

**Consideration of Findings from a Virtual Survey Visit
The College of Healthcare Professions in Houston, Texas
Associate Degree Nursing Education Program**

Summary of Request:

Consider the report of the survey review of The College of Healthcare Professions (TCHCP) Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN) to Associate Degree Nursing Education (ADN) Program in Houston, Texas. A virtual survey visit was conducted based upon the extensive program documents submitted to Board staff and meetings with the program director, administration, nursing faculty, and nursing students through online conferencing April 13 – 15, 2021.

The survey visit was conducted per Board Order issued at the January 2021 Board meeting when the program approval status was changed to Full Approval with Warning. The survey visit followed the new Education Guideline 3.2.3.b. Conducting Survey Visits during COVID-19 Pandemic.

Historical Perspective:

- TCHCP ADN Program, designed for Licensed Vocational Nurses to earn an Associate Degree and to be eligible to sit for the NCLEX-RN® examination, was approved by the Board in July 2014.
- TCHCP is privately owned, accredited by the Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools (ABHES) through February 2025, has a Certificate of Authorization from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to grant Associate and Bachelor Degrees through February, 2025, and is currently licensed by The Texas Workforce Commission.
- Other Allied Health programs offered by TCHCP include Vocational Nursing; Dental Assistant; Cardiac Sonography; Diagnostic Medical Sonography; Medical Assistant; Limited Medical Radiologic Technologist; Medical Radiologic Technologist with MA Skills; Medical Coding and Billing; and Surgical Technology programs.
- The ADN program director role has been filled by three different directors in the past seven years.
- Fred Gary Heath, MSN, RN, currently serves as the Director of Nursing and has responsibility for both the ADN and Vocational Nursing Education (VN) Programs. Mr. Heath has 24 years of nursing experience with nine years in nursing education.
- Mr. Heath was approved by the Board in October 2020 as Interim Program Director and February 2021 as full Program Director. He served as program lead, simulation coordinator and faculty at TCHCP prior to Board approval of the nursing leadership role.
- The ADN program NCLEX-RN® pass rate has been above 80% one time since the inception of the program.

- The NCLEX-RN® examination pass rates for the past five years are provided below:

NCLEX Examination Year	BON Approval Status	Pass Rates	Number of First Time Candidates (Passed/Total)
2020	Full w/ Warning	57.14%	20/35
2019	Full	65.52%	19/29
2018	Full	95.00%	19/20
2017	Initial w/Warning	67.74%	21/31
2016	Initial	60.00%	6/10

- Due to the 2016 NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate of 60.00%, the Program Director and faculty were required to submit a Self-Study Report (SSR) in 2017 that would evaluate factors that may have contributed to the graduates' performance on the NCLEX-RN®.
- The Program Director at the time received an extension for the 2017 SSR due date but never submitted the report.
- The SSR was submitted at a later date in 2017 by the new Program Director, approved by the Board in August 2017, and faculty who developed the plan.
- The faculty identified factors in the SSR that may have contributed to the low pass rate and designed corrective measures to be implemented that included:
 - Adhering to the admission criteria and exit exam policy;
 - Incorporating NCLEX style practice test questions into course content;
 - Developing and implementing a faculty examination policy to include purchase of grading/test analysis software;
 - Hiring faculty with experience in nursing education;
 - The Program Director focusing on administration of the program instead of carrying a teaching load;
 - Faculty development related to writing NCLEX style test questions, test item analysis, and test blueprints;
 - Designating a Clinical Coordinator to procure clinical sites which allows faculty time to focus on instruction, curriculum development and student remediation; and
 - Developing a comprehensive Total Program Evaluation Plan (TPE).
- Despite these efforts for improvement, the pass rate for 2017 was 67.74%.
- Due to pass rates below 80% for two consecutive years, the Board changed the program approval status from Initial Approval to Initial Approval with Warning in January 2018, and issued a requirement for a survey visit.
- The July 2018 survey visit focused on the program's identified areas for improvement and corrective measures implemented. One requirement and one recommendation was issued by the Board and the program timely complied.
- In January 2019, the Board changed the approval status of the ADN program from Initial Approval with Warning to Full Approval based on the 2018 NCLEX pass rate of 95.00% and compliance with Rule 215.
- The 2019 NCLEX-RN® examination pass rate dropped to 65.52%. The Program Director and faculty were required to submit a Self-Study Report (SSR) in 2020 that would evaluate factors that may have contributed to the graduates' performance on the NCLEX-RN®.

- The SSR submitted in May 2020 identified several corrective measures that were similar to those identified in 2017. The measures identified in 2020 to improve the program performance included:
 - Increasing admission criteria;
 - Establishing a testing policy that includes test development and analysis;
 - Recruiting faculty with teaching experience;
 - Hiring an ADN Clinical Coordinator to seek additional clinical opportunities; and
 - Implementing the Total Program Evaluation Plan on a regular basis.
- These efforts for improvement have not been successful as evidenced by the 57.14% pass rate for 2020.
- Due to pass rates below 80% for two consecutive years, the Board changed the approval status of the ADN program from Full Approval to Full Approval with Warning in January 2021, and issued a requirement for a survey visit.
- The program NCLEX-RN® pass rate data from October 1, 2020 – June 25, 2021 is 66.67% (12/18).

Summary of Virtual Survey Visit via Zoom

Education Consultant Reviewed Information Provided Prior to Visit:

- Curriculum Plan, Philosophy/Mission, Objectives/Goals, Conceptual Framework;
- Faculty & Program Director Job Descriptions;
- Faculty & Student Handbooks;
- Syllabi for all courses;
- Clinical evaluation tools and clinical affiliation agreements;
- Total Program Evaluation Plan (TPE) and data; and
- Faculty meeting minutes.
- Student records; and
- Video tour of Facilities and Resources.

Education Consultant Reviewed:

- 2020 Nursing Education Program Information Surveys (NEPIS).

Education Consultant:

- held initial conference with administrators;
- held meeting with faculty;
- interviewed nursing students; and
- conducted an exit discussion with administrators.

Individuals Participating in the Virtual Survey Visit:

- Administrators:
 - Joanitt Montano, MD, Provost & Sr. Vice President of Academics
 - Lee Jones, MEd, Campus President
 - Khawar Aizaz, BS, MD, FRCSI, MBA, Director of Education
 - Francis Hester, EdD, MA, Assistant Director of Education
 - F. Gary Heath, MSN, RN, Director of Nursing

- ADN Faculty
 - Mattie “Geneva” Caldwell, DNS, MSN, APRN-CNS
 - Dorothy Conley, MSN-Ed., MBA, RN, CNE
 - Susan Ogunnowo, PhD, MSN-Ed, RN
 - Nam Eom, MSN, APRN, ACNP-BC
- ADN students
 - Met with seven students
 - Two Level III, four Level II and one Level I.

Process for the Survey Visit:

Mr. Heath placed all the documents typically reviewed for a survey visit in Dropbox folders including a video tour of the facilities and resources. Board staff received a secure link to access the information.

Mr. Heath scheduled Zoom meetings between Board Staff and TCHCP representatives and hosted the following meetings:

- April 13, 2021, 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. – Initial Conference with Mr. Heath
- April 13, 2021, 12:15 p.m. – 12:45 p.m. – Interview with first group - students
- April 13, 2021, 2:30 p.m. – 3:15 p.m. – Opening Conference Administrators
- April 14, 2021, 12 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. - Meeting with Faculty
- April 14, 2021, 1:15 p.m. – 1:45 p.m. – Interview with second group - students
- April 15, 2021, 11:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. – Pre-exit Meeting with Mr. Heath
- April 15, 2021, 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. – Exit Conference with Administrators

Administration:

- Administration indicated the ADN program is a high priority and desires for the program to be the flagship of the college. They specified that the college is focused on positive student outcomes.
- Mr. Jones serves as Campus President and Dr. Hester serves as Assistant Director of Education, both for seven months. Dr. Aizaz has served as Director of Education for four years.
- F. Gary Heath MSN, RN, was approved as Interim Program Director in October 2020 and full Program Director in February 2021. He is a dedicated nursing leader, works well with the faculty and students, and has developed a student friendly environment.
- Mr. Heath indicated he is supported by administration and has the authority to direct the ADN and VN programs in all phases. Dr. Aizaz and Mr. Heath meet weekly to discuss and identify needs of the programs.
- Campus administrators formally meet every month with Mr. Heath and the Vocational Nursing Program Lead to communicate regarding the programs. Informal meetings occur more frequently as needed.
- At the time of the survey visit, Mr. Heath, was not carrying a teaching load. He has plans to teach Module 10, the last course in the program. As time allows, Mr. Heath provides guest lectures throughout the curriculum as a content expert related to areas of his nursing expertise. This is limited to a maximum of three clock hours per week and does not occur weekly.

- Administrators identified challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic as maintaining faculty, closing of clinical sites to students, and space for social distancing upon returning to face-to-face classes. Other challenges include leadership turnover, determining products to use and student outcomes.
- During the opening and exit conference, Board staff explained the implications to the program approval status if the 2021 NCLEX-RN pass rate is still below 80%. Rule 215.4(c)(3)(B)(i) states, "A program may be placed on conditional approval status if the pass rate of first-time candidates, as described in paragraph (2)(A) of this subsection, is less than 80% for three (3) consecutive examination years."

Faculty:

- The ADN program instruction is carried out by three full-time and four part-time faculty. At the time of the survey visit, there were no vacant faculty positions.
- Faculty turnover was high from the inception of the program until October 2020. One part-time faculty moved to a full-time position in January 2021 and no faculty have resigned.
- Faculty members offer a rich diversity in their education and experiential backgrounds including nursing practice and nursing leadership. Faculty nursing experience varies from 47 to 14 years and nursing education experience varies from 17 to 5 years.
- All faculty and the director are designated to evaluate clinical agencies, to schedule clinical experiences, and to maintain a collaborative relationship with clinical sites. Dr. Aizaz maintains clinical affiliation agreements to assure they are current.
- At the time of the survey visit, the school was in the process of finalizing the hiring of a clinical coordinator who will manage clinical scheduling, clinical affiliation agreements, and other aspects related to clinical that do not require the expertise of a nurse.
- New faculty orientation is structure, college wide and nursing department specific. The Nursing Faculty Handbook contains detailed information regarding the orientation.
- Faculty meetings are held at least monthly, more often if needed. Minutes of meetings are maintained and reflect that faculty members are involved in planning and decision-making. Part-time faculty are encouraged to participate and have a voice in all nursing committees and faculty/staff meetings.
- Faculty committees are active to address all aspects of the curriculum, supplies, and simulation. Committees formally report at each monthly faculty/staff meeting. Faculty indicated they do not have adequate time for teaching, committee work, tutoring, remediation, and counseling specifying that a full-time simulation coordinator would meet this need.
- Full-time faculty workload is 40 hours per week and includes class/laboratory/clinical instruction, office hours, preparation and grading time, student tutoring, and committee/curriculum work. Part-time faculty work less than 30 hours per week.
- Faculty Development consists of institution wide training on the use of technology and workshops related to the teaching/learning process. The Nursing Department subscribes to Nurse Tim for nursing specific faculty development. TCHCP requires that each faculty member earn at least two nursing contact hours of continuing nursing education and attend one corporate learning program per quarter. Individual faculty development plans are maintained and updated annually.

- Faculty indicated when the Covid-19 Pandemic started, they had two days to change from face-to-face curriculum delivery to virtual delivery. The transition was smooth since most faculty were competent in online learning/teaching and students were accustomed to using computers for portions of the curriculum.
- Faculty stated that continuing 12 hour clinicals online and utilizing virtual clinical resources allowed students the opportunity to develop advanced clinical decision making skills.
- Covid-19 pandemic challenges identified were the delivery of clinical learning experiences and assisting students who tried to attend even though some experienced severe illness. Faculty indicated that students were resilient, continued to work and managed school responsibilities.
- The Nursing Faculty handbook is well-written and includes all policies required by Board Rule 214.7.
- Faculty stated the part-time experienced simulation coordinator is a great asset and that simulation is a vital component of the program. Faculty feel strongly that the coordinator position should be full-time.

Students:

- At the time of the survey visit, there were 14 students in Level III expected to graduate in July 2021, 19 in Level II expected to graduate in September 2021, and 19 in Level I expected to graduate in July 2022.
- The ADN program admits two cohorts per year of no more than 20 students per cohort every March and October. At risk students are identified early in the admissions process starting with the admission interview.
- According to the Student Handbook, remediation is mandatory with faculty for any student falling below the passing average of 75. A student remediation plan will be developed by the faculty and student with a report provided to the program director regarding progress.
- Student policies are well-defined, written, available to students, and include all content required by Rule 215.8.
- Students stated they enrolled in the ADN program at TCHCP because of the concept based curriculum, the small class size that is more conducive to learning, faculty commitment, the flexibility to continue working, the good reputation from former students, financial aid and school career services.
- Positive aspects mentioned include meaningful faculty led discussions, faculty utilize a variety of teaching techniques, abundant resources, group research on diseases including care plan development and detailed case studies that broaden critical thinking.
- Students cited challenges as adjusting to virtual clinical experiences, family issues related to Covid-19, and working extra because co-workers were ill. At the time of the survey visit, one student was also enrolled in an online baccalaureate nursing program.
- Student representatives are designated to attend monthly faculty meetings to relay student body concerns and suggestions on a resolution for student concerns. The students interviewed revealed that the director and faculty take time to listen and are receptive to concerns.
- Students have input into faculty evaluations and the curriculum by completing evaluations at the end of each course.
- All students interviewed plan to pursue a baccalaureate degree in nursing.

Program of Study:

- The program is 19 months in length, 60 semester credit hours, and consists of three levels for a total of 10 modules. Level I has five modules, Level II has three modules and Level III has two modules. Each module is eight weeks long except for the final module that is four weeks long.
- The program of study is concept based and includes all Board required content. *The Differentiated Essential Competencies (DECS) (2010)* are incorporated into the curriculum as evidenced in the syllabi. The director and faculty are currently reviewing *The DECS (2021)* and incorporating the changes/additions into the curriculum.
- The curriculum is designed to be delivered through a face-to-face format including faculty-supervised skills laboratory with clinical learning experiences in a variety of healthcare facilities.
- The admission criteria in the nursing student handbook (SHB) and the college catalog were not the same. The SHB indicates a 2.5 GPA is required for admission to the ADN program and the college catalog indicated a 2.0 GPA was required. Applicants were admitted that did not meet the program admission criteria. The college catalog has been corrected and will take effect for the next cohort accepted.
- A testing policy that includes test development and item analysis has been developed and is utilized by faculty across the curriculum. Test blueprints are based on course and unit objectives. Faculty construct exams by writing questions, editing test bank questions and by giving feedback to each other on exams to be administered.
- Standardized assessment testing is used throughout the curriculum with required remediation as indicated by test scores. Remediation is faculty-led and each student plan is based on adaptive quizzes specific to the student's learning needs.
- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the courses were taught using a hybrid model of delivery with skills laboratories held face-to-face in small groups. Currently courses are face-to-face with infection control procedures in effect.
- The program has utilized two standardized exit exams that required a minimum score achievement in order for students to graduate. Mr. Health indicated students were focused on the exit exam rather than focusing on learning. Beginning with the cohort expected to graduate in July 2021, the program plans to utilize the exam scores as an NCLEX-RN predictor and to identify areas of focus for the NCLEX-RN review.

Clinical Learning Experiences:

- The CHCP has nine active clinical contracts including five acute care hospitals, one long term acute care, skilled nursing and rehabilitation, one children's clinic, and one behavioral health hospital that are located throughout the Houston metropolitan area including Galveston.
- Hands on patient care clinical experiences include medical-surgical, gerontology, rehabilitation, maternal-child, pediatrics and mental health.
- Faculty provide supervision during all clinical learning experiences. BON required faculty-to-student ratios are maintained throughout the program.
- Clinical preceptors and observational clinical experiences are not utilized at this time. Simulation activities are counted as skills laboratory time and not as clinical time. The director and faculty have discussed using a preceptor model since Board compliant policies are in place.

- Students practice in the skills lab and demonstrate basic competency prior to providing hands-on care in the clinical setting.
- Current Level III students participated in hands-on clinical experiences prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic and will have more when clinical sites open in May and June, 2021. Level II and Level I students have begun hands on patient care clinical experiences for the first time in May and June 2021.
- The clinical evaluation tools include formative and summative evaluations with weekly feedback from faculty for clinical courses throughout the program. These are progressive, based upon course content, and incorporate the DECs (2010).

Facilities, Resources, and Services:

- A video tour of the building was narrated by TCHCP staff and Mr. Heath and made available to Board staff for review.
- The main areas viewed by Board Staff included:
 - Program Director's private office;
 - Large faculty office with four desks, each with a computer workstation;
 - Main classroom for nursing with 14-15 tables for two and audio-visual equipment;
 - Large, fully equipped skills and simulation laboratories with abundant storage and hot and cold running water;
 - Student lounge areas throughout including vending machines; and
 - Two computer laboratories for nursing only.
- A high fidelity birthing manikin and baby manikin have been ordered.
- A full-time administrative assistant provides support to the director of nursing and the faculty.
- TCHCP Learning Library is available online 24 hours, seven days per week via the Library and Information Resources Network (LIRN). A variety of reference resources are available to nursing students including current books and nursing journals. A small in-house library with computers is open during the day and available to students.
- Future Plans: move to a new location approximately four miles from the current location, possibly in Fall 2021.

Records and Reports:

- All records involving the nursing program are retained by the college in locked filing cabinets on campus for an indefinite period of time.
- According to college policy, student records and are maintained in the registrar's office.
- Minutes of faculty meetings are maintained in the director of education office in locked storage cabinets and in the corporate shared drive.
- Clinical affiliation agreements are current and stored in the clinical coordinator's office.
- The Total Program Evaluation Plan (TPE) is utilized for ongoing evaluation and decision making as evidenced in faculty meeting minutes and documentation on the TPE.

Pros and Cons of Program Review:

Pros:

- See Attachment #2 identifying Quality Indicators.

Cons:

- NCLEX-RN pass rates below 80% for two consecutive years.
- Faculty turnover
- Lack of adherence to program admission criteria

Staff Recommendation:

Move to accept the report of the findings from the virtual survey visit to The College of Health Care Professions ADN Program in Houston, Texas, and issue the following recommendations as outlined in the attached letter (Attachment #1).

Staff Rationale for Recommendation #1:

Rule 215.6(d) states, “Salaries shall be adequate to recruit, employ, and retain sufficient qualified nursing faculty members. . . .” Rule 215.7(c)(1) states, “A professional nursing education program shall employ sufficient faculty members. . . . The number of faculty members shall be determined by such factors as the number and level of students enrolled.” Faculty turnover was high from the inception of the program until October 2020. During the survey visit, administration identified that maintaining faculty is a challenge.

Recommendation #1:

It is recommended that administration identify strategies to retain qualified nursing faculty. Please provide a response to Board Staff no later than September 1, 2021.

Staff Rationale for Recommendation #2:

Rule 215.8(d)(2) states, “Nursing student policies which differ from those of the governing entity shall be in writing and shall be made available to faculty and students.” Discussion was held during the survey visit regarding the decision being made by administration to follow the college catalog admission criteria of a 2.0 GPA for the ADN program rather than following the ADN program Student Handbook admission criteria requiring a 2.5 GPA.

Recommendation #2:

It is recommended that administration review the ADN program admission criteria in the SHB and assure these are maintained. Please provide a response to Board Staff no later than September 1, 2021.

DRAFT LETTER

July 22, 2021

F. Gary Heath, MSN, RN, Director of Nursing
The College of Health Care Professions
Associate Degree Nursing Education Program
240 Northwest Mall Blvd.
Houston, Texas 77092

Dear Mr. Heath:

At the July 22, 2021 meeting, the members of the Texas Board of Nursing (Board) considered the report of the Board ordered virtual survey visit to The College of Health Care Professions Associate Nursing Education Program in Houston, Texas. It was the decision of the Board to accept the report of the virtual survey visit conducted on April 13 – 15, 2021, and to issue two recommendations as indicated below.

1. It is recommended that administration identify strategies to retain qualified nursing faculty. Please provide a response to Board Staff no later than September 1, 2021.
2. It is recommended that administration review the ADN program admission criteria in the Student Handbook and assure these are maintained. Please provide a response to Board Staff no later than September 1, 2021.

A Recommendation is a suggestion based upon program assessment indirectly related to the rules to which a program must respond but in a method of their choosing.

If you have any questions, or if we may be of any assistance, please contact Board Staff at beverly.skloss@bon.texas.gov or 512-318-3219.

Sincerely,

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

Copy: Lee Jones, MEd, Campus President

**Regulatory Quality Indicators
 The College of Health Care Professions in Houston, Texas
 Associate Degree Nursing Education Program**

Basis:

Spector, N., Silvestre, J., Alexander, M., Martin, B., Hooper, J. I., Squires, A., & Ojemeni, M. (2020). NCSBN regulatory guidelines and evidence-based quality indicators for nursing Education programs. *Journal of Nursing Education*, 11(2), S2-S64.

Quality indicators for pre-licensure nursing education programs were identified in a NCSBN national, mixed-methods study of data and responses from nursing education programs, clinical educators, and board of nursing education consultants. The following table reflects a strong association between specific quality indicators and evidence from the survey visit.

Identified Quality Indicator	Findings from Survey Visit
Institutional administrative support of the nursing program	Administration stated the ADN program is a high priority and desires for the program to be the flagship of the college. They specified that the college is focused on positive student outcomes. Mr. Heath is supported by administration and has the authority to direct the ADN and VN programs in all phases. Communication occurs on a regular basis.
Consistent administrative leadership in the nursing program.	The ADN program director role has been filled by three different directors in the past seven years. The current director was approved by the Board in October 2020 as Interim Director of Nursing and February 2021 as the full Director. He served as program lead, simulation coordinator and faculty prior to Board approval of the nursing leadership role.
Consistent full-time faculty as opposed to reliance on adjunct faculty.	Three full-time faculty are dedicated, well-qualified, and function as a team. Faculty turnover was high from the inception of the program until October 2020. One part-time faculty moved to a full-time position in January 2021 and no faculty have resigned since October.
Clinical experiences with actual patients that prepare students for the reality of clinical practice.	TCHCP has nine active clinical contracts including acute care hospitals, long term acute care, skilled nursing and rehabilitation, a children's clinic, and a behavioral health hospital. Level III students participated in hands-on clinical experiences prior to the Covid-19

	<p>Pandemic and started again in May and June, 2021. Level II and Level I students have begun hands on patient care experiences for the first time in May and June 2021.</p>
<p>Administrative support for ongoing faculty development.</p>	<p>The Nursing Department subscribes to Nurse Tim for nursing specific faculty development. TCHCP requires that each faculty member earn at least two nursing contact hours of continuing nursing education and attend one corporate learning program per quarter. Individual faculty development plans are maintained and updated annually.</p>
<p>Program Admission</p>	<p>Applicants were admitted that did not meet the program admission criteria of a 2.5 GPA. This has been corrected and will take effect for the next cohort accepted.</p>