



**Janet Napolitano**  
Governor

**Joey Ridenour**  
Executive Director

## Arizona State Board of Nursing

### ANNUAL REFRESHER COURSE PROVIDER MEETING DRAFT MINUTES January 31, 2008

#### **ATTENDEES:**

Ilene Borze, GateWay Community College  
Karen Brown, Pima Community College CTD  
Regina Cottrell, SEVEN Healthcare Academy  
Terri Crews, Mesa Community College  
Terry Duffy, John C. Lincoln Health Network  
Peggy Friedell, Mesa Community College  
Diane Hultquist, Pima Community College CTD  
David Kutzler, Pima Community College CTD  
Debra McGinty, Northland Pioneer College  
Jeanette Peterson, GateWay Community College  
Linda Riesdorph, Mohave Community College  
Bertha Sepulveda, Mesa Community College

#### **BOARD STAFF PRESENT:**

Judy Bontrager, Associate Director Operations/Licensing  
Karen Grady, Education Consultant  
Debra Kunkle, RN/LPN Licensure Renewal  
Pamela K. Randolph, Associate Director Education

#### **I. CALL TO ORDER – INTRODUCTIONS**

Randolph called the meeting to order at 10:08 a.m. Program representatives present introduced themselves.

Attendees reviewed and accepted the 2006 Annual Refresher Course Provider Meeting Minutes without correction.

#### **II. REPORTS/DISCUSSION REFRESHER PROGRAM ISSUES**

##### **A. Refresher Course Data**

Randolph provided a preliminary report on data collected from approved refresher course programs. Data from the CNE Net program has yet to be submitted. The following data includes enrollment numbers previously provided by CNE Net. There were approximately 245 persons enrolled in refresher courses for the 2007 calendar year; 154 graduates; 200 students progressing through programs; 38 failures and withdrawals; and 21 students lagging. Randolph noted that of the reported 21 students lagging or remaining in programs, most are internationally educated students having trouble with NCLEX or English Language Proficiency. Without that demographic only 6 students are lagging.

PN programs consistently report less students enrolled. The data will not change once CNE Net submits its enrollment information. Presently, 37 students have been admitted to PN refresher course programs, 26 have graduated, and 4 continued.

Of the total number enrolled in refresher course programs, 11 have been Board ordered as a condition of probation or summary suspension. Most of those students are enrolled at GateWay Community College. One to two percent of all renewal applicants are taking a refresher course.

Program representatives have reported an overall increase in enrollment. GateWay Community College reported an increase in enrollment with no waiting list. Clinical groups are started to accommodate the number of enrollees. John C. Lincoln Health Network reported that of 100 potential candidates, only 2 were accepted. Mohave Community College reported an increase in enrollment; however, approximately 50% of students that enroll drop out immediately after the course begins. Pima Community College reported having a two month waiting list, with students enrolled through March. SEVEN Healthcare Academy also reported an increase in enrollment.

#### Future Employment/Tracking:

Borze offered that GateWay Community College is concerned with LPN clinical sites stating that they do not want LPNs in acute care. Agencies have stated that they want LPNs in long-term care. Some agencies will take LPNs if they are going on to RN programs.

John C. Lincoln Health Network (JCL) representative Terri Duffy would like to track and report to the Board the number of students that drop. Duffy is concerned with refresher course students that pass through. Duffy stated that it is not always noted as to why a person leaves and wants to report if the person was 'termed' for incompetence. JCL utilizes personalized interviews to ascertain what students were doing prior to leaving practice and for how long. JCL finds the personalized interview critical in the selection process for candidates. JCL will be implementing pre-tests that will consist of basic nursing knowledge with some questions taken from mid-term and final exams. The pre-test will not be used in

deciding employment but to highlight any weaknesses. If hired, educators and preceptors on units can focus on weak areas and strengthen skills.

Mesa Community College nurses are usually hired by agencies where clinicals are conducted.

SEVEN Healthcare Academy reported that 80% of their students remain at the agency where the preceptorship was conducted.

## **B. Program Innovations**

Randolph asked refresher course representatives to share what their respective programs do with candidates that want to work in specialty areas; the availability of preceptors; the culture of healthcare today, and how the programs cope with different healthcare cultures.

GateWay Community College has students in specialty areas. Hospice of the Valley has taken students; students interested in psych have been sent to the VA; obstetric students have been sent to Banner; NICU students have been sent to Phoenix Children's Hospital. GateWay encourages basic skills first. Agency recruiters come to speak with students who are usually hired or contracted before they complete the course.

Borze noted that peer connection and peer support is beneficial. Students have access to the computer lab which also provides math skills reviews. Students are placed in Sim Lab and receive the same experience as with regular nursing students. Of note is the lack of computer skills for new refresher course students, which needs to be addressed as everything becomes computerized.

John C. Lincoln Health Network (JCL) conducts a three-day orientation. Students are then required to sit with a clinical educator. Students have designated time on computers. Learning packets and mandatory education are computerized now. Of note, JCL has, for the first time, hired a RN who completed the RN refresher course online and is doing the clinical piece with JCL.

Mesa Community College (MCC) has a grant funded pilot program for internationally educated nurses already living in Arizona. The program is in its third year. This semester MCC will be tracking those nurses and surveying employers. The initial group is still working. The nurses are working full time, mainly in acute care. MCC will look at how they did and how they are being retained in the workplace. Most students are sponsored by organizations and then taken in. Others have difficulty getting employment. These students do not meet the criteria of having experience. Hiring hospitals recognize that the students in this program have special needs and have been placing them in new grad orientation. MCC will have data collected by the end of the semester and will provide a report to the Board. Sepulveda noted that the length of time not in the

States or length of time at work does not make a difference in success. Internationally educated nurses typically do not have problems with nursing proficiency, but have trouble with English proficiency exams.

MCC requires extra work if the student wants to go into specialty areas. MCC offers extra HESI case studies in OB, PEDS and PSYCH for those students that live in rural areas. If students live in the valley, they are encouraged to come to MCC and take a one credit course, and then take block 4 for OB/PEDS. The course meets one day per week. Students may then do a preceptorship in the specialty area. Otherwise they will be required to do clinicals in med/surg. Friedell noted that MCC offers an internet course, as many students are older and not computer literate. A drug calculation test is also given. Randolph recommends 100% on drug calculation exams with a calculator.

Mohave Community College does not make personal visits. Faculty calls the preceptor and the student. The preceptorship is almost an orientation in that most successful students are hired at precepting agencies. Most students are not in hospitals unless it is a local situation. Hospice of the Valley, some nursing homes, and the mental health clinic in Flagstaff offer clinical placements for Mohave students. The Mohave course touches on many of the specialties areas.

Northland Pioneer College (NPC) currently has one student enrolled in the program. McGinty stated that NPC is discouraged with the number of students, and has extended an invitation to nurses in the community informing them that the program exists. NPC uses the HESI exam as an assessment of basic/foundation skills as well as a competency checklist. The course does not extend didactic into specialty areas, however students are always able to sit in. Students are responsible for identifying preceptors and may opt for a specialty area.

Pima Community College CTD (PCC) offers an online typing course and an internet usage course. Brown stated that lack of computer skills slows students down in the clinical setting. Pima visits students and preceptors at the clinical sites at 80 hours and at 160 hours.

Brown reported a lot of change in the past year. Prior to this past year everything was done in self learning packets. PCC found they had a tremendous drop out rate because of that. Every refresher candidate did everything on their own. PCC went live with an online ITV program in March, there is a maximum of 5 students per month; an additional faculty member has been hired. Candidates are required to produce a doctor's note that says the candidate is mentally and physically capable to participate in clinicals. PCC requires malpractice insurance, proof of health insurance, CPR card, TB, Hepatitis B, MMR, and if low titers are reported, candidates are required to get boosters. An in-person interview/two-hour orientation is conducted. The first 10 weeks of class are online. The program is not self-paced. There is a required skills lab to cover basic skills. There is also a

shadowing experience within the first week. Specialty areas are allowed including NICU, Cardiac ICU, OB, Hospice, Med/Surg, Rehab, Psych, and nursing education. PCC utilizes a one-on-one preceptorship selection. Most agencies hire refresher students, and some students get paid during preceptorship. Some students are required to do multiple shadows which help students to decide which area they would like to work in. Students are required to maintain weekly contact. PCC has a six month timeframe. Extensions require proof of emergency.

SEVEN Healthcare Academy reported that most of their students are from the local area. Cottrell stated that SEVEN Healthcare Academy has a good rapport with agencies and institutions. Cottrell makes one call mid term during the students' rotation to see how the student is doing. To date, Cottrell has not had any problems. Per Randolph's recommendation, criteria have been set up for those students wanting specialty areas. Those students must prove continuing education or in-service hours during their break in clinical practice. Cottrell stated that most nurses returning to practice want to do home health, one-on-one, hospice, or work in a physician's office. Employers have been pleased.

Computer skills are not required for students. Didactic is offered as NCLEX preparation. Students taking the didactic portion for NCLEX preparation have passed the exam. To date, students enrolled for the didactic portion as NCLEX preparation have recently graduated.

The program is working on other education affiliation agreements, and working with an institution on a project to set up an educator's preceptorship which may help address the faculty shortage. Cottrell will provide the Board with copies of new preceptor affiliation agreements, and a list of new contacts numbers. Cottrell noted that some agencies are requiring background checks for refresher students. Riesdorff maintained that other programs are required to do background checks as it is mandated by the joint commission for agencies to do so. Randolph stated that the Board does not do background checks on all persons that may enter refresher courses, nor does the Board look at health requirements for licensees.

### **III. Clinical Placements and Preceptorships for Refresher Course Students**

Randolph asked attendees to share anything that was not already covered regarding clinical placements and preceptorships.

Borze reported that Scottsdale Healthcare is now requiring students to have fentanyl drug testing prior to clinicals which will cost students approximately \$75.00. This requirement created an obstacle as clinical placements are hard to get. Eight students have elected to go to Scottsdale Healthcare and are willing to bear the cost of fentanyl testing. LPN placements may be more challenging in the fall.

Brown stated that Carondelet Healthcare System and Sierra Vista Medical Center are requiring students to have a negative TB test result even if shadowing. Pima Community College is now asking refresher course students to have the TB test done before they come in for orientation. University Medical Center (UMC) requires students to sign a one-year contract for full-time employment to be considered for a preceptor experience there. Students sent there are successful because of the screening process PCC utilizes for placement. Another agency used by PCC has been purchased by a larger corporation which is requiring PCC to renegotiate clinical agreements. This agency is now asking for, among other things, DPS security clearance and driving records. PCC is in the process of intense negotiation. PCC is finding sufficient placements for traditional LPN students. PCC has recently expanded in to some new sites and is trying to look at more sites that are actually hiring LPNs. The VA in Tucson is not hiring many LPNs except in their long-term care unit. PCC students were recently excluded at the VA from the med/surg unit. The VA's rationale was that they do not hire LPNs there so they do not have a professional model for LPNs to follow. PCC students have been placed at Healthsouth in the sub acute unit with positive results.

Cottrell stated that Scottsdale Healthcare would not take SEVEN Healthcare Academy students because SEVEN Healthcare Academy is not a NLN approved program. Cottrell does have an education affiliation with Banner, where one of the surgical centers has agreed to accept SEVEN Healthcare Academy students. Cottrell maintained that her biggest problem remains competition with ADN programs.

ORs as an option for clinical placement were suggested, however, it was noted that ORs did not take refresher students without those students spending time in med/surg. Doctors that only hire RNs were also suggested as a possibility for placement.

#### **IV. Licensure Issues/Notification of Course Completion**

##### **A. Citizenship Requirements**

Bontrager addressed the attendees stating that on January 2, 2008 the Arizona State Board of Nursing began enforcing state law A.R.S. § 1-501 which requires all initial and renewal applicants for licensure or certification to show proof of legal presence or citizenship before licensure or certification may be issued.

Board challenges include changing all of the applications available online to reflect the requirement regarding status of citizenship or legal presence; the online renewal process has been delayed as staff must wait for documentation; there is no additional staff to assist with the growing number of telephone calls per day (now 1590 per day, up from 1407 calls per day in November/December); the

average number of e-mails received is now 114 per day, up from 50-60 emails per day.

Changes are being made to the database so that when the office receives documentation of citizenship status that information can be recorded in the database. The revised renewal application is not online yet, but applicants can still renew online and submit documentation by mail. Renewing applicants are encouraged to submit applications now and not wait until June. An article to that effect will be published in the AZBN Journal because of the anticipated volume of documentation that will have to be processed and the delay in the renewal process. Early renewals will not effect the terms of licensure or dates of expiration. Initial applicants are being asked to submit documentation with their application.

Attendees shared that some of the institutions also require proof of citizenship status for registration and determination of tuition rates.

Revised applications provide lists of documents that will be accepted as proof of citizenship. Renewal applications will also have additional questions regarding numbers of hours worked in the year and workplace settings. Applicants will then be directed to complete a short survey, part of a project through NCSBN in conjunction with ASU, the Arizona Hospital Association and Robert E. Johnson, that will look at trends in the workforce and try to predict what the needs are in nursing, and collect workplace data.

## **B. Licensure Needed Before Clinical Placement**

Bontrager and Randolph provided information and clarity as to the requirements for obtaining temporary licensure, noting that everyone must have passed NCLEX and meet all licensure requirements; refresher course candidates must have a license prior to clinicals; candidates must provide evidence of enrollment in a refresher course; and that a temporary license is only good for six months. Bontrager asked attendees to review the memorandum addressed to refresher students regarding temporary licensure. Attendees recommended the memorandum be changed to address 'Refresher Course Candidates'. Bontrager will also include the following statement at the beginning of the memorandum:

Refresher course candidates who do not hold an active Arizona license must obtain a temporary license for 'refresher course only' before attending clinical.

Bontrager will revise the memorandum, a copy of which will be sent with the draft minutes of this meeting.

**V. Other Concerns**

Attendees expressed concern with candidates enrolling in refresher course programs having been out of practice for up to 40 years in some instances. Program representatives cited legal obligations to allow candidates to take the course but noted the difficulty in finding clinical placement for such candidates and the issue of public safety. Some programs require documentation of physical, mental and psychological fitness, but that does not ensure that a candidate will be clinically competent. Oregon requires candidates that have been out of practice for 20 years or greater to take another RN nursing program and take the NCLEX. Randolph will address the matter in Article 3, noting that it will take several months to open the rule and have it approved. Randolph suggested that programs address the matter in policy and program criteria. Programs may also add a component to the didactic portion of the course that would measure clinical competency. Some of the refresher program attendees agreed to state in policy that persons out of practice 20-30 years will not be eligible to participate in the course.

Attendees discussed enrollment candidates with disabilities and enrollment processes.

**VI. Adjournment**

There being further business the meeting was adjourned at 1:11 p.m.

**MINUTES APPROVED BY:**



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Signature