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**OPINION: MILITARY VETERANS WITH A
HEALTHCARE DESIGNATION
SEEKING TO SIT FOR THE NLCEX-PN
APPROVED DATE: 05/18
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ORIGINATING COMMITTEE:
EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

Within the Scope of Practice of ___ RN X LPN

ADVISORY OPINION

MILITARY VETERANS WITH A HEALTHCARE DESIGNATION SEEKING TO SIT FOR THE NLCEX-PN

Background:

HB2076, signed in April 2013, effective December 31, 2013, allows a military veteran with a healthcare designation to complete a bridge course based on the 2013 gap analysis (revised in 2016) from the National Council of State Boards of Nursing (NCSBN), "A Comparison of Selected Military Health Care Occupation Curricula with a Standard Licensed Practical/Vocational Nurse Curriculum" (2013, rev. ed. 2016).

In May 2013, the AZ State Board of Nursing Education Committee discussed this opportunity for Veteran students. A task force of educators from colleges around the state of AZ met in summer 2013, to review and create a statewide Veteran's Bridge Course curriculum. The course was designed based on the premise that veterans should be given credit for previous education, allowing them to accelerate through the LPN curriculum. Core knowledge, abilities and skills were derived from the gap analysis, existing AZ LPN curriculum, and AZ State Board rules. Following completion of the appropriate Veteran's Bridge Course (3- 12 credits), the student is eligible to sit for the National Council Licensing Examination (NCLEX) for Practical Nurses. AZBN staff will review transcripts, identify deficiencies in training and collaborate with instructors of Practical Nursing Program Bridge Course and determine the appropriate Bridge Course needed by the student.

Rationale:

From the NCSBN gap analysis:

"After an extensive review of the health care specialist (medic), corpsman and airman curricula and comparing it with a standard LPN/VN curriculum, significant differences in content were identified. The military occupations lack content in the nursing process, health promotion and prevention, care of the pediatric patient, care of the obstetric patient, care of the older adult/geriatric patient, and chronic care management. In addition, the role of the LPN/VN is different from the military health care occupations cited in this report. The veteran needs time to learn a new scope of practice, acclimate to the role of an LPN/VN, and learn how to think and act like an LPN/VN. For those who have only worked on the battlefield, coursework will be needed

on the health care delivery system, including hospital systems and long-term care” (NCSBN, 2013, rev. ed. 2016, p. 15).

In addition to the statements and rationale presented in the NCSBN gap analysis, a pre-course fundamental, standardized written examination is offered to the veteran students upon entering the course. This examination reveals a significant knowledge deficit in fundamental skills, care of the older adult, role of the LPN, and basic theoretical knowledge. Post-test results demonstrate a significant improvement in scores following rigorous instruction and skill practice, indicating the veteran student meets minimum competency to successfully pass the NCLEX-PN examination.

The curriculum found in both the Air Force BMTCP 4N051 (5 Skill Level) or the ARMY 68WM6 LPN Program do not meet the requirements detailed in AZ Rule R4-19-206 (Curriculum) and the scope of practice specified in A.R.S. § 32-1601(18, 19 a-g) and R4-19-401 for a practical nurse. This statement is based on evaluation of recent AZ Veteran’s Bridge Course standardized fundamentals test results (Lastine, 2018), assessment of veteran student transcripts from a variety of military health care backgrounds, and information provided by Hoell and Masek (2012) in a report comparing basic LPN curricula. The Air Force BMTCP 4N051 (5 Skill Level) or the ARMY 68WM6 LPN Program, while providing a variety of skills and theoretical knowledge for practice in a military setting do not provide the student with the comprehensive knowledge, skills, and abilities to work as a LPN in a civilian practical nurse role.

Summary:

The goal is for military veterans who have earned a health care credential to be awarded credit for previous education, complete a bridge course building on existing knowledge, skills, and abilities, and successfully pass the NCLEX-PN. This pathway will provide the veteran student the foundational knowledge to move into a career as a LPN in a practice setting and provide opportunities for future academic progression in professional nursing.

References

Arizona State Board of Nursing Rules and Statutes (2018). Retrieved from <http://www.azbn.gov/laws-rules/statutes/>.

Lastine, J. (2016/2017) Evaluations; Veteran’s Bridge Course. Reviewed March 2018.

Hoell, L., Masek, S. (2012). Military medical education and training comparison report. Washington State Department of Health. Retrieved from <http://www.wtb.wa.gov/Documents/ComparisonofMilitaryEducationandTraining.pdf>.

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