

**Consideration of Findings from a Virtual Survey Visit
Tyler County Hospital in Woodville, Texas
Vocational Nursing Education Program**

Summary of Request:

Consider the report of the virtual survey review of the Tyler County Hospital (TCH) Vocational Nursing (VN) Education Program in Woodville, Texas. A face-to-face visit to Tyler County Hospital was originally planned for Fall, 2020, but was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A virtual program review was conducted based upon extensive program documents submitted to Board Staff and conference calls with Program Director, Administration, nursing faculty, and nursing students through online meetings beginning on April 6, 2021, and ending on April 8, 2021.

Historical Perspective:

- The program originated in 1956 at Lamar College in Beaumont, Texas, with the theory component being taught in Beaumont, Texas, and the clinical site provided by Tyler County Hospital in Woodville, Texas.
- In 1960, the program began as Tyler County Hospital (TCH) Vocational Nursing (VN) Program.
- The program was last visited on July 10, 2014.
- TCH VN program is totally supported by the Tyler County Hospital.
- Lynn Hays, BSN, RN was appointed Director in October 2016 when the former director retired after 29 years.
- The program is approved by the Texas Workforce Commission and the hospital is approved by the Department of State Health Services.
- The NCLEX-PN® examination pass rates for the past five years are presented in the table below:

Examination Year	BON Approval Status	NCLEX-PN® Examination Pass Rate	Number of First Time Candidates (Passed/Total)
2020	Full	90.91%	40/44
2019	Full	80.39%	41/51
2018	Full	90.20%	46/51
2017	Full	87.72%	50/57
2016	Full	85.45%	47/55

Summary of Survey Visit:

Documents Provided to Board Staff Prior to Visit:

- Curriculum Plan, Philosophy/Mission, Objectives/Goals, Conceptual Framework
- Faculty and Program Director Job Descriptions
- Faculty Handbook
- Student Handbook
- Syllabi for all Courses
- Clinical Evaluation Tools
- Total Program Evaluation Plan
- Faculty Minutes
- Virtual Tour of Resources and Facilities

Individuals Participating in the Virtual Survey Visit:

- Lynn Hays, BSN, RN, VN Program Director

Board Representative met with:

- Sondra Williams, Tyler County Hospital CEO
- Connie Sturrock, RN, BSN, CNO

Tyler County Hospital Vocational Nursing Faculty:

- Patricia Hooks, BSN, RN
- Bonnie Owens, ADN, RN
- Karen Swearingen, BSN, RN

Tyler County Hospital Vocational Nursing Students:

- Met virtually with the fifty-three students who will be graduating in December 2021.

Board Staff:

- Gayle P. Varnell, PhD, APRN, CPNP-PC

Process for the Virtual Survey Visit:

- Ms. Hays submitted all the documents that would have been reviewed in a routine survey visit as well as the following video and class lecture electronically:
 - Tyler County Hospital Campus, VN offices, and lab video tour; and
 - Ms. Swearingen's classroom lecture.
- Ms. Hays scheduled online meetings between Board Staff and Tyler County Hospital representatives; and hosted the following meetings:
 - April 6, 2021, 10:00 -11:00 a.m. between G. Varnell and L. Hays
 - April 7, 2021, 9:00 - 10:00 a.m. - Meeting with Administrative Officers
 - April 8, 2021, 10:00 -11:00 a.m. - Meeting with Nursing Faculty
 - April 8, 2021, 11:00 -12:00 p.m. - Meeting with Students
 - April 9, 2021, 10:00 -11:00 a.m. - Meeting with Program Director
 - April 9, 2021, 11:00 -12:00 p.m. - Exit Report

Administration and Organization:

- The Director of the VN Program reports directly to Sondra Williams, RN, MSN, CEN, CEO of Tyler County Hospital.
- The director of the nursing program graduated from Tyler County Hospital VN Program as did both the CEO and CNO of the hospital.
- The director states that administration is very responsive to the needs of the program and she has the full authority to direct the VN program in all its phases.
- Policies are in place and are enforced.
- The Dean/Director teaches some course content throughout the curriculum.
- The VN program has an administrative assistant, Cindy McElvain.
- Administration states the program is well respected in the community and the graduates are recruited from a wide area.

Faculty:

- The 2020-2021 Faculty Handbook includes faculty policies required in Rule 214: By-Laws for the Faculty Organization; Faculty Workload Policy; Faculty Evaluation; Job Descriptions; Faculty Orientation; Mentoring Guidelines; and Peer Review for faculty is combined with the Tyler County Hospital nursing employees.
- There are three full-time VN faculty, the program director, and two part-time faculty. There are no faculty vacancies. Many of the faculty graduated from the program and went on to further their education.
- The full-time faculty share teaching responsibilities throughout the curriculum and work together on assignments and testing.

Students:

- The program admits one cohort in January every year. This year, 55 students met the admission criteria and were admitted into the program.
- Currently there are 53 students enrolled in the program who anticipate graduating in December 2021.
- The 2020-2021 VN Student Handbook includes the required policies for admission, readmission, transfer, progression, graduation, and dismissal. Eligibility information is provided in the Handbook and a form indicating receipt of this information. There is also information on the Differentiated Essential Competencies (DECs) (2010) in the Student Handbooks and it is threaded throughout the course syllabi and clinical evaluations tools.
- Students interviewed stated that they chose the program because of its reputation of producing well-prepared graduates that are actively recruited by health care facilities in the area. Many of the students stated that family members were graduates of the program.
- Students cited that the strengths of the program are the faculty and the clinical learning experiences they receive throughout the program. The students begin clinicals in the sixth week of Level I with two 8-clinical days a week. In Level II and III, the students will have two 12-hour clinical days a week.
- Students sometimes drive long distances for their clinical experiences, but stated they do not mind the distance and would drive twice as far to attend the program.
- Although there are limited resources for the students in the program, students stated that if they were struggling in the classroom, faculty were responsive to their needs and provided assistance.

- Students have input into faculty and clinical evaluations and are very satisfied with the program.
- If a student passes Level I and fails Level II, they are able to retake Level II the following May and is based on available space. Only one failure is allowed in the program.
- When VN students graduate, they have no difficulty finding employment in the area. The majority of graduates remain in the community.
- The program meets a need in the community for a VN education program and receives strong support from clinical affiliates and the community.

Program of Study:

- The curriculum is divided into three levels each 16 weeks in length. There are 651 didactic hours in the block curriculum. According to the 2019 NEPIS report, the program has 93 hours in skills lab, 0 hours in simulation lab, and 816 clinical hours for a total of 909 hours. The clinical hours are broken down into 75% acute care, 10% long term care, and 15% in the community. The program includes 60 hours in pediatrics and 42 hours in maternity.
- Level I includes the following:
 - Nursing skills;
 - Personal/Vocation Relationships (PVR) I that includes Mental Health Concepts;
 - Nutrition; and
 - Anatomy and Physiology.
- Level II includes the following:
 - Pharmacology; and
 - Medical-Surgical Nursing.
- Level III includes the following:
 - A continuation of Medical-Surgical Nursing;
 - Maternal and Newborn;
 - Pediatrics;
 - Geriatrics; and
 - PVR II
- The curriculum is sound, logically organized, and include all Board required content. The faculty consistently evaluate and revise the curriculum based upon evidence and according to need.
- The *Differentiated Essential Competencies (DECs)*(2010) have been incorporated into the curriculum including the clinical evaluation tools.
- There is one admission a year so the faculty progress with the students through the three levels.
 - Level I begins in January and the students graduate in December of the same year.
 - There is a wide variety of affiliation agreements in the local area hospitals which include obstetrics, pediatrics, emergency room, clinics, and acute care patients.
 - A video of Ms. Swearingen's Mental Health lecture was also provided.
 - All of the faculty have a clinical assignment. Students spend ten weeks with one faculty and then the students rotate to another faculty and facility for their clinical experience.
 - Preceptors are used in specialty areas and clinics.
 - At the time of the visit, the preliminary pass rate for the VN program was 85.11% with 40 out of 47 graduates passing the NCLEX-PN®.

Clinical Learning Experiences:

- TCH has over 18 clinical facilities offering a rich variety of clinical experiences. Besides Tyler County Hospital in Woodville, the students attend clinicals in hospitals located in Livingston, Jasper, and two hospitals in Lufkin. Students are able to have clinical experiences in mental health, pediatrics, and maternal-child.
- TCH Clinical Evaluation Tools are based upon the *DECs* and demonstrate progression in expectations of student performance and competence.
- Preceptors may be used in the clinics and long-term care facilities and preceptors complete a daily evaluation of the student.
- Medication administration is practiced in the skills lab and although the Tyler County Hospital is unable to accommodate the use of electronic health records (EMRs) due to internet capabilities, students are learning to use EMRs in some of the other clinical facilities.

Resources and Facilities:

- TCH provided a video tour that included the following:
 - VN faculty and administrative assistant offices located in a converted house next to the hospital;
 - Area with kitchen, lockers, and tables for students;
 - Three-bed skills lab;
 - Small library;
 - The VN program also has access to empty hospital rooms where students can practice their skills; and
 - One classroom that can accommodate over sixty students with white board and computer for power point presentations;

Total Program Evaluation:

- The Total Program Evaluation (TPE) is reviewed annually. All elements required in Rule 214.13 are included and supporting documents and minutes of faculty meetings were submitted for review.

Pros and Cons of Program Review:

Pros

- See Attachment #2 identifying Quality indicators.

Cons:

- None noted.

Staff Recommendation:

Move to accept the report of the findings from the virtual survey visit to Tyler County Hospital Vocational Nursing Education Program in Woodville, Texas, as indicated in the attached letter. (Attachment #1)

DRAFT LETTER

July 22, 2021

Lynn Hays, BSN, RN, Director
Vocational Nursing Program
Tyler County Hospital VN Program
1100 W. Bluff
Woodville TX 75979

Dear Ms. Hays:

At the July 22, 2021 virtual Board meeting, members of the Texas Board of Nursing considered the findings from program review of the Tyler County Hospital Vocational Nursing Education Program in Woodville, Texas. It was the decision of the Board to accept the survey visit report.

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

Sincerely,

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

Copy: Dr. Sondra Williams, Tyler County Hospital CEO

**Regulatory Quality Indicators
 Tyler County College in Woodville, Texas
 Vocational 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	Tyler County Hospital VN Program is unique as it is associated with Tyler County Hospital and not a college. The Director of the program reports directly to the CEO of the hospital and states that the needs of the nursing program are fully met by administration. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the program had to adapt to online learning and administration provided access to online programs to assist the program.
Consistent administrative leadership in the nursing program.	The former director retired after 29 years. Ms. Hays became director in 2016. Along with her administrative duties, she teaches in all levels of the nursing program.
Consistent full-time faculty as opposed to reliance on adjunct faculty.	There are three full-time faculty who share equally in the didactic courses and teach all three levels. There are no faculty vacancies. Faculty work together on the course objectives and testing.
Faculty are able to role model professional behaviors.	The faculty as well as administration are all nurses, many of them are graduates of the program. They are respectful of each other and role model to their students professional behavior on a daily basis.

Clinical experiences with actual patients that prepare students for the reality of clinical practice.	The program prides itself on the amount of hands on clinical practice their students receive. Students attend clinicals after they have been in the program six weeks. There are numerous affiliation agreements in hospitals, long term care facilities, mental health, pediatrics, and maternal-child.
Consistently has a pattern of NCLEX pass rates that meet set standards.	Pass rates for the past 5 years have been: 90.91% (2020); 80.39% (2019); 90.20% (2018); 87.72% (2017); and 85.45% (2016).
Administrative support for ongoing faculty development.	Faculty are able to attend the Texas Association of Vocational Nurse Educators (TAVNE) as well as online continuing nursing education related to nursing education.
Comprehensive student support services especially services to assist at-risk students.	There is no comprehensive student support services to assist students, but in interview the students stated that if they did not understand nursing concepts all faculty were were readily available for support.
Ongoing systematic evaluation of the nursing program.	There is a total program evaluation done annually and changes are made as necessary.