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NURSING PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR

Background:

Board staff is receiving many applications from programs that are part of a national private career education schools. Assessing whether proposals meet rule requirements for nursing program administrator is problematic due to layers of corporate and local oversight. Additionally we have had unusual requests regarding the nursing program administrator function for existing programs in Arizona. This document is provided to clarify enforcement of existing rules. All rules relating to nursing program administrator are detailed below.

Rules:

R4-19-201. Organization and Administration

- D. The parent institution shall center the administrative control of the nursing program in the nursing program administrator.
- H. The parent institution shall appoint a nursing program administrator who meets the requirements of R4-19-203.
- J. A nursing program shall notify the Board of a vacancy or pending vacancy in the position of nursing program administrator within 15 days of the program's awareness of the vacancy or pending vacancy and do the following:
 - 1. Appoint an interim administrator or a permanent administrator who meets the requirements of R4-19-203(A) within 15 days of the effective date of the vacancy, and
 - 2. Notify the Board of the appointment of an interim or permanent administrator within 15 days of appointment and provide a copy of the administrator's credentials to the Board.

R4-19-202. Resources, Facilities, Services, and Records

- A. The parent institution of a nursing program shall consider the size of the program faculty and number of program students and shall provide facilities for the program that meet the following requirements:
 - 1. A private office for the administrator of the nursing program;

R4-19-203. Administrator; Qualifications and Duties

- A. A nursing program shall appoint an administrator who holds a current Arizona registered nurse license in good standing or multi-state privilege to practice in Arizona under A.R.S., Title 32, Chapter 15 and:
 - 1. For professional nursing programs, a graduate degree with a major in nursing; or
 - 2. For practical nursing programs, a baccalaureate degree with a major in nursing.
- B. The administrator shall have comparable status with other program administrators in the parent institution and shall report directly to an academic officer of the institution.
- C. The administrator shall:
 - 1. Administer the nursing education program;
 - 2. Facilitate and coordinate activities related to academic policies, personnel policies, curriculum, resources, facilities, services, and program evaluation;

3. Prepare and administer the budget;
 4. Recommend candidates for faculty appointment, retention, and promotion;
 5. In addition to any other evaluation used by the parent institution, ensure that faculty are evaluated:
 - a. At least every three years,
 - b. By the nurse administrator or a nurse educator designated by the nurse administrator, and
 - c. In the areas of teaching ability and nursing knowledge and skills.
 6. Maintain, enforce, and evaluate written policies and procedures that require all students, faculty, and preceptors who participate in clinical practice settings to be physically and mentally able to provide safe client care; and
 7. Participate in activities that contribute to the governance of the parent institution.
- D. The administrator of the nursing program shall not teach more than 45 contact hours per academic session.

R4-19-204. Faculty; Personnel Policies; Qualifications and Duties

- G. The nursing faculty, together with the program administrator, shall:
1. Develop, implement, and evaluate the program of learning; and
 2. Develop and implement standards for the admission, progression, and graduation of students

Examples Of Issues:

1. A national chain of career colleges appoints a corporate nursing director to develop nursing program curriculum and policies and to oversee all nursing programs across multiple campuses in multiple states. The local campus is independently accredited. The national chain hires and identifies a local campus nursing administrator as administrator of the nursing program in their application. The organizational chart reveals that the local site administrator of the nursing program is reporting directly to a campus director but also is reporting to the corporate director of nursing. Policies reveal that most administrative aspects of the program are determined by a corporate nursing director.

Current interpretation: The program is advised that whoever they appoint as administrator must have administrative control over the program and the ability to modify curriculum, admission standards etc. There can be a relationship with the corporate nursing director for advice or consultation. Additionally the parent institution can set policies for curriculum change such as advisory committees and peer review as commonly occurs in most program, but the administrator is the person responsible for the program and must have a mechanism to institute and effect change to meet the unique needs of the particular program in AZ.

2. The administrator of a school with a small program calls and asks if the nursing program administrator can be part time.

Current interpretation: Nothing in current rules prohibits the position from being part time, however the program was told this was not advisable and the administrator should be available during normal operating hours to oversee all aspects of the program and ensure the curriculum and policies are implemented effectively.

3. A rural program requires the nursing program administrator to teach 45 hours during the school year however a site visit revealed that the administrator was teaching over 45

hours and was also administering the CNA program and did not have sufficient time or assistance to tend to her administrative duties plus teach, therefore had to use her “own time” on weekends to teach.

Current interpretation: This is a slippery slope that could lead to a situation where the administrator position is expected to use personal time to teach in addition to administrative duties. The current rule was designed and intended to prevent this. The program is advised that no administrator can teach more than 45 hours in any academic session for their own educational institution. In fact in this situation, the Board would suggest that the administrator not teach at all since there does not seem to be sufficient time to accomplish administrative duties which led to other violations of rules due to not accomplishing essential role requirements such as evaluation of faculty.

4. A nursing program, upon the resignation of the nursing program administrator, appoints 2 faculty members to perform administrative duties while maintaining their teaching loads.

Current interpretation: Programs can have only one administrator and that administrator must meet all requirements. An interim administrator’s job description must meet the rule requirements for nursing program administrators including limited teaching.

5. Another variant of the above: a program reorganizes the nursing department and leaves the current administrator in place, however promotes another nursing faculty to oversee him/her and approve all program decisions—this is not an academic officer of the institution. The program identifies the current administrator as the program administrator.

Current interpretation: This does not appear to meet rule requirements as the administrator must answer to an academic officer of the institution. The lines of authority and communication appear very muddled here.

6. A large program has an overall program administrator and several site coordinators. Do the current rules prevent the site coordinators from teaching more than 45 hours in one academic session?

Current interpretation: No, rule only applies to designated administrator for the total program.