

**Consideration of Request to Establish A
Task Force to Study Implications of the Growth of Texas Nursing Education Programs**

Background:

In consideration of the growth in the number of vocational and professional nursing education programs in Texas, as well as the annual growth in program enrollments and graduations, Board staff recommend the establishment of a new task force to study the implications of growth in Texas nursing education programs. Data indicates that:

- Since September 2006, thirty-six (36) proposals for new nursing programs have been approved by the Board, representing an almost 18% increase.
- Approved professional nursing programs' enrollments have grown from 16,711 in 2006 to 22,181 in 2010, with an increase in student enrollments each year ranging from 2.2% to 12.5%.
- Approved vocational nursing programs' enrollments have grown from 6,295 in 2006 to 7,860 in 2010, with the percentage of annual increase ranging from 3.1% to 24.9%.
- Graduates from professional nursing programs have increased from 6,674 in 2006 to 9,096 in 2010.
- Graduates from vocational nursing programs have increased from 4,082 in 2006 to 5,046 in 2010.

Constituents are expressing concerns regarding the availability of clinical learning experiences for new and existing nursing programs, employment opportunities for new graduates, and the issue of maintaining quality in nursing education since there has been a greater emphasis on producing more nursing graduates to meet the nursing shortage. Besides the establishment of new nursing programs, a number of schools have opened extension sites to provide opportunities for nursing education in distant locations. The effects of the successes in growth have challenged the educational systems and their partners.

Areas for Study:

It seems timely and appropriate to evaluate the implications of the growth of nursing programs in Texas to determine the BON's role in ensuring that nursing graduates have adequate preparation to provide safe and competent care for the citizens of Texas. Areas for study would include:

- Regional needs for additional vocational and professional nursing graduates indicating specific areas of practice need
- Nursing program outcomes match the needs of the communities to be served
- Available clinical sites for student learning experiences
- Efficiency of scheduling clinical sites for clinical learning experiences
- Nursing workforce data projecting needs for nursing graduates across the state
- Employment patterns across the state
- Best practices in education to produce competent nursing graduates

Suggested Task Force Members:

A diverse membership with representation from:

- Nursing practice - hospital
- Vocational Nursing Programs
- Associate Degree Nursing Programs
- Baccalaureate Degree Nursing Programs
- Career Schools
- Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies
- Texas Workforce Commission

Staff Recommendation:

Move to establish a task force to study implications of the growth of Texas nursing programs with members representing nursing practice and education constituents.