



California Community Colleges

MEMORANDUM

March 20, 2020

Via Email

TO: Chief Executive Officers
Chief Instructional Officers
Chief Student Services Officers
Chief Business Officers
Regional Consortium Chairs
CTE Deans
Statewide Technical Assistance Providers
ASCCC

FROM: Sheneui Weber, Vice Chancellor,
Workforce and Economic Development Division

CC: Eloy Ortiz Oakley, Chancellor
Marty Alvarado, Executive Vice Chancellor, Education Services & Support
Lizette Navarette, Vice Chancellor, College Finance & Facilities Planning
All-CCCCO Staff

RE: COVID-19 Guidance – BRN Requirements for Nursing Clinical Hours

The purpose of this memo is to provide an update to colleges impacted by the closure of partner clinical sites due to COVID-19 and to share our efforts to identify solutions or alternative options.

There are three issues the Chancellor's Office is currently working to address regarding Nursing Clinical Hours:

1) Flexibility and Emergency Conditions Exemptions to the 75 Percent Requirement

The Chancellor's Office has submitted a request to the Governor's Office for emergency conditions exemptions. Specifically, the request is for the Board of Registered Nursing (BRN) to provide emergency conditions exemptions to the 75 percent requirement of clinical hours in direct patient care, reducing to it to 50 percent for programs affected by an emergency or extraordinary condition.

Chancellor's Office, Workforce and Economic Development Division

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In the coming days and weeks, we will continue to advocate for flexibility and work in partnership with the Administration, Senate and Assembly leadership for a solution that enables student completion of nursing clinical hours. Please be patient and stand ready to coordinate with key partners to expedite partnerships when we have an emergency exemption granted.

2) Alternative Options for 75 Percent Clinical Hours in Direct Patient Care

California regulations governing nursing education provide as follows:

The course of instruction shall be presented in semester or quarter units or the equivalent under the following formula:

(1) One (1) hour of instruction in theory each week throughout a semester or quarter equals one (1) unit.

(2) Three (3) hours of clinical practice each week throughout a semester or quarter equals one (1) unit. With the exception of an initial nursing course that teaches basic nursing skills in a skills lab, 75 percent of clinical hours in a course must be in direct patient care in an area specified in section 1426(d) in a board-approved clinical setting.

(16 Cal. Code Regs., § 1426)

In a call with the BRN this week, additional clarification was provided regarding the 25/75 percent requirements. Current regulations are silent about the use of simulation in the 25 percent. Colleges have the discretion to determine how the skills lab portion of the curriculum is met.

For the 75 percent clinical hours in direct patient care requirement, the regulation does not specify that direct patient care must be completed in a face-to-face or a hospital setting. For example, the requirement may be met in a community or public health setting, as well as utilizing telehealth and telephone triage with scripts.

Please also see the attached email sent by *Loretta Melby, RNC/MSN*, Acting Executive Director of the California Board of Registered Nursing, on March 17 to Deans and Directors of Nursing Programs.

We recommend that BRN programs discuss with Partner Clinical Sites the possibility of altering Clinical hours to include telehealth or telephone triage options, and include your **Nursing Education Consultants** (NECs) in these discussions to ensure any new format is compliant with regulations.

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3) NCLEX Testing

We are aware of the suspension of NCLEX test delivery by all U.S. and Canada-based Pearson VUE-owned test centers beginning March 17 until April 16, due to COVID-19 pandemic. The Chancellor's Office is monitoring this situation closely.

Please note that National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) Learning Extension is extending NCLEX-RN and NCLEX-PN prep course subscriptions by 45 days. The extension applies to active courses (as of March 17, 2020) purchased between January 17, 2020 and March 17, 2020. Users should see the additional days added to their subscriptions by early next week. The COVID-19 outbreak is a rapidly changing situation. Please keep this in mind when purchasing new course subscriptions.

Additional information regarding other Healthcare programs updates can be found at <https://ca-hwi.org/>

We would also like you to be informed regarding the following:

Closing of College Campuses – On March 19, the Governor issued a statewide stay at home order. This means that you must reduce your campus operations to a bare minimum of essential functions. Only “Essential Personnel” may be allowed on campus. Colleges and their local boards determine who is designated as “Essential” based on college district Emergency Operations Plans. All non-essential personnel must be sent home and teleworking protocols initiated for them. Nevertheless, colleges should continue to provide remote instruction to their students. The Governor is directing that the system continue to provide instruction and to follow the guidance provided by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) and directives of local health authorities.

We understand that many of you need additional guidance to consider as you make local decisions. The Chancellor's Office will be seeking additional clarification regarding community college programs that serve critical infrastructure sectors such as Healthcare and Public Health, Emergency Services, and Food and Agriculture sectors, and continuation of instruction where appropriate and necessary, given the feasibility of moving many of these programs completely online.

The Chancellor's Office is reviewing flexibility options to allow extending excused withdrawals, and therefore avoid students dropping out and having to unnecessarily retake courses. Given the importance of nursing programs in the COVID-19 pandemic, colleges are asked to do everything possible to convert to online alternative instruction, to not close programs, or find ways to postpone until it is feasible to resume these programs. Should you have any questions about this memo, you can contact me at sweber@cccco.edu or Brenda Fong at bfong@cccco.edu.