

House Bill No. 989

An act relating to physician assistants; amending s. 458.347, F.S.; authorizing certain students of the former Florida College of Physician's Assistants to sit for the examination for licensure as a physician assistant; requiring prior completion of incomplete or additionally required clinical rotations and providing requirements therefor; authorizing temporary licensure; providing for licensure of successful examinees; providing for fees; providing for future repeal; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Paragraph (b) of subsection (7) of section 458.347, Florida Statutes, 1998 Supplement, is amended to read:

458.347 Physician assistants.—

(7) PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT LICENSURE.—

(b)1. Notwithstanding subparagraph (a)2. and sub-subparagraph (a)3.a., the department shall examine each applicant who the Board of Medicine certifies:

a. Has completed the application form and remitted a nonrefundable application fee not to exceed \$500 and an examination fee not to exceed \$300, plus the actual cost to the department to provide the examination. The examination fee is refundable if the applicant is found to be ineligible to take the examination. The department shall not require the applicant to pass a separate practical component of the examination. For examinations given after July 1, 1998, competencies measured through practical examinations shall be incorporated into the written examination through a multiple-choice format. The department shall translate the examination into the native language of any applicant who requests and agrees to pay all costs of such translation, provided that the translation request is filed with the board office no later than 9 months before the scheduled examination and the applicant remits translation fees as specified by the department no later than 6 months before the scheduled examination, and provided that the applicant demonstrates to the department the ability to communicate orally in basic English. If the applicant is unable to pay translation costs, the applicant may take the next available examination in English if the applicant submits a request in writing by the application deadline and if the applicant is otherwise eligible under this section. To demonstrate the ability to communicate orally in basic English, a passing score or grade is required, as determined by the department or organization that developed it, on ~~one of the following English examinations:~~

(~~f~~) the test for spoken English (TSE) by the Educational Testing Service (ETS);

(II) the test of English as a foreign language (TOEFL), by ETS;:

(III) a high school or college level English course, or;

(IV) the English examination for citizenship, Immigration and Naturalization Service. A notarized copy of an Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) certificate may also be used to demonstrate the ability to communicate in basic English; and.

b.(I) Is an unlicensed physician who graduated from a foreign medical school listed with the World Health Organization who has not previously taken and failed the examination of the National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants and who has been certified by the Board of Medicine as having met the requirements for licensure as a medical doctor by examination as set forth in s. 458.311(1), (3), (4), and (5), with the exception that the applicant is not required to have completed an approved residency of at least 1 year and the applicant is not required to have passed the licensing examination specified under s. 458.311 or hold a valid, active certificate issued by the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates;:

e. was eligible and made initial application for certification as a physician assistant in this state between July 1, 1990, and June 30, 1991; and.

d. was a resident of this state on July 1, 1990, or was licensed or certified in any state in the United States as a physician assistant on July 1, 1990; or.

(II) Completed all coursework requirements of the Master of Medical Science Physician Assistant Program offered through the Florida College of Physician's Assistants prior to its closure in August of 1996. Prior to taking the examination, such applicant must successfully complete any clinical rotations that were not completed under such program prior to its termination and any additional clinical rotations with an appropriate physician assistant preceptor, not to exceed 6 months, that are determined necessary by the council. The boards shall determine, based on recommendations from the council, the facilities under which such incomplete or additional clinical rotations may be completed and shall also determine what constitutes successful completion thereof, provided such requirements are comparable to those established by accredited physician assistant programs. This sub-subparagraph is repealed July 1, 2001.

2. The department may grant temporary licensure to an applicant who meets the requirements of subparagraph 1. Between meetings of the council, the department may grant temporary licensure to practice based on the completion of all temporary licensure requirements. All such administratively issued licenses shall be reviewed and acted on at the next regular meeting of the council. A temporary license expires upon receipt and notice of scores to the licenseholder from the first available examination specified in subparagraph 1. following licensure by the department. An applicant who fails the proficiency examination is no longer temporarily licensed, but may apply for a one-time extension of temporary licensure after reapplying for the next available examination. Extended licensure shall expire upon failure

of the licenseholder to sit for the next available examination or upon receipt and notice of scores to the licenseholder from such examination.

3. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the examination specified pursuant to subparagraph 1. shall be administered by the department only five times. Applicants certified by the board for examination shall receive at least 6 months' notice of eligibility prior to the administration of the initial examination. Subsequent examinations shall be administered at 1-year intervals following the reporting of the scores of the first and subsequent examinations. For the purposes of this paragraph, the department may develop, contract for the development of, purchase, or approve an examination, including a practical component, that adequately measures an applicant's ability to practice with reasonable skill and safety. The minimum passing score on the examination shall be established by the department, with the advice of the board. Those applicants failing to pass that examination or any subsequent examination shall receive notice of the administration of the next examination with the notice of scores following such examination. Any applicant who passes the examination and meets the requirements of this section shall be licensed as a physician assistant with all rights defined thereby.

Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 1999.

Approved by the Governor June 17, 1999.

Filed in Office Secretary of State June 17, 1999.