

## **Report of Findings Comparing Programs with Sanctions and Programs in Good Standing**

### **Summary of Request:**

Consider the findings when comparing data from nursing programs with sanctions to nursing programs in good standing to determine risk factors that may indicate a need for a timely, proactive approach in the protection of students to include the limitation of enrollments into the program.

### **Background:**

- Board Staff have recognized a trend whereby an increasing number of nursing programs are experiencing difficulties that result in the approval status of those programs being changed to a warning or conditional status.
- The Board has expressed an interest in identifying early risk factors that would be beneficial in promoting the programs' future success.
- Board Staff reviewed data and performance of twenty-six (26) nursing programs that were placed on sanctions (warning or conditional status) since January 2012.
- In order to assimilate several perspectives of the data, three (3) approaches were used:
  - The Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies was requested to provide a statistical analysis comparing characteristics of programs with sanctions and characteristics of programs in good standing to determine if any associations with NCLEX examination pass rates exist.
  - Board Staff reviewed NCLEX pass rates and admission, enrollment, and graduation data for the programs with sanctions for five (5) years to determine trends and commonalities among the programs.
  - Board Staff reviewed 2012 Self-Study Reports from twelve (12) programs with a one-time pass rate below 80% and Board Staff prepared an analysis of programs' identified areas of weakness.

This report is based upon findings from these three (3) areas.

### **Demographics of Programs that Experienced Sanctions from January 2012 to the Present:**

#### **Governing Entities:**

- Fourteen (14) of the programs are located within a public college or university
- Eleven (11) of the programs are located within a career school
- One (1) program is located within a private university.

#### **Types of Programs:**

- Twelve percent (12%) of the total number of Texas-approved programs have experienced sanctions since January 2012.
- Twelve percent (12%) to fifteen percent (15%) of VN and ADN programs have experienced sanctions since January 2012.
- Thirteen (13) programs are vocational nursing (VN) programs.
- Eleven (11) programs are associate degree nursing (ADN) programs.
- Two (2) programs are baccalaureate degree nursing (BSN) programs.

#### **Outcomes of Changes in Approval Status:**

- Three (3) of the programs listed have lost approval status and have been closed.
- Twelve (12) of the programs have experienced a conditional approval status since January 2012.
- Four (4) of the programs are currently on conditional approval.
- Five (5) programs were on conditional and recovered before losing approval.

- Four (4) programs are currently in serious jeopardy of losing approval.

**Descriptive Data:**

Among the twenty six (26) Programs on Sanction Reviewed:

- Eight (8) of the programs started within the past five (5) years.
- Ten (10) of the programs started after the year 2000.
- When comparing five-year data for admissions, total enrollments, and graduates, there was an obvious clumping of the numbers in the enrollment column. This indicates that admitted students were not graduating on time possibly due to:
  - students being readmitted after failing a course,
  - students delaying their progression through the program by personal choice, or
  - the program accepting transfer students.
 The program is then handling more enrolled students than they intended.
- Three (3) of the programs repeated a pass rate below 80% a second time after achieving a pass rate above 80% during the previous five (5) years.

**Statistical Analysis:**

Staff at the Texas Center for Nursing Workforce Studies analyzed the 2011 program characteristics for programs for which a 2012 NCLEX pass rate was available by comparing passing schools and failing schools. The researcher's analysis examined many program characteristics and their impact on NCLEX pass rates but because of the small number of cases (less than 100 programs studied, it was difficult to find differences that were statistically significant. However, there was one finding that was statistically significant. Among VN programs, an association between a program's status as "for-profit" or "not for profit" and NCLEX pass rates was found using an ANOVA statistical analysis indicating that for-profit VN programs may have a higher probability of failure to achieve an 80% NCLEX pass rate. This finding may not be predictive since it represents data from one year.

VN Program Type	Passing Schools	Failing Schools	Passing %
Private/Non-Profit	3	1	75.00%
Private/Proprietary	5	9	35.71%
Public	70	5	93.33%
<b>Total</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>83.87%</b>
<b>VN Program</b>			
Public College/University	67	5	93.1%
Private College/University	0	1	0.0%
Public Hospital	2	0	100.0%
Career School or College	7	9	43.8%
Private Hospital	2	0	100.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>83.9%</b>

However, even though only one characteristic proved to be statistically significant, the descriptive information that surfaced during the analysis of data will be helpful in determining risk factors of programs with sanctions.

- Higher faculty turnover and faculty vacancy rates were seen in VN and RN programs that had failing pass rates than in programs that had acceptable pass rates.
- RN Programs with failing pass rates reported more clinical hours spent in computer lab, skills lab, and simulation lab, and fewer hours spent in patient care clinical hours than programs with acceptable pass rates.

- Differences in clinical hours are less pronounced in VN programs since their clinical and didactic hours are required in Rule 214.

### **Summary:**

Evaluation of the Common characteristics of programs with sanctions in this report as well as findings from the nursing education programs' 2012 Self-Study Summary report (Agenda Item 3.2.10) suggest the following risk factors that may influence a program's success in graduating safe, competent students who will pass the NCLEX examination as first-time candidates:

- Director turnover
- High faculty turnover
- Faculty lacking competencies in developing curriculum, providing instruction, and evaluating students
- Relaxed student policies for admission, re-admission, and progression
- Heavy reliance upon standardized examinations to guide student progression
- Lack of resources and/or services to assist students with special needs, i.e. ESL students
- Difficulty managing increases in student enrollments
- Challenges in the use of clinical learning experiences
- Ineffective methods of identification and remediation of high-risk students
- Lack of experience in nursing education in a newly approved program

Board Staff suggest that when a nursing program's examination pass rate falls below 80% for the first time, Board Staff will take immediate proactive measures to remediate the program. The process will begin with Board Staff conducting a conference call with the program to outline requirements in the report. The required Self-Study Report will include details about faculty turnover and vacancy rates, aggregate data showing trends in total enrollment and a description of managing increases in students in the program, admission and readmission policies, program's use of clinical learning experiences, and director turnover. Board Staff will stress the importance of a plan to respond and address to challenges that might be unique to their program.

Board Staff may determine that the program needs to provide progress reports during the following year to monitor their progress and their evaluation of corrective measures.

The results of the evaluation of the data concerning a program's risk factor and NCLEX pass rates suggests that there is no one formula of program characteristics that will predict failure or success. There are many factors involved in evaluating a program's NCLEX pass rates and utilizing the following rules and guidelines will provide direction for remediation strategies.

- Rules 214.4(a) and 215.4(a) describing the progressive designation of approval status based upon compliance with Board rules.
- Rules 214.4(b) and 215.4(b) listing factors jeopardizing program approval status indicating the use of imposing restrictions or conditions, special monitoring, and/or conducting survey visits.
- Rules 214.(c) and 215.4(c) outlining requirements for ongoing approval and Self-Study Reports (Board Education Guideline 3.2.1.a. Writing a Self-Study Report on Evaluation of Factors that Contributed to the Graduates' Performance on the NCLEX-PN® of NCLEX-RN® Examination.)
- Board Education Guideline 3.2.3.a. Criteria for Conducting Survey Visits.
- Board Education Guideline 3.2.2. Criteria and Schedule for Progress Reports.
- Board Education Guideline 3.6.1.a. Criteria for Determining Student Enrollment.

**Board Staff Plan of Action:**

1. Provide guidance to the program required to write a Self-Study Report in order to involve the faculty and to develop a Report that will be most helpful to the program. A conference call with the program will provide an initial step in this process.
2. Monitor the program through Progress Reports and evaluation of measures taken to improve their performance.
3. If the NCLEX examination pass rate is below 80% for a second consecutive year, Board Staff will conduct a survey visit and report to the Board. Board Staff does not recommend a formula driven restriction of enrollment with programs not on conditional status. However if warranted, Board Staff may recommend reducing enrollment in the program based upon their individual risks and non-compliance with BON rules and guidelines to improve manageability and promote success.