Questions and Answers – All

Evaluations from the audience were positive. Since a virtual orientation is not limited in the number of attendees, many program representatives other than new directors are participating to gain an update. This is a positive aspect of virtual presentations.

#### **Webinar on the *Differentiated Essential Competencies (DECs)***

Board Staff presented a virtual webinar for nursing programs on May 12, 2021 presenting an overview of the DECs and suggestions for implementing the new version. The agenda included:

- Meaning and Purpose of the DECs – Kristin Benton
- Historical Background – Beverly Skloss
- Supplemental Documents in the DECs – Gayle Varnell
- Major Concepts Across the DECs – Virginia Ayars
- The DECs Model – Gayle Varnell
- Implementing the DECs – Jan Hooper

#### **Survey to Programs Re: COVID**

In an effort to follow the management of nursing education during the pandemic, a survey was submitted to all pre-licensure nursing education programs in May 2021. Findings from the survey are available in Attachment #1.

#### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

This is an informational report. No action is required.

## Findings from a BON Survey of All Pre-Licensure Nursing Programs – May 2021

### The Effects of COVID-19 on Nursing Education in Texas – Year Two

Board Staff surveyed nursing education programs in May and July 2020 to gauge the impact of the pandemic on their educational progress. Most nursing education programs had abruptly moved to online didactic and virtual simulation learning activities in March 2020. Directors, faculty, and students alike made drastic adjustments to continue the preparation of vocational and professional nurses. A new survey was forwarded to all pre-licensure programs for a May 2021 return. Sixty-three total programs responded and 58 provided usable data for the survey findings. Information was provided from approximately 42% of surveyed Vocational programs, 38% of Associate-degree and Diploma programs, and 38% of Baccalaureate degree programs. There were also responses from post-licensure programs that may have been located in settings with the pre-licensure programs.

#### Question #1: What strategies have been effective in managing the impact of COVID-19?

Effective Strategy	Percent of Respondents
Adapted to online didactic courses	90%
Utilized virtual simulation	88%
Validated student skills in skills lab	76%
Added more resources for technical assistance	72%
Used more high-fidelity simulation for clinical	67%

Specific methodologies and opportunities provided in individual programs:

- Voice-over online lectures that allowed student access more than once
- Faculty-scheduled appointment times for questions from students
- Rotation of smaller groups between hands-on clinical and simulation experiences
- Test-security using Proctoria
- Mixing face-to-face didactic with online portions
- Case studies in virtual labs for clinical experiences
- Rural clinical sites that allowed students' presence in clinicals
- Focus on quality experiences in hands-on clinical time
- Multiple skills check-offs, orientations, pre-clinical competency reviews
- Academic partnerships with rehabilitation settings and public health
- IM injections (COVID-19 vaccinations)
- Skills training modules and supplies provided to students for home practice
- Partnerships with schools for pediatric experiences
- Return to clinical sites in summer 2020
- In-depth case studies
- Return to face-to-face learning
- Emphasize social-distancing
- Hybrid models
- Volunteering to help at Convention Center and tent hospital (extension sites for care)
- School nursing
- Telecommunicating with elderly
- EMS ride-along

- Training to assist RNs in care for COVID-19 patients
- Contact tracing for campus
- Work with infection control nurses

### What are the projections for clinical learning experiences in 2021?

- 50% of respondents expect fewer students will be allowed on clinical units.
- 43% of respondents expect to return to regular clinical instruction.
- 38% of respondents expect fewer days each week will be available for student practice.

Though many hospitals are allowing students to return to the units, most are scheduling fewer students on each unit for fewer hours of practice. Long term care facilities and nursing homes have been slower to accept students back into the facilities. Decreased hospital censuses has also affected student placements. Nursing programs have employed more adjunct faculty to supervise the smaller student groups which in turn required rescheduling classroom time until later in the day. Most faculty are spending more contact hours in teaching activities to accommodate students. Experiences in maternal-child and pediatric are scarcer than before. Another issue is the reduced number of available preceptors for students. Programs may also be dealing with a backlog of students who received an “Incomplete” grade for clinical courses.

However, programs have identified the following clinical sites for student practice in 2021:

Clinical Site	Percent of Respondents
Acute care	98%
Rehabilitation Facilities	59%
Clinics	59%
Schools	38%
Pediatrics Hospital	33%
Surgery Centers	28%
Home Health	24%
Hospice	22%
Public Health	21%
Long Term Care/Nursing Home	21%
Mental Health Clinics	20%
Assisted Living	14%
Geriatric Centers	12%
Birth Centers	7%
Head Start	7%
Residential Care	7%
Classes for Patients	7%
Other (See examples below)	24%

### “Other Settings” for Clinical Experiences:

Wound care	Cardiac Cath Lab	Operating Room
Emergency Department	In-Patient Psychiatric Care	Peri-anesthesia
Intensive Care	Children with Disabilities	Alzheimer’s Units
In-Patient Drug and Rehab	Respite Care (Mental Health)	Free Standing Urgent Care
In-Patient Mental Health	COVID-19 testing	

## What Plans for Change Are Intended for Your Program?

Planned Changes	Percent of Respondents
Re-evaluation of clinical courses and experiences	53%
Alter clinical rotations	34%
Use of more hybrid courses	22%
Change clinical ratios	22%
Changes in courses and course content	17%

### Other specific planned changes mentioned:

- Add more telehealth and high-fidelity simulation.
- Seek practice partnerships.
- Utilize social distancing in teaching situations.
- Decrease hours for transition students.
- Require students possess equipment for technology.
- Review texts for possible changes.
- Provide PPE for students and faculty.
- Decrease clinical rotations.

### Changes Resulting from COVID-19:

Outcomes from COVID-19	Percent of Respondents
Preceptor shortage	48%
Decline in enrollment	41%
Decision to decrease admissions for social distance space	29%
Difficulty recruiting faculty	22%
Loss of faculty	16%

### Responsibility of Purchasing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

Sixty-two percent of respondents reported that nursing programs were responsible for purchasing PPE.

### Is the college or school requiring students to be vaccinated?

Thirty-one percent replied YES; 69% replied NO. Nursing homes and pediatric clinics require students to be vaccinated. It was reported that vaccinated students are not required to mask.

### Additional Comments:

Programs also reported that students who entered the nursing program during the pandemic had a higher rate of attrition. Students who were already enrolled had established relationships with faculty and other students were more likely to complete the program.

Some faculty have suggested that current students are stronger clinically than expected because of more practice hours in high-fidelity simulation and clinical labs.

Nursing programs have been faced with higher financial costs due to the need to purchase PPE, online testing and proctoring of exams, COVID testing, and more adjunct faculty to supervise smaller groups of students in clinical settings. Faculty have gained a better familiarity with public health and community services.

**Alternate clinical experiences available:**

<b>Alternate Clinical Experiences</b>	<b>Percent of Respondents</b>
Vaccination centers	78%
Other (see examples on previous page)	45%
Public health	24%
Partnerships with clinical settings (student jobs)	22%
Telehealth	12%
Hospice	10%
Home health	9%