

TITLE 43. PROFESSIONS AND BUSINESSES
CHAPTER 26. NURSES
ARTICLE 1. GEORGIA REGISTERED PROFESSIONAL NURSE PRACTICE ACT

§ 43-26-1. Short title

This article shall be known and may be cited as the "Georgia Registered Professional Nurse Practice Act."

HISTORY: Code 1981, § 43-26-1, enacted by Ga. L. 1990, p. 747, § 1.

§ 43-26-2. Legislative intent

The purpose of this article is to protect, promote, and preserve the public health, safety, and welfare through legislative regulation and control of registered professional nursing education and practice. This article ensures that any person practicing or offering to practice nursing or using the title registered professional nurse, as defined in this article, within the State of Georgia, shall be licensed as provided in this article.

HISTORY: Code 1981, § 43-26-2, enacted by Ga. L. 1990, p. 747, § 1.

§ 43-26-3. Definitions

As used in this article, the term:

(1) "Advanced nursing practice" means practice by a registered professional nurse who meets those educational, practice, certification requirements, or any combination of such requirements, as specified by the board and includes certified nurse midwives, nurse practitioners, certified registered nurse anesthetists, clinical nurse specialists in psychiatric/mental health, and others recognized by the board.

(1.1) "Advanced practice registered nurse" means a registered professional nurse licensed under this chapter who is recognized by the board as having met the requirements established by the board to engage in advanced nursing practice and who holds a master's degree or other graduate degree from an approved nursing education program and national board certification in his or her area of specialty, or a person who was recognized as an advanced practice registered nurse by the board on or before June 30, 2006. This paragraph shall not be construed to require a certified registered nurse anesthetist who graduated from an approved nurse anesthetist educational program prior to January 1, 1999, to hold a master's degree or other graduate degree.

(1.2) 'Approved nursing education program' located in this state means a nursing education program approved by the board as meeting criteria established by the board. An 'approved nursing education program' located outside this state means a nursing education program that the board has determined to meet criteria similar to and not less

stringent than criteria established by the board for nursing education programs located in this state. In order to be approved by the board, a nursing education program must be one that is offered by:

- (A) A unit of the University System of Georgia accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools;
- (B) An institution of the Technical College System of Georgia accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools;
- (C) A nonprofit postsecondary institution of higher education that is accredited by a regional accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education; or
- (D) A postsecondary institution of higher education that is not accredited in accordance with subparagraph (C) of this paragraph, but whose curriculum has been determined by the board to meet criteria similar to and not less stringent than criteria established by the board for other approved nursing education programs."

(2) "Board" means the Georgia Board of Nursing created in Code Section 43-26-4.

(3) "Consumer member" means a United States citizen and Georgia resident who is knowledgeable about consumer health concerns, does not derive that person's primary livelihood from the practice of nursing, and shall neither be, nor ever have been, a health care provider or enrolled in any health related educational program.

(4) "License" means a current document, issued by the board, permitting a person to practice nursing as a registered professional nurse or a licensed undergraduate nurse.

(5) "Licensure" means the bestowing of a current license by the board permitting a person to practice nursing as a registered professional nurse or a licensed undergraduate nurse.

(6) "Practice nursing" or "practice of nursing" means to perform for compensation or the performance for compensation of any act in the care and counsel of the ill, injured, or infirm, and in the promotion and maintenance of health with individuals, groups, or both throughout the life span. It requires substantial specialized knowledge of the humanities, natural sciences, social sciences, and nursing theory as a basis for assessment, nursing diagnosis, planning, intervention, and evaluation. It includes, but is not limited to, provision of nursing care; administration, supervision, evaluation, or any combination thereof, of nursing practice; teaching; counseling; the administration of medications and treatments as prescribed by a physician practicing medicine in accordance with Article 2 of Chapter 34 of this title, or a dentist practicing dentistry in accordance with Chapter 11 of this title, or a podiatrist practicing podiatry in accordance with Chapter 35 of this title.

(7) "Practice nursing as a licensed undergraduate nurse" means to practice nursing by performing for compensation selected acts in the care of the ill, injured, or infirm under the direction of a registered professional nurse, a physician practicing medicine in accordance with Article 2 of Chapter 34 of this title, a dentist practicing dentistry in accordance with Chapter 11 of this title, or a podiatrist practicing podiatry in accordance with Chapter 35 of this title.

(8) "Practice nursing as a registered professional nurse" means to practice nursing by performing for compensation any of the following:

(A) Assessing the health status of individuals, groups, or both throughout the life span;

(B) Establishing a nursing diagnosis;

(C) Establishing nursing goals to meet identified health care needs;

(D) Planning, implementing, and evaluating nursing care;

(E) Providing for safe and effective nursing care rendered directly or indirectly;

(F) Managing and supervising the practice of nursing;

(G) Collaborating with other members of the health care team in the management of care;

(H) Teaching the theory and practice of nursing;

(I) Administering, ordering, and dispensing medications, diagnostic studies, and medical treatments authorized by protocol, when such acts are authorized by other general laws and such acts are in conformity with those laws;

(J) Administering medications and treatments as prescribed by a physician practicing medicine in accordance with Article 2 of Chapter 34 of this title, a dentist practicing dentistry in accordance with Chapter 11 of this title, or a podiatrist practicing podiatry in accordance with Chapter 35 of this title; or

(K) Performing any other nursing act in the care and counsel of the ill, injured, or infirm, and in the promotion and maintenance of health with individuals, groups, or both throughout the life span.

(9) "Registered professional nurse" means a person who is authorized by a license issued under this article to practice nursing as a registered professional nurse.

HISTORY: Code 1981, § 43-26-3, enacted by Ga. L. 1990, p. 747, § 1; Ga. L. 1994, p. 97, § 43; Ga. L. 2006, p. 125, § 3/SB 480; Ga. L. 2007, p. 460, § 1/SB 222; Ga. L. 2009, p. 210, § 1/HB 475; Ga. L. 2011, p. 779, § 1/SB 100.

§ 43-26-4. (For effective date, see note.) Georgia Board of Nursing; membership; meetings; officers

(a) The Georgia Board of Nursing existing immediately prior to July 1, 2014, is continued in existence and shall be constituted as provided in this Code section. Those persons serving as members of the board immediately prior to July 1, 2014, shall continue to serve out their respective terms of office and until their successors are appointed. Members shall serve three-year terms and until their successors are duly appointed and qualified. No member shall be appointed to more than two consecutive full terms, and for purposes of this limitation, an appointment to fill a vacancy for an unexpired term of two or more years shall constitute an appointment for a full term.

(b) A vacancy on the board for any reason other than expiration of the term shall be filled for the remainder of the unexpired term by appointment of the Governor with the confirmation of the Senate. In the event a board member changes employment which causes a conflict with this Code section, the position of the member making such change shall be immediately vacant and a new member appointed to fill the vacancy.

(c) The 13 members of the board shall be appointed by the Governor with the confirmation of the Senate and shall consist of two registered nursing educators, one practical nursing educator, two registered nurses employed in nursing service administration, one registered nurse employed in nursing home administration or nursing service administration, two advanced practice registered nurses, one additional registered nurse, three licensed practical nurses, and one consumer member.

(d) The board shall meet annually and shall elect from its members a president, vice president, and other officers as deemed necessary. All officers shall serve for terms of one year and until their successors have been elected. The board may hold such other meetings during the year as necessary to transact its business.

HISTORY: Code 1981, § 43-26-4, enacted by Ga. L. 1990, p. 747, § 1; Ga. L. 2013, p. 643, § 1/ HB 332.

§ 43-26-5. (For effective date, see note.) General powers and responsibilities of board

(a) The board shall:

(1) Be responsible for the enforcement of the provisions of this chapter and shall be specifically granted all of the necessary duties, powers, and authority to carry out this responsibility;

(2) Be authorized to draft, adopt, amend, repeal, and enforce such rules as it deems necessary for the administration and enforcement of this chapter in the protection of public health, safety, and welfare;

(3) Enforce qualifications for licensure under this article or Article 2 of this chapter;

(4) Develop and enforce reasonable and uniform standards for nursing education and nursing practice;

- (5) Periodically evaluate nursing education programs and approve such programs as meet the board's requirements;
- (6) Deny or withdraw approval from noncompliant nursing education programs;
- (7) License duly qualified applicants under this article or Article 2 of this chapter by examination, endorsement, or reinstatement;
- (8) Be authorized to issue temporary permits;
- (9) Renew licenses of registered professional nurses, licensed undergraduate nurses, and licensed practical nurses in accordance with this article or Article 2 of this chapter;
- (10) Be authorized to set standards for competency of licensees under this article or Article 2 of this chapter continuing in or returning to practice;
- (11) Set standards for and regulate advanced nursing practice;
- (12) Be authorized to enact rules and regulations for registered professional nurses in their performing acts under a nurse protocol as authorized in Code Section 43-34-23 and enact rules and regulations for advanced practice registered nurses in performing acts as authorized in Code Section 43-34-25;
- (13) Implement the disciplinary process;
- (14) Be authorized to issue orders when a license under this article or Article 2 of this chapter is surrendered to the board while a complaint, investigation, or disciplinary action against such license is pending;
- (15) Issue a limited license to practice nursing or licensed practical nursing subject to such terms and conditions as the board may impose;
- (16) Provide consultation and conduct conferences, forums, studies, and research on nursing education and nursing practice;
- (17) Approve the selection of a qualified person to serve as executive director;
- (18) Be authorized to appoint standing or ad hoc committees as necessary to inform and make recommendations to the board about issues and concerns and to facilitate communication amongst the board, licensees under this article or Article 2 of this chapter, and the community;
- (19) Maintain membership in the national organization which develops and regulates the nursing licensing examination and the practical nursing licensing examination;

(20) Be authorized to collect data regarding existing nursing and licensed practical nursing resources in Georgia and coordinate planning for nursing education and nursing practice;

(21) Determine fees; and

(22) Adopt a seal which shall be in the care of the executive director and shall be affixed only in such a manner as prescribed by the board.

(b) The board shall be the sole professional licensing board for determining if a registered professional nurse, licensed practical nurse, or any other person has engaged illegally in the practice of nursing. If a registered professional nurse or licensed practical nurse is charged with the unauthorized practice of any other health profession by any other board, such board shall notify the Georgia Board of Nursing before conducting any hearing. Nothing contained in this chapter shall be construed to limit any powers of any other board.

(c) Chapter 1 of this title is expressly adopted and incorporated by reference into this chapter as if all the provisions of such chapter were included in this chapter.

HISTORY: Code 1981, § 43-26-5, enacted by Ga. L. 1990, p. 747, § 1; Ga. L. 2000, p. 1706, § 13; Ga. L. 2006, p. 125, § 4/SB 480; Ga. L. 2009, p. 859, § 12/HB 509; Ga. L. 2013, p. 643, § 2/HB 332.

§ 43-26-6. Use of title by licensed registered nurse or advanced practice registered nurse

(a) Any person who is licensed as a registered professional nurse shall have the right to use the title "registered professional nurse" and the abbreviation "R.N." Any person recognized by the board as an advanced practice registered nurse shall have the right to use the title "advanced practice registered nurse" and the abbreviation "A.P.R.N." No other person shall assume such titles or use such abbreviations or any other words, letters, signs, or symbols to indicate that such person is a registered professional nurse or an advanced practice registered nurse in Georgia. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to repeal the right of any person who is licensed as a registered professional nurse or recognized by the board as an advanced practice registered nurse on June 30, 2006, to be licensed and to use the title "registered professional nurse" or to use the title "advanced practice registered nurse," respectively.

(b) Any person holding a license to practice nursing as a licensed undergraduate nurse, which license was issued by the board and valid on July 1, 1975, shall be deemed to be licensed to practice nursing as a licensed undergraduate nurse under this article and shall have the right to use the title "licensed undergraduate nurse" and the abbreviation "L.U.N." No other person shall assume such title or use such abbreviation or any other words, letters, signs, or symbols to indicate that such person is licensed to practice nursing as a licensed undergraduate nurse. After July 1, 1975, there shall be no new certificates issued for licensure to practice nursing as a licensed undergraduate nurse.

(c) Any person who is licensed as a registered professional nurse shall identify that he or she is so licensed by displaying either the title "registered professional nurse" or "registered nurse," the abbreviation "R.N.," the title "advanced practice registered nurse," or the abbreviation "A.P.R.N." on a name tag or other similar form of identification during times when such person is providing direct patient care. An advanced practice registered nurse shall meet the identification requirements of this subsection by displaying the title or abbreviation of his or her area of specialization.

(d) No person shall use the title "nurse" or any other title or abbreviation that would represent to the public that a person is authorized to practice nursing unless the person is licensed or otherwise authorized under this article or Article 2 of this chapter.

HISTORY: Code 1981, § 43-26-6, enacted by Ga. L. 1990, p. 747, § 1; Ga. L. 1997, p. 979, § 1; Ga. L. 2006, p. 125, § 5/SB 480; Ga. L. 2007, p. 460, § 2/SB 222; Ga. L. 2008, p. 378, § 1/ HB 1041; Ga. L. 2011, p. 779, § 1A/SB 100.

§ 43-26-7. Requirements for licensure as registered professional nurse; requirements for nontraditional nursing education program

(a) Any applicant who meets the requirements of this Code section shall be eligible for licensure as a registered professional nurse.

(b) An applicant for licensure by examination shall:

(1) Submit a completed written application and fee;

(2) (A) Have graduated from an approved nursing education program, as defined in Code Section 43-26-3; or

(B) (i) Notwithstanding subparagraph (A) of this paragraph, have graduated from a nontraditional nursing education program approved by the board which meets the requirements in subsection (e) of this Code section; and

(ii) (I) If the applicant entered the nontraditional nursing education program as a licensed practical nurse and had an academic education as a licensed practical nurse that included clinical training in pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, medical-surgical, and mental illness, have at least two years of clinical experience in the five years preceding the date of the application in an acute care inpatient facility or a long-term acute care facility as a licensed practical nurse, as approved by the board. Such clinical experience shall be documented in writing by the applicant's immediate supervisor stating that, in his or her opinion, the applicant has exhibited the critical thinking abilities, clinical skills, and leadership abilities that would indicate the ability to work as a beginning registered professional nurse;

(II) If the applicant entered the nontraditional nursing education program as a licensed practical nurse, had an academic education as a licensed practical nurse that included

clinical training in pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, medical-surgical, and mental illness, and has at least two years of experience as a licensed practical nurse in any setting, although such experience shall be exclusive of night duty in a skilled nursing facility, but less than two years of experience in the five years preceding the date of the application in an acute care inpatient facility or a long-term acute care facility, as approved by the board, have completed a 320 hour postgraduate preceptorship. If the applicant can show that he or she cannot find a preceptorship in an acute care inpatient facility or a long-term acute care facility, the board may authorize a preceptorship pursuant to this subdivision in a skilled nursing facility, if such facility has 100 beds or more and such facility ensures to the board that the applicant will be providing health care to patients with similar health care needs as those patients in a long-term acute care facility;

(III) If the applicant entered the nontraditional nursing education program as (1) a paramedic with at least two years of experience as a paramedic or (2) a licensed practical nurse with less than two years of clinical experience in the five years preceding the date of the application in an acute care inpatient facility or a long-term acute care facility as a licensed practical nurse whose academic training as a licensed practical nurse did not include clinical training in pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, medical-surgical, and mental illness, have completed a 480 hour postgraduate preceptorship. Such preceptorship shall be in the area or areas as determined by the board on a case-by-case basis, which may include pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, medical-surgical, mental illness, and transition into the role of a registered professional nurse;

(IV) If the applicant entered the nontraditional nursing education program as a military medical corpsman and has at least two years of experience as a military medical corpsman, have completed a postgraduate preceptorship of at least 480 hours but not more than 640 hours, as determined by the board; or

(V) If the applicant does not meet the requirements of subdivision (I), (II), (III), or (IV) of this division and the applicant entered a nontraditional nursing education program before July 1, 2008, which meets the requirements of subsection (e) of this Code section and completes such program no later than June 30, 2015, have completed a 640 hour postgraduate preceptorship arranged by the applicant under the supervision of a registered professional nurse. The preceptorship shall have prior approval of the board, and successful completion of the preceptorship shall be verified in writing by the preceptor. The preceptorship shall be in an acute care inpatient facility or a long-term acute care facility; provided, however, that the board may authorize a preceptorship pursuant to this subdivision in other facilities to obtain specialized experience in certain areas.

All preceptorships required pursuant to this division shall be arranged by the applicant under the close supervision of a registered professional nurse where such applicant is transitioned into the role of a registered professional nurse and the applicant performs duties typically performed by registered professional nurses. Except as otherwise provided in subdivision (II) of this division, a preceptorship shall be in an acute care

inpatient facility or a long-term acute care facility; provided, however, that the board may authorize a preceptorship in other facilities to obtain specialized experience in certain areas. The preceptorship shall have prior approval of the board, and successful completion of the preceptorship shall be documented in writing by the preceptor stating that, in his or her opinion, the applicant has exhibited the critical thinking abilities, clinical skills, and leadership abilities necessary to practice as a beginning registered professional nurse. No later than August 1, 2011, the board shall develop and make available one or more standard forms for use by and assistance to applicants in securing and completing preceptorships. Such form or forms shall include information relating to the specific requirements for preceptorships, including the minimum qualifications of the preceptor, the type of training required, and the documentation required upon completion of the preceptorship. The board shall make the determinations required by this division in accordance with its established guidelines;

(3) Pass a board recognized licensing examination; provided, however, that such examination may not be taken prior to graduation from the approved nursing education program. In no way shall the passage of such examination by a graduate of a nontraditional nursing education program who does not meet the other requirements of this subsection be construed to authorize such individual to practice nursing, to require the board to license such individual as a registered professional nurse other than to issue in its sole discretion a temporary permit pursuant to Code Section 43-26-8, or to be endorsed from another state as a registered professional nurse;

(4) Have satisfactory results from a fingerprint record check report conducted by the Georgia Crime Information Center and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, as determined by the board. Application for a license under this Code section shall constitute express consent and authorization for the board or its representative to perform a criminal background check. Each applicant who submits an application to the board for licensure by examination agrees to provide the board with any and all information necessary to run a criminal background check, including, but not limited to, classifiable sets of fingerprints. The applicant shall be responsible for all fees associated with the performance of such background check; and

(5) Meet such other criteria as established by the board.

(c) An applicant for licensure by endorsement shall:

(1) Submit a completed written application and fee;

(2) (A) Have passed a board recognized licensing examination following graduation from an approved nursing education program, as defined in Code Section 43-26-3; or

(B) Notwithstanding subparagraph (A) of this paragraph, have graduated from a nontraditional nursing education program approved by the board which meets the requirements in subsection (e) of this Code section;

(3) Submit verification of initial and current licensure in any other licensing jurisdiction administering a board recognized licensing examination;

(4) (A) Have practiced nursing as a registered professional nurse for a period of time as determined by the board or have graduated from a nursing education program within the four years immediately preceding the date of the application;

(B) If the applicant entered a nontraditional nursing education program as a licensed practical nurse whose academic education as a licensed practical nurse included clinical training in pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, medical-surgical, and mental illness, have practiced nursing as a registered professional nurse in a health care facility for at least one year in the three years preceding the date of the application, and such practice is documented by the applicant and approved by the board; provided, however, that for an applicant that does not meet the experience requirement of this subparagraph, the board shall require the applicant to complete a 320 hour postgraduate preceptorship arranged by the applicant under the oversight of a registered nurse where such applicant is transitioned into the role of a registered professional nurse. The preceptorship shall have prior approval of the board, and successful completion of the preceptorship shall be verified in writing by the preceptor; or

(C) If the applicant entered a nontraditional nursing education program as anything other than a licensed practical nurse whose academic education as a licensed practical nurse included clinical training in pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, medical-surgical, and mental illness, have graduated from such program and practiced nursing as a registered professional nurse in a health care facility for at least two years in the five years preceding the date of the application, and such practice is documented by the applicant and approved by the board; provided, however, that for an applicant that does not meet the experience requirement of this subparagraph, the board shall require the applicant to complete a postgraduate preceptorship of at least 480 hours but not more than 640 hours, as determined by the board, arranged by the applicant under the oversight of a registered professional nurse where such applicant is transitioned into the role of a registered professional nurse. The preceptorship shall have prior approval of the board, and successful completion of the preceptorship shall be verified in writing by the preceptor.

For purposes of this paragraph, the term "health care facility" means an acute care inpatient facility, a long-term acute care facility, an ambulatory surgical center or obstetrical facility as defined in Code Section 31-6-2, and a skilled nursing facility, so long as such skilled nursing facility has 100 beds or more and provides health care to patients with similar health care needs as those patients in a long-term acute care facility;

(5) Have satisfactory results from a fingerprint record check report conducted by the Georgia Crime Information Center and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, as determined by the board. Application for a license under this Code section shall constitute express consent and authorization for the board or its representative to perform a criminal background check. Each applicant who submits an application to the board for licensure by examination agrees to provide the board with any and all information

necessary to run a criminal background check, including, but not limited to, classifiable sets of fingerprints. The applicant shall be responsible for all fees associated with the performance of such background check; and

(6) Meet such other criteria as established by the board.

(d) An applicant for reinstatement who has previously held a valid license in Georgia shall:

(1) Submit a completed written application and fee;

(2) Have practiced nursing as a registered professional nurse for a period of time as determined by the board or have graduated from an approved nursing education program, as defined in Code Section 43-26-3, within the four years immediately preceding the date of the application;

(3) Have satisfactory results from a fingerprint record check report conducted by the Georgia Crime Information Center and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, as determined by the board. Application for a license under this Code section shall constitute express consent and authorization for the board or its representative to perform a criminal background check. Each applicant who submits an application to the board for licensure by examination agrees to provide the board with any and all information necessary to run a criminal background check, including, but not limited to, classifiable sets of fingerprints. The applicant shall be responsible for all fees associated with the performance of such background check; and

(4) Meet such other criteria as established by the board.

(e) A nontraditional nursing education program shall meet the following requirements:

(1) Is part of an institution of higher education that is approved by the appropriate regulatory authorities of its home state;

(2) Holds regional and specialty accreditation by an accrediting body or bodies recognized by the United States Secretary of Education or the Council for Higher Education Accreditation;

(3) Requires its students to pass faculty determined program outcomes, including competency based assessments of nursing knowledge and a summative performance assessment of clinical competency of a minimum of 2 1/2 days developed by faculty subject matter experts that follows nationally recognized standards for educational testing; and

(4) Its graduates pass a board recognized licensing examination at a rate equivalent to the minimum rate required for board approved traditional nursing education programs.

HISTORY: Code 1981, § 43-26-7, enacted by Ga. L. 1990, p. 747, § 1; Ga. L. 1994, p. 97, § 43; Ga. L. 2008, p. 378, § 2/ HB 1041; Ga. L. 2009, p. 210, § 2/ HB 475; Ga. L. 2011, p. 752, § 43/ HB 142; Ga. L. 2011, p. 779, § 1C/ SB 100.

§ 43-26-8. Temporary permits

(a) A temporary permit may be issued to an applicant for licensure by examination, endorsement, or reinstatement in accordance with criteria established by the board.

(b) A six-month temporary permit may be issued to a graduate of a nontraditional nursing education program that meets the requirements of subsection (e) of Code Section 43-26-7 to practice nursing only as a part of his or her board approved preceptorship. A temporary permit issued pursuant to this subsection may be renewed only one time for an additional six-month period.

HISTORY: Code 1981, § 43-26-8, enacted by Ga. L. 1990, p. 747, § 1; Ga. L. 2009, p. 210, § 3/ HB 475; Ga. L. 2010, p. 878, § 43/ HB 1387.

§ 43-26-9. Biennial renewal of licenses; voluntary surrender or failure to renew license; restoration and reissuance of license

(a) Licenses issued under this article shall be renewed biennially according to schedules and fees approved by the board.

(b) A renewed license shall be issued to a registered professional nurse or licensed undergraduate nurse who remits the required fee and complies with requirements established by the board.

(b.1) Beginning with the 2016 license renewal cycle, an applicant for license renewal under this article shall meet one of the following continuing competency requirements during the previous licensure period:

(1) Completion of 30 continuing education hours by a board approved provider;

(2) Maintenance of certification or recertification by a national certifying body recognized by the board;

(3) Completion of an accredited academic program of study in nursing or a related field, as recognized by the board;

(4) Verification of competency by a health care facility or entity licensed under Chapter 7 of Title 31 or by a physician's office that is part of a health system and at least 500 hours practiced as evidenced by employer certification on a form approved by the board; or

(5) Other activities as prescribed and approved by the board that show competency in the nursing field.

Failure to meet the minimum continuing competency requirement for renewal of a license shall be grounds for denial of a renewal application. The board may waive or modify the requirements contained in this subsection in cases of hardship, disability, or illness or under such other circumstances as the board, in its discretion, deems appropriate. An applicant who is renewing a license for the first time shall not be required to meet the requirements of this subsection until the time of the second renewal if the applicant's initial license period is six months or less.

(c) The voluntary surrender of a license or the failure to renew a license by the end of an established penalty period shall have the same effect as a revocation of said license, subject to reinstatement at the discretion of the board. The board may restore and reissue a license and, as a condition thereof, may impose any disciplinary sanction provided by Code Section 43-1-19 or 43-26-11.

HISTORY: Code 1981, § 43-26-9, enacted by Ga. L. 1990, p. 747, § 1; Ga. L. 2013, p. 830, § 1/ HB 315. § 43-26-9.1. Inactive status; restoration of inactive license; nurses on inactive status barred from practicing

(a) A registered professional nurse, subject to rules of the board and on forms prescribed by the board, may request that his or her license be placed on inactive status and to be excused from payment of renewal fees until he or she resumes active status.

(b) A licensee on inactive status may have his or her license restored by submitting an application to the board on a form prescribed by the board and paying the required restoration fee. The board shall require evidence of competency to resume the practice of nursing as a registered professional nurse in order to restore the license to active status.

(c) A registered professional nurse or advanced practice registered nurse whose license is on inactive status shall not practice nursing as a registered professional nurse or an advanced practice registered nurse in this state.

HISTORY: Code 1981, § 43-26-9.1, enacted by Ga. L. 2013, p. 830, § 2/ HB 315.

§ 43-26-10. Practicing as a registered professional nurse without a license prohibited

It shall be a misdemeanor for any person, including any corporation, association, or individual, to:

(1) Practice nursing as a registered professional nurse, without a valid, current license, except as otherwise permitted under Code Section 43-26-12;

(2) Practice nursing as a registered professional nurse under cover of any diploma, license, or record illegally or fraudulently obtained, signed, or issued;

(3) Practice nursing as a registered professional nurse during the time the license is suspended, revoked, surrendered, or administratively revoked for failure to renew;

(4) Use any words, abbreviations, figures, letters, title, sign, card, or device implying that such person is a registered professional nurse or advanced practice registered nurse unless such person is duly licensed or recognized by the board so to practice under the provisions of this article;

(5) Fraudulently furnish a license to practice nursing as a registered professional nurse;

(6) Knowingly employ any person to practice nursing as a registered professional nurse who is not a registered professional nurse;

(7) Conduct a nursing education program preparing persons to practice nursing as registered professional nurses unless the program has been approved by the board; or

(8) Knowingly aid or abet any person to violate this article.

HISTORY: Code 1981, § 43-26-10, enacted by Ga. L. 1990, p. 747, § 1; Ga. L. 1994, p. 97, § 43; Ga. L. 2006, p. 125, § 6/SB 480.

§ 43-26-11. Denial or revocation of licenses; other discipline

In addition to the authority granted in Code Section 43-1-19, the board shall have the authority to refuse to grant a license to an applicant, to revoke the license of a licensee, or to discipline a licensee upon a finding by the board that the applicant or licensee has:

(1) Been convicted of any felony, crime involving moral turpitude, or crime violating a federal or state law relating to controlled substances or dangerous drugs in the courts of this state, any other state, territory, or country, or in the courts of the United States, including but not limited to a plea of nolo contendere entered to the charge; or

(2)(A) Displayed an inability to practice nursing as a registered professional nurse or licensed undergraduate nurse with reasonable skill and safety due to illness, use of alcohol, drugs, narcotics, chemicals, or any other type of material, or as a result of any mental or physical condition.

(B) In enforcement of this paragraph, the board may, upon reasonable grounds, require a licensee or applicant to submit to a mental or physical examination by a board approved health care professional. The results of such examination shall be admissible in any hearing before the board, notwithstanding any claim of privilege under a contrary law or rule. Every person who is licensed to practice nursing as a registered professional nurse or licensed undergraduate nurse in this state or who shall file an application shall be deemed to have given such person's consent to submit to such mental or physical examination and to have waived all objections to the admissibility of the results in any hearing before the board upon the grounds that the same constitutes a privileged communication. If a licensee or applicant fails to submit to such an examination when properly directed to do so by the board, unless such failure was due to circumstances beyond that person's control, the board may enter a final order upon proper notice, hearing, and proof of such refusal. Any licensee or applicant who is prohibited from

practicing under this paragraph shall at reasonable intervals be afforded an opportunity to demonstrate to the board that such person can resume or begin to practice with reasonable skill and safety nursing as a registered professional nurse or licensed undergraduate nurse.

(C) In enforcement of this paragraph the board may, upon reasonable grounds, obtain any and all records relating to the mental or physical condition of a licensee or applicant, including psychiatric records; and such records shall be admissible in any hearing before the board, notwithstanding any privilege under a contrary rule of law or statute. Every person who is licensed as a registered professional nurse or licensed undergraduate nurse in this state or who shall file an application shall be deemed to have given such person's consent to the board's obtaining any such records and to have waived all objections to the admissibility of such records in any hearing before the board upon the grounds that the same constitute a privileged communication.

HISTORY: Code 1981, § 43-26-11, enacted by Ga. L. 1990, p. 747, § 1; Ga. L. 2002, p. 415, § 43.

§ 43-26-11.1. Administration of anesthesia by certified registered nurse anesthetist

In any case where it is lawful for a duly licensed physician practicing medicine under the laws of this state to administer anesthesia, such anesthesia may be administered by a certified registered nurse anesthetist, provided that such anesthesia is administered under the direction and responsibility of a duly licensed physician.

HISTORY: Code 1981, § 43-26-11.1, enacted by Ga. L. 1990, p. 747, § 1; Ga. L. 1994, p. 97, § 43.

§ 43-26-12. Exceptions to operation of article; burden of proof

(a) No provision in this article shall be construed to require licensure in Georgia as a registered professional nurse in:

(1) The practice of nursing by students that is an integral part of a curriculum in a board approved nursing education program leading to initial licensure;

(2) The rendering of assistance by anyone in the case of an emergency or disaster;

(3) The incidental care of the sick by members of the family, friends, or persons primarily utilized as housekeepers, provided that such care does not constitute the practice of nursing within the meaning of this article;

(4) Caring for the sick in accordance with tenets or practices of any church or religious denomination which teaches reliance upon spiritual means through prayer for healing;

(5) The performance of auxiliary services in the care of patients when such care and activities do not require the knowledge and skill required of a person practicing nursing as a registered professional nurse and when such care and activities are performed under orders or directions of a licensed physician, licensed dentist, licensed podiatrist, or person

licensed to practice nursing as a registered professional nurse;

(6) The practice of nursing as a registered professional nurse, by a person licensed so to practice in another state, who is employed by the United States government or any bureau, division, or agency thereof while in the discharge of that person's official duties;

(7) The practice of nursing as a registered professional nurse, by a person currently licensed so to practice in another state, who is employed by an individual, agency, or corporation located in another state and whose employment responsibilities include transporting patients into, out of, or through this state for a period not to exceed 24 hours;

(8) The practice of nursing as a registered professional nurse by a person currently licensed so to practice in another state, who is visiting Georgia as a nonresident, in order to provide specific, nonclinical, short-term, time limited services including, but not limited to, consultation, accreditation site visits, and the participation in continuing education programs; and

(9) (A) The performance of health maintenance activities by a proxy caregiver pursuant to a written plan of care for a disabled individual when:

(i) Such individual or a person legally authorized to act on behalf of such individual has executed a written informed consent designating a proxy caregiver and delegating responsibility to such proxy caregiver to receive training and to provide health maintenance activities to such disabled individual pursuant to the written orders of an attending physician, or an advanced practice registered nurse or physician assistant working under a nurse protocol agreement or job description, respectively, pursuant to Code Section 43-34-25 or 43-34-23;

(ii) Such health maintenance activities are provided outside of a hospital or nursing home and are not provided by a medicare-certified home health agency or hospice organization and if alternative sources are available, Medicaid is the payor of last resort; and

(iii) The written plan of care implements the written orders of the attending physician, advanced practice registered nurse, or physician assistant and specifies the frequency of training and evaluation requirements for the proxy caregiver, including additional training when changes in the written plan of care necessitate added duties for which such proxy caregiver has not previously been trained. A written plan of care may be established by a registered professional nurse.

Rules, regulations, and policies regarding training for proxy caregivers pursuant to this paragraph shall be promulgated by the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities or the Department of Community Health, as applicable.

(B) An attending physician, advanced practice registered nurse, or physician assistant whose orders or written plan of care provide for the provision of health maintenance

activities to a disabled person shall not be vicariously liable for a proxy caregiver's negligent performance of health maintenance activities unless the proxy caregiver is an employee of the physician, advanced practice registered nurse, or physician assistant. Any person who trains a proxy caregiver to perform health maintenance activities for a disabled individual may be held liable for negligently training that proxy caregiver if such training deviated from the applicable standard of care and was a proximate cause of injury to the disabled individual.

(C) For purposes of this paragraph, the term:

(i) "Disabled individual" means an individual that has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities and who meets the criteria for a disability under state or federal law.

(ii) "Health maintenance activities" are limited to those activities that, but for a disability, a person could reasonably be expected to do for himself or herself. Such activities are typically taught by a registered professional nurse, but may be taught by an attending physician, advanced practice registered nurse, physician assistant, or directly to a patient and are part of ongoing care. Health maintenance activities are those activities that do not include complex care such as administration of intravenous medications, central line maintenance, and complex wound care; do not require complex observations or critical decisions; can be safely performed and have reasonably precise, unchanging directions; and have outcomes or results that are reasonably predictable. Health maintenance activities conducted pursuant to this paragraph shall not be considered the practice of nursing.

(iii) "Proxy caregiver" means an unlicensed person who has been selected by a disabled individual or a person legally authorized to act on behalf of such individual to serve as such individual's proxy caregiver, provided that such person shall receive training and shall demonstrate the necessary knowledge and skills to perform documented health maintenance activities, including identified specialized procedures, for such individual.

(iv) "Training" means teaching proxy caregivers the necessary knowledge and skills to perform health maintenance activities for disabled individuals. Good faith efforts by an attending physician, advanced practice registered nurse, physician assistant, or registered professional nurse to provide training to a proxy caregiver to perform health maintenance activities shall not be construed to be professional delegation.

(b) In a civil or administrative proceeding under this chapter, a person claiming an exemption or an exception pursuant to subsection (a) of this Code section has the burden of proving this exemption or exception. In a criminal proceeding, the burden of going forward with evidence of a claim of exemption or exception pursuant to subsection (a) of this Code section is on the person claiming the exemption or exception.

HISTORY: Code 1981, § 43-26-12, enacted by Ga. L. 1990, p. 747, § 1; Ga. L. 1994, p. 97, § 43; Ga. L. 2010, p. 1153, § 1/HB 1040.

§ 43-26-13. Certain information given to the board by licensees

A licensee may, in lieu of providing his or her home address, provide the board a legitimate business address for purposes of the public information made available by the board with regard to licensed registered professional nurses.

ARTICLE 3. MANDATORY REPORTING REQUIREMENTS FOR NURSES

§ 43-26-50. (For effective date, see note.) Definitions

As used in this article, the term:

(1) "Board" means the Georgia Board of Nursing, with respect to registered professional nurses and advanced practice registered nurses, and the Georgia Board of Examiners of Licensed Practical Nurses, with respect to licensed practical nurses.

(2) "Nurse" means a registered professional nurse licensed pursuant to Article 1 of this chapter, an advanced practice registered nurse, as defined in paragraph (1.1) of Code Section 43-26-3, or a licensed practical nurse licensed pursuant to Article 2 of this chapter.

HISTORY: Code 1981, § 43-26-50, enacted by Ga. L. 2013, p. 830, § 4/HB 315.

§ 43-26-51. (For effective date, see note.) Mandatory reporting requirement for violations of grounds for discipline; no reporting requirement for knowledge obtained via privileged communications

A nurse shall report names of subject individuals to the applicable board if the nurse has reasonable cause to believe that any other nurse has violated any of the grounds for discipline provided for in Code Section 43-26-53. A nurse need not duplicate a report if he or she has reasonable cause to believe that such report has been made to the applicable board. A licensed health care professional shall not be required to report a nurse to the board under this Code section as a result of professional knowledge obtained in the course of the health care professional-patient relationship when the nurse is the patient.

HISTORY: Code 1981, § 43-26-51, enacted by Ga. L. 2013, p. 830, § 4/HB 315.

§ 43-26-52. (For effective date, see note.) Institutional reporting requirements; voluntary submission to alternative to discipline program not subject to reporting requirement

(a) Hospitals, nursing homes, temporary staffing agencies, and other employers of registered professional nurses, advanced practice registered nurses, or licensed practical nurses shall report to the applicable board, or ensure that such report has in fact been

made to such board, the name of any nurse whose employment has been terminated or who has resigned in order to avoid termination for any reasons stipulated in Code Section 43-26-53.

(b) A state agency that licenses, registers, or certifies hospitals, nursing homes, home health agencies, or other types of health care facilities, or surveys one of these facilities or agencies, shall report to the applicable board when such state agency has evidence that a nurse has violated Code Section 43-26-53 or ensure that such a report has in fact been made to such board.

(c) In the event a nurse enters a voluntary alternative to discipline program approved by the board, reporting to the applicable board shall not be required for such nurse by a person under this Code section. Each board may approve alternative to discipline programs for monitoring of nurses who agree to seek treatment for impairment by chemical dependency or mental illness that could lead to disciplinary action by such board. The costs for any treatment programs shall be borne by the nurse.

(d) Each board shall inform, in the manner such board determines appropriate, nurses, facilities, agencies, and other persons of their duty to report under this article.

HISTORY: Code 1981, § 43-26-52, enacted by Ga. L. 2013, p. 830, § 4/HB 315.

§ 43-26-53. (For effective date, see note.) Reportable incidents

(a) The following incidents shall be reported to the applicable board in the event any person is:

(1) Practicing nursing as a registered professional nurse, an advanced practice registered nurse, or a licensed practical nurse, without a valid, current license, except as otherwise permitted under Code Section 43-26-12 or 43-26-41, as applicable;

(2) Practicing nursing as a registered professional nurse, an advanced practice registered nurse, or a licensed practical nurse under cover of any diploma, license, or record illegally or fraudulently obtained, signed, or issued;

(3) Practicing nursing as a registered professional nurse, an advanced practice registered nurse, or a licensed practical nurse during the time the applicable license is suspended, revoked, surrendered, or administratively revoked for failure to renew;

(4) Using any words, abbreviations, figures, letters, title, sign, card, or device implying that such person is a registered professional nurse, an advanced practice registered nurse, or a licensed practical nurse unless such person is duly licensed or recognized by the applicable board to practice as such under the provisions of this chapter;

(5) Fraudulently furnishing a license to practice nursing as a registered professional

nurse, an advanced practice registered nurse, or a licensed practical nurse;

(6) Knowingly aiding or abetting any person in violating this chapter;

(7) While holding a license as a nurse, convicted of any felony, crime involving moral turpitude, or crime violating a federal or state law relating to controlled substances or dangerous drugs in the courts of this state, any other state, territory, or country, or in the courts of the United States, including, but not limited to, a plea of nolo contendere entered to the charge; or

(8) While holding a license as a nurse, currently or previously displaying an inability to practice nursing as a registered professional nurse, an advanced practice registered nurse, a licensed undergraduate nurse, or a licensed practical nurse with reasonable skill and safety due to use of alcohol, drugs, narcotics, or chemicals.

(b) Minor incidents, as defined by the applicable board, shall not be required to be reported pursuant to this article when the continuing practice by the subject nurse does not pose a risk of harm to a patient or others and can be addressed through corrective action by the nurse's employer. The applicable board shall adopt rules governing reporting of minor incidents. The applicable board may evaluate a complaint and determine that it is a minor incident under this Code section.

HISTORY: Code 1981, § 43-26-53, enacted by Ga. L. 2013, p. 830, § 4/HB 315.

§ 43-26-54. (For effective date, see note.) Court order; citation for civil contempt

The applicable board may seek an order from a court of competent jurisdiction for a report from a nurse as required by Code Section 43-26-51 if one is not forthcoming voluntarily. The applicable board may seek a citation for civil contempt if a court order for a report is not obeyed by such nurse.

HISTORY: Code 1981, § 43-26-54, enacted by Ga. L. 2013, p. 830, § 4/HB 315

§ 43-26-55. (For effective date, see note.) Immunity from liability for good-faith reporting

(a) No nurse, hospital, nursing home, temporary staffing agency, employer, state agency, or other person required to report a nurse to the applicable board under this article, who, in good faith, either reports or fails to report, shall be subject to civil or criminal liability or discipline for unprofessional conduct for such action or inaction.

(b) A physician or other licensed health care professional who, at the request of the applicable board, examines a nurse shall be immune from suit for damages by the nurse examined if the examining physician or examining health care professional conducted the examination and made findings or diagnoses in good faith.

HISTORY: Code 1981, § 43-26-55, enacted by Ga. L. 2013, p. 830, § 4/HB 315.

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