

December 7, 1998

## NURSE QUALIFICATION STANDARDS STEERING COMMITTEE

**1. PURPOSE:** This memorandum establishes a time-limited interorganizational group to oversee implementation of the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Registered Nurse Qualification Standards. This Steering Committee will report to the Office of the Under Secretary for Health.

**2. POLICY:** The VHA Registered Nurse Qualification Standards Steering Committee is established to:

a. Provide leadership in ensuring that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Registered Nurse Qualification Standards are implemented in an equitable and timely manner.

b. Ensure all affected parties understand the changes in the new qualification standards, the philosophy behind the changes, and the implementation schedule. *Affected parties include, but are not limited to, registered nurses, Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) and medical center leadership including nurse executives, union partners, managers, supervisors, members of Professional Standards Boards, nurse recruiters, human resources personnel, veterans service organizations, and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) staff as well as external stakeholders such as the nursing academic community, and congressional staff.*

### 3. ACTION

a. **Steering Committee.** The Steering Committee will:

(1) Foster an environment in which the new Nurse Qualification Standards are used to improve nursing practice and the quality of patient care.

(2) Encourage the commitment of available budget and program resources to the employee development needs associated with implementation of the qualification standards.

(3) Develop guidance to assure that funds for educational assistance are distributed fairly and equitably.

(4) Develop guidance for establishing relationships with academic partners that focus on the creation and expansion of non-traditional educational programs that offer the nursing workforce innovative academic opportunities to obtain the baccalaureate and advanced degrees, as well as educational programs that target local need and individual student learning need in settings convenient for staff.

(5) Make recommendations to the Under Secretary for Health relating to the criteria and procedures for requesting exceptions to the grade requirements of the qualification standards.

(6) Provide leadership in identifying and resolving any problems associated with implementation of the qualification standards.



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(7) Periodically publish any findings and recommendations concerning implementation of the qualification standards.

(8) Provide oversight of the existing Implementation Task Force.

b. **Membership.** The membership of the Steering Committee will consist of:

(1) A VISN Director;

(2) A medical center director;

(3) A medical center chief of staff;

(4) Chief Consultant, Nursing Strategic Healthcare Group;

(5) A facility nurse executive;

(6) A facility nurse educator;

(7) A staff nurse (NOVA member);

(8) Bargaining Unit Representatives; ***NOTE: Each Unit will appoint one representative.***  
and,

(9) A Human Resources Management representative.

**4. RESPONSIBILITY:** The Chief Consultant, Nursing Strategic Healthcare Group (118), is responsible for the contents of this memorandum.

**5. RESCISSION:** None.

**6. RECERTIFICATION:** This VHA Memorandum is scheduled for recertification on/or before the last working day of December 2003.

Kenneth W. Kizer, M.D., M.P.H.  
Under Secretary for Health

**DISTRIBUTION:** CO and VISN: E-mailed 12/8/98