

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2017 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Health Policy

CS/CS/HB 543 — Regulation of Health Care Practitioners

by Health and Human Services Committee; Health Innovation Subcommittee; and Rep. Pigman and others (CS/SB 328 by Health Policy Committee; and Senators Grimsley, Perry, and Campbell)

The bill modifies provisions pertaining to nursing education programs and amends several chapters of the Florida Statutes relating to health care practitioners.

The bill authorizes the Board of Nursing (BON) to adopt rules relating to nursing curriculum, including rules addressing the use and limitations of simulation technology, and to conduct on-site evaluations of applicants for nursing education programs. The bill changes the method for calculating the examination passage rate for nursing education programs to include all first time test takers, rather than only those individuals who take the examination within six months of graduation. The bill removes a requirement that a nursing student who does not take the licensure examination within six months of graduation must successfully complete a licensure examination preparatory course.

The bill authorizes the BON to grant a one-year extension to a nursing education program that is on probation for failure to meet the graduate passage rate if the program shows progress. A program, whether accredited or non-accredited, that is on probation must notify its students and applicants of that status and its implications in writing. The bill prohibits a nursing education program that was terminated or closed from reapplying for approval for three years.

The bill eliminates requirements for certain reporting and tasks by the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) relating to nursing education programs and places those responsibilities on the Florida Center for Nursing. Additionally, the Florida Center for Nursing is required to annually assess approved nursing programs for compliance with accreditation requirements and report on each program's status toward accreditation.

Additional changes in the bill to the practice of nursing include:

- Removing an obsolete pathway for certification as an advanced registered nurse practitioner (ARNP);
- Removing the joint committee as the entity that determines minimum standards for ARNP protocols;
- Requiring an ARNP protocol to be maintained where the ARNP practices rather than filing it with the BON; and
- Requiring an ARNP to have a supervisory protocol with at least one of the physicians when practicing within a physician group practice.

The bill creates s. 465.1893, F.S., which authorizes a pharmacist who meets certain education requirements and acts within an established protocol with a physician, to administer at the direction of the physician an injection of long-acting antipsychotropic medication to a patient.

The bill requires orthotists and prosthetists to complete a one-hour board approved course on the prevention of medical errors for initial licensure and as part of the required continuation education for license renewal.

The bill provides an additional pathway for a physical therapist assistant to obtain licensure if he or she was enrolled in an accredited physical therapist assistant school in this state between July 1, 2014, and July 1, 2016, and has graduated, or is eligible to graduate, by July 1, 2018, and passes the board examination.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect upon becoming law, except as otherwise expressly provided in the act.

Vote: Senate 38-0; House 116-1