Credentialing Services for Foreign Educated Professionals

International Academy of Physician Associate Educators

October 14, 2014

Presented by:
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Objectives

- Provide an overview of CGFNS International, Inc., its programs and services.
- Highlight select current challenges in the credentials assessment arena.
- Review program criteria for Physicians Assistants
About CGFNS International
CGFNS International Background

- Incorporated as not for profit – 1977
- Immigration-neutral
- 12 member Board of Trustees
- 5 divisions
- The only credentialing agency referenced in Section 343 of the IIRARA for the federal screening of physician assistants, nurses, speech language pathologist, audiologist, clinical laboratory scientist and technicians.
- Over 1 million healthcare professionals have been evaluated by us.
- Our robust educational database features 189 countries.
- New initiatives include NNAS and the Alliance for Ethical International Recruitment.
Programs and Services

- The Certification Program (CP)
- The Credentials Evaluation Service (CES)
- VisaScreen®: Visa Credentials Assessment (VisaScreen®)
- Credentials Verification Service for New York State
- International Standards for Professional Nurses (ISPN)
In the late 1960’s, a significant increase occurred in nurses migrating to the United States. As a result only 15-20% of international nurses passed U.S. RN Licensure Exam (NCLEX-RN®) on the first try.

Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) now known as the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) had difficulty issuing occupational visas.

Foreign educated nurses (FENs) were being exploited.

Potential U.S. employers were frustrated.
Created in 1977 in Philadelphia with initial sponsorship through the American Nurses Association (ANA), National League for Nursing (NLN) and the Kellogg Foundation to establish a leading organization in international nursing.

The American Hospital Association (AHA) and other nursing organizations also recommended a predictor exam for FENs administered by independent body.

As result, our Certification Program was created to specifically for first-level, general (registered) nurses educated outside the United States who wish to practice nursing in the United States which includes our CGFNS Qualifying Exam®.
Launched Credentials Evaluation Services in 1993 to service multiple stakeholders, including State Boards of Nursing, academic institutions, employers, governmental agencies and others.

CES provides a detailed analysis of the nursing education received outside the United States in an advisory report to the recipient.
In 1996, CGFNS International was named in interim rule of Section 343 of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) as an organization qualified to offer a federal screening program. The final became effective in 2003.

CGFNS International created a new division, the International Commission on Healthcare Professions (ICHP), to administer our federal screen program, VisaScreen®: Visa Credentials Assessment.
Since 2001, CGFNS has verified the credentials of healthcare workers educated outside the United States for New York State through the Credential Verification Service for New York State (CVS) program.

The CVS for New York State program independently collects and verifies the authenticity of an healthcare professionals credentials.
Developed the International Standards for Professional Nurses (ISPN) to allow first-level, general nurses to take the CGFNS Qualifying Exam® for the purpose of benchmarking their nursing knowledge against an international standard. Today the major market is Chinese nurses.

The aggregate information obtained from testing can also assist local institutions in comparing and developing international curriculum standards and teaching methods.
International Consultants of Delaware (ICD)

- Charter member of NACES (National Association of Credential Evaluation Services) a division of CGFNS and operates independently from the our other divisions.

- Provides evaluation of international educational and other credentials for the purpose of education, employment, licensure, and certification in the United States for various health care professions outside of nursing and non-healthcare professions.
New Initiatives

National Nursing Assessment Service (NNAS)
- Service to evaluate internationally educated nurses on behalf of the regulatory bodies across all provinces in Canada (except Quebec) for licensure/registration

Alliance for Ethical International Recruitment
- Facilitates adoption and compliance with voluntary standards to help ensure that recruitment of foreign-educated health professionals to the United States is ethical, responsible, and transparent.
CGFNS International uses best practices to verify and authenticate transcripts and licenses as part of our credentials evaluation programs.

With the rise in fraudulent documents and identity thefts, regulatory agencies, academic institutions and employers rely on CGFNS International to authenticate and verify education and professional documents.

If our investigation confirms the use of fraudulent documents to obtain credentials report, it is grounds for suspension and the applicant’s order is sealed.

CGFNS International recently published on this area in the Journal of Nursing Regulation.
VisaScreen®: Visa Credentials Assessment and the Process for Physician Assistants
What is the Visa Screen®: Visa Credentials Assessment service?

- The service is required of specific health care professionals complete a screening program before they can receive either a permanent or temporary occupational visa, including Trade NAFTA status with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

- Applicants who successfully complete Visa Screen® receive an ICHP Visa Screen® certificate, which satisfies the Federal screening requirements.
An Overview of VisaScreen®

Provides Services for:

- Physician Assistants
- Audiologists
- Clinical Laboratory Scientists
- Clinical Laboratory Technicians
- Licensed Practical or Vocational Nurses
- Occupational Therapists
- Physical Therapists
- Registered Nurses
- Speech Language Pathologists
History of the Health Care Worker Visa Requirement

The two laws that govern federal screenings are:

- Section 343 of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) of 1996
  - Created a new ground of inadmissibility.
  - Healthcare workers are inadmissible unless they hold a certificate from CGFNS International or a like organization.

- Codified at Section 212(a)(5)(C) of the Immigration and Nationality Act 8 U.S.C. 1182(a)(5)(C)
Several interim rules were issued between 1996 until the final rule was passed in 2003.

Specifically, the third interim rule issued in January 2001 gave CGFNS International the authority to screen additional professions including Physician Assistants.

It also identified required English scores for the additional professions named in the rule.
Education Standards & the Assessment of Credentials

Presented by: Jamilah Leonard, Manager of Certification Programs and Monique Rawls, Exam Coordinator
Date: July 12, 2013
The process by which an entity, authorized and qualified to do so, grants formal recognition to, or records the recognition status of individuals, organizations, institutions, programs, processes, services or products that meet pre-determined and standardized criteria.

The credentials evaluation and assessment process at CGFNS International determines the comparability of education and other credentials received by the healthcare worked educated outside of the U.S. measured against the standards that prepare U.S. graduates in the same profession.
Development of Education Standards

- Each profession CGFNS International is authorized to review for state licensure or occupational visa purposes has a Professional Standards Committee.

- The role of a Professional Standards Committee is to develop, revise, and uphold the integrity of the profession specific standards. The Committee also reviews documents of applicants whose credentials pose unusual problems.

- Standards are finalized based on field testing, presented to and approved by the CGFNS International Board of Trustees.
In addition to the Health Professions Standards Committee the following committees govern the education assessment for each VisaScreen® profession:

- Professional Nurse Credentials & Standards Committee
- Licensed Practical Nurse Standards Committee
- Medical Technology Professional Standards Committee
- Occupational Therapy Professional Standards Committee
- Physical Therapy Professional Standards Committee
- Physician Assistants Professional Standards Committee
- Speech Language and Audiology Professional Standards Committee
Physician Assistant Standards Development

- Physician Assistant professional standards are based on the federal requirements for entry into the United States; U.S. licensure and education requirements for physician assistants.

- Criteria used to develop our standards include:
  - the Accreditation Standards for Physician Assistant Education
  - the Accreditation Review Commission on Education for the Physician Assistant, Inc. (ARC-PA)
  - the Nineteenth Annual Report on Physician Assistant Educational Programs in the United States, 2002-2003, developed by the Association of Physician Assistant Programs
  - the Report on Initial Phases of the Physician Assistant Core Competency Project of the American Academy of Physician Assistants.
Physician Assistants represent 1% of our total application pool for VisaScreen®: Visa Credentials Assessment.

CGFNS International receives the majority of its applications from international physician assistants educated in the United States and Canada.

Most international physician assistant programs outside of the U.S. do not meet the standards for federal screening.
Other VisaScreen® Criteria

English Language Proficiency Requirement

The English language proficiency assessment confirms that the applicant demonstrates the required competency in oral and written English based on the applicant’s achievement of passing scores on tests jointly approved by the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Applicants educated in specific countries where English is the native language and the textbook and instruction language are exempt from having to take an English proficiency exam.
An Overview of VisaScreen®

English Language Proficiency Exemption

Applicants educated in specific countries where English is both the native language and the language of classroom and textbook instruction are exempt from having to take an English language proficiency examination. To be exempt, one must meet all of the following criteria:

- Country of entry-level education was in United Kingdom (England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland), Australia, Canada (except for Quebec), New Zealand, Ireland or the United States, and
- the language of textbooks and verbal instruction of your education was English.
- Exemption is not automatic because one meets all the criteria.
English Language Proficiency Exams

If an applicant does not meet the requirement to be exempt from the English language proficiency exam requirement, one of the following groups of English language proficiency exams must forward scores to CGFNS International of evaluation.

- TOEFL® iBT (Test of English as a Foreign Language, Internet-Based Test) measuring all four skills of communication: reading, writing, listening, and speaking.
- International English Language Testing System (IELTS): Academic format for physician assistants.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>IELTS Total</th>
<th>IELTS Spoken Band</th>
<th>TOEFL iBT Total</th>
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<td>6.5</td>
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Outcome of VisaScreen®

- Credentials Evaluation
- CGFNS Qualifying Exam® or NCLEX-RN
- English Language Proficiency Testing
Sample Format of the ICHP Certificate for VisaScreen®

International Commission On Healthcare Professions

a division of CGFNS International, Inc.
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, United States of America

certifies that

APPLICANT'S NAME

born on Date of Birth in COUNTRY

has met all of the requirements of section 212(r) of the Immigration and Nationality Act for the Profession of Registered Nurse

issued on September 24, 2014

Michael R. Bleich, PhD, RN, FAAN
President, Board of Trustees CGFNS International, Inc.

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Chief Executive Officer CGFNS International, Inc.
An Overview of VisaScreen® Process

- After an initial review of the VisaScreen® order, the ICE specialist may need further information from a school or licensing authority to meet the requirement of the program. In this scenario, the deliverable to the applicant is an incomplete email notification.

- After the conclusion of a review, if the applicant’s education has deficiencies or is not comparable to a 1st level registered (general nurse) the deliverable to the applicant is an ineligible email notification.
Current Challenges
VisaScreen® Retrogression

How does Retrogression Occur?

- When the number of applicants from a particular country is greater than the number of available visas in a given category, retrogression occurs and the applicants go into a queue.
Global Workforce Challenges

- Fraudulent documentation
- Incomplete data on international recruitment Allied health professionals
- Incomplete original portfolio content