

CGFNS
INTERNATIONAL
NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CGFNS MEETS WITH PHILIPPINE DELEGATION

Philadelphia, March 5, 2007 — The Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools (CGFNS International) Board of Trustees President Dr. Lucille Joel, Chief Executive Officer Dr. Barbara Nichols, and counsel to CGFNS John Ratigan met in extended discussion with the Philippine Task Force organized by Congressman Monico Puentevella on March 5 at CGFNS headquarters in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA. They heard the Task Force present its concerns about CGFNS's decision to deny *VisaScreen*[®] certification to the June 2006 passers of the Philippine Nursing Licensure Exam. In addition to Congressman Puentevella, the Task Force was composed of Dr. Leonor T. Rosero, Chair of the Philippine Professional Regulation Commission, Dr. Remigia Nathanielz, representing the Commission on Higher Education and Philippine Nurses Association, and the leader of a group of June 2006 nursing licensees, Renato Aquino. After listening to and reviewing the concerns of the delegation, Joel and Nichols explained that CGFNS's decision was based on the requirements of U.S. law and was not subject to re-negotiation or further review.

Dr. Joel and Dr. Nichols explained the following to the Philippine delegation that:

- This decision was based on U.S. law, and what U.S. law required of CGFNS in the circumstances of the June 2006 examination. The key question was not what Philippine authorities did, but what U. S. authorities would have done in similar circumstances.
- CGFNS determined that in the case of the June 2006 Philippine license examination, the compromise situation was handled in a way that was not comparable to the way it had been handled in the U.S.
- CGFNS has been gathering information on this matter almost since it occurred. Dr. Nichols led a fact-finding team to Manila in September 2006 for exactly that purpose. CGFNS has been well and thoroughly informed of developments throughout this process.
- As Dr. Nichols advised Dr. Rosero, the decision on this issue made and announced by the CGFNS Board of Trustees on February 14 was unanimous. That decision is final, and will not be reconsidered. The Philippine delegation accepted that fact.

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- We hope that is the message the delegation will take back to the Philippines—that the time for challenges and delegations is past.
- The sooner the responsible authorities in the Philippines move forward to implement the steps for a re-take of Tests 3 and 5, without the need for Philippine nurses to surrender their current licenses in order to do so, the better it will be for all concerned.

CGFNS announced on October 26, 2006 that it was questioning the eligibility for *VisaScreen* certification of the Philippine nurses who passed the Professional Regulation Commission's (PRC) June 2006 nursing licensing exam based on the widespread allegations that the June 2006 Philippine Nursing Licensing Exam had been compromised.

The CGFNS Board of Trustees directed its staff and counsel to review and assess whether the licensure process based on the challenged results of the June 2006 exam is "comparable" with that required for nurses licensed in America, as required by U.S. law. CGFNS then made a final determination on February 14, 2007 that the licensure process was not comparable and moved to deny *VisaScreen* certification for Philippine Nurses Who Passed the Compromised June 2006 Philippine Licensure Examination.

The CGFNS *VisaScreen* Program, administered by the International Commission on Healthcare Professions (ICHP), a division of CGFNS, is a federal screening program mandated by U.S. immigration law. U.S. law designates CGFNS to determine whether internationally-educated healthcare professionals who wish to obtain a visa to practice in the U.S. possess education, training, license and experience that is "comparable with that required for an American healthcare worker of the same type."

The CGFNS decision provided a remedy by which the June passers could regain their eligibility for *VisaScreen* certification by re-taking and passing the compromised Tests 3 and 5 with a passing score of 75. CGFNS urged the Philippine authorities to authorize a re-take of those tests without surrender of licensure.

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The integrity of foreign licensing systems ultimately affects the health and safety of patients in the United States, a primary consideration of CGFNS in its role in evaluating foreign-educated healthcare workers under U.S. immigration law. The decision that was made final on February 14, 2007 supports this critical mission of CGFNS.

CGFNS International is an internationally recognized authority on credentials evaluation and verification pertaining to the education, registration and licensure of nurses and healthcare professionals worldwide. CGFNS International is an immigration-neutral, nonprofit organization with 30 years of experience in certifying the credentials of over 450,000 internationally educated nurses and other healthcare workers.

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