

By: Howard

H.B. No. 3734

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the professional nursing programs that may receive grants under the professional nursing shortage reduction program.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Section 61.9621, Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 61.9621. DEFINITION. In this subchapter, "professional nursing program" means an educational program that is offered by a public or private institution of higher education and that:

(1) prepares [for preparing] students to attain [for] initial licensure as registered nurses; or

(2) leads students, including registered nurses holding an associate or comparable degree, to earn a bachelor of science degree in nursing.

SECTION 2. Section 61.9622, Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 61.9622. PROGRAM. A professional nursing shortage reduction program is established to increase the number and types of registered nurses in order to meet the needs for registered nurses in this state. The board shall administer the professional nursing shortage reduction program to make grants for those purposes to professional nursing programs and other entities involved with those programs [~~a professional nursing program in the~~]

1 ~~preparation of students for initial licensure as registered nurses~~  
2 ~~in order to increase the number and types of registered nurses to~~  
3 ~~meet the needs for registered nurses in the state].~~

4 SECTION 3. Section [61.9623](#)(a), Education Code, is amended  
5 to read as follows:

6 (a) A grant from the professional nursing shortage  
7 reduction program to a professional nursing program or other entity  
8 described by Section [61.9622](#) [~~involved with a professional nursing~~  
9 ~~program in the preparation of students for initial licensure as~~  
10 ~~registered nurses]~~ must be:

11 (1) expended exclusively on costs related to:

12 (A) enrolling additional students;

13 (B) nursing faculty enhancement in accordance  
14 with Section [61.96231](#);

15 (C) encouraging innovation in the recruitment  
16 and retention of students, including the recruitment and retention  
17 of Spanish-speaking and bilingual students; or

18 (D) identifying, developing, or implementing  
19 innovative methods to make the most effective use of limited  
20 professional nursing program faculty, instructional or clinical  
21 space, and other resources, including:

22 (i) sharing curriculum and administrative  
23 or instructional personnel, facilities, and responsibilities  
24 between two or more professional nursing programs located in the  
25 same region of this state; and

26 (ii) using preceptors or part-time faculty  
27 to provide clinical instruction in order to address the need for

1 qualified faculty to accommodate increased student enrollment in  
2 the professional nursing program;

3 (2) contingent on the professional nursing program's  
4 having been approved as a professional nursing program by the board  
5 or the Texas Board of Nursing, as appropriate;

6 (3) contingent on the professional nursing program's  
7 not being on probation with the Texas Board of Nursing or other  
8 accrediting body; and

9 (4) if granted to increase enrollments, contingent on  
10 the professional nursing program's ability to enroll additional  
11 students, including having the necessary classroom space and  
12 clinical slots.

13 SECTION 4. Sections 61.96232(a) and (b), Education Code,  
14 are amended to read as follows:

15 (a) The board by rule shall establish a process under which  
16 a public or private institution of higher education that offers a  
17 professional nursing program may apply for a grant under this  
18 subchapter and the commissioner of higher education, contingent on  
19 appropriations of money for the grants, selects one or more  
20 applicants to receive a grant based on criteria established by  
21 board rule. The criteria must include the institution's agreement  
22 that the institution's professional nursing program will enroll  
23 additional students or graduate additional students in a program  
24 that:

25 (1) prepares students [~~prepared~~] for initial  
26 licensure as registered nurses; or

27 (2) leads students, including registered nurses

1 holding an associate or comparable degree, to earn a bachelor of  
2 science degree in nursing.

3 (b) The process established under Subsection (a) may  
4 authorize the commissioner of higher education to accept a joint  
5 application from multiple institutions that agree to cooperate on a  
6 regional or joint basis for their professional nursing programs to  
7 enroll additional students or graduate additional students  
8 described by Subsection (a) [prepared for initial licensure as  
9 registered nurses].

10 SECTION 5. Section 61.9626(a), Education Code, is amended  
11 to read as follows:

12 (a) Each institution of higher education that has a  
13 professional nursing program shall submit an annual report to the  
14 board detailing its strategy for increasing the number of students  
15 who [that] graduate from the program prepared to attain initial  
16 [for] licensure as registered nurses or who earn a bachelor of  
17 science degree in nursing. The report must include:

18 (1) the capacity of the program, either alone or in  
19 cooperation with one or more other programs, to graduate more  
20 students who are prepared to attain initial [for] licensure or who  
21 earn a bachelor of science degree as described by this subsection  
22 [as registered nurses]; and

23 (2) the resources allocated to increase the number of  
24 students who [that] graduate from the program prepared to attain  
25 initial [for] licensure or who earn a bachelor of science degree as  
26 described by this subsection [as registered nurses].

27 SECTION 6. This Act takes effect September 1, 2021.