

Senate Bill 187

By: Senators McKoon of the 29th, Butterworth of the 50th, Thompson of the 5th and Chance of the 16th

**AS PASSED SENATE**

**A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT**

1 To amend Article 1 of Chapter 26 of Title 43 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, the  
2 "Georgia Registered Professional Nurse Practice Act," so as to revise the nursing education  
3 program requirements for licensure as a registered nurse; to revise certain provisions relating  
4 to the requirements for registered professional nurses in nontraditional nursing education  
5 programs; to provide for related matters; to provide an effective date; to repeal conflicting  
6 laws; and for other purposes.

7 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:**

8 **SECTION 1.**

9 Article 1 of Chapter 26 of Title 43 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, the "Georgia  
10 Registered Professional Nurse Practice Act," is amended by adding a new paragraph to Code  
11 Section 43-26-3, relating to definitions, to read as follows:

12 "(3.1) 'Health care facility' shall have the same meaning as defined in paragraph (17) of  
13 Code Section 31-6-2."

14 **SECTION 2.**

15 Said article is further amended by revising Code Section 43-26-7, relating to requirements  
16 for licensure as a registered professional nurse, as follows:

17 "43-26-7.

18 (a) Any applicant who meets the requirements of this Code section shall be eligible for  
19 licensure as a registered professional nurse.

20 (b) An applicant for licensure by examination shall:

21 (1) Submit a completed written application and fee;

22 (2)(A) Have graduated from an approved nursing education program, as defined in  
23 Code Section 43-26-3; or

24 (B)(i) Notwithstanding subparagraph (A) of this paragraph, have graduated from a  
 25 nontraditional nursing education program approved by the board which meets the  
 26 requirements in subsection (e) of this Code section; and

27 ~~(ii)(I) If entered the nontraditional nursing education program as a licensed  
 28 practical nurse with at least three years of clinical experience in a health care facility  
 29 as a licensed practical nurse whose academic education as a licensed practical nurse  
 30 included clinical training in pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, medical-surgical,  
 31 and mental illness, have completed a 350 hour postgraduate preceptorship arranged  
 32 by the applicant under the oversight of a registered professional nurse where such  
 33 applicant is transitioned from the role of a licensed practical nurse to a registered  
 34 professional nurse. The preceptorship shall have prior approval of the board and  
 35 successful completion of the preceptorship shall be verified in writing by the  
 36 preceptor; or~~

37 ~~(II) If entered the nontraditional nursing education program as (1) a military  
 38 medical corpsman or paramedic or (2) a licensed practical nurse with less than three  
 39 years of clinical experience in a health care facility as a licensed practical nurse  
 40 whose academic training as a licensed practical nurse did not include clinical  
 41 training in pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, medical-surgical, and mental  
 42 illness, have completed a 700 hour postgraduate preceptorship arranged by the  
 43 applicant under the oversight of a registered professional nurse and approved by the  
 44 board. Such preceptorship shall include clinical practice in a health care facility in  
 45 pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, medical-surgical, mental illness, and  
 46 transition into the role of a registered professional nurse. The preceptorship shall  
 47 have prior approval of the board and successful completion of the preceptorship  
 48 shall be verified in writing by the preceptor.~~

49 Applicants who Have, before July 1, 2008, entered a nontraditional nursing  
 50 education program which meets the requirements of in subsection (e) of this Code  
 51 section and complete such program no later than June 30, 2011, shall be deemed to  
 52 meet the criteria of this paragraph; provided, however, that the board shall have the  
 53 discretion to require additional clinical hours of experience of applicants who (i) did  
 54 not enter the nontraditional nursing education program as a licensed practical nurse;  
 55 or (ii) entered the nontraditional nursing education program as a licensed practical  
 56 nurse but does not have at least one year of clinical experience in a health care  
 57 facility as a licensed practical nurse, if such applicant's clinical experience is  
 58 deemed lacking by the board;

59 (II) Have entered a nontraditional nursing education program which meets the  
 60 requirements in subsection (e) of this Code section after July 1, 2008, as a licensed

- 61 practical nurse with at least one year of clinical experience in a health care facility  
62 as a licensed practical nurse;
- 63 (III) Have entered a nontraditional nursing education program which meets the  
64 requirements of subsection (e) of this Code section after July 1, 2008, as a  
65 paramedic with at least one year of experience as a paramedic; or
- 66 (IV) Have entered a nontraditional nursing education program which meets the  
67 requirements of subsection (e) of this Code section after July 1, 2008, as a licensed  
68 practical nurse with less than one year of clinical experience in a health care facility  
69 as a licensed practical nurse, a paramedic with less than one year of experience as  
70 a paramedic, or a military medical corpsman. Applicants seeking licensure pursuant  
71 to this subdivision may be required to complete a 350 hour postgraduate  
72 preceptorship arranged by the applicant under the oversight of a registered  
73 professional nurse and approved by the board. If required, such preceptorship shall  
74 include clinical nursing practice in a health care facility and may be completed in  
75 a single type of health care facility. The board shall consider the applicant's  
76 professional experience when deciding whether to require a postgraduate  
77 preceptorship. If required, the preceptorship shall have the prior approval of the  
78 board, and successful completion of the preceptorship shall be verified in writing  
79 by the preceptor;
- 80 (3) Pass a board recognized licensing examination; provided, however, that such  
81 examination ~~may~~ shall not be taken prior to graduation from the approved nursing  
82 education program. In no way shall the passage of such examination by a graduate of a  
83 nontraditional nursing education program who does not meet the other requirements of  
84 this subsection be construed to authorize such individual to practice nursing, to require  
85 the board to license such individual as a registered professional nurse other than to issue  
86 in its sole discretion a temporary permit pursuant to Code Section 43-26-8, or to be  
87 endorsed from another state as a registered professional nurse;
- 88 (4) Have satisfactory results from a fingerprint record check report conducted by the  
89 Georgia Crime Information Center and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, as  
90 determined by the board. Application for a license under this Code section shall  
91 constitute express consent and authorization for the board or its representative to perform  
92 a criminal background check. Each applicant who submits an application to the board  
93 for licensure by examination agrees to provide the board with any and all information  
94 necessary to run a criminal background check, including, but not limited to, classifiable  
95 sets of fingerprints. The applicant shall be responsible for all fees associated with the  
96 performance of such background check; and
- 97 (5) Meet such other criteria as established by the board.

- 98 (c) An applicant for licensure by endorsement shall:
- 99 (1) Submit a completed written application and fee;
- 100 (2)(A) Have passed a board recognized licensing examination following graduation
- 101 from an approved nursing education program, as defined in Code Section 43-26-3; or
- 102 (B) Notwithstanding subparagraph (A) of this paragraph, have graduated from a
- 103 nontraditional nursing education program approved by the board which meets the
- 104 requirements in subsection (e) of this Code section;
- 105 (3) Submit verification of initial and current licensure in any other licensing jurisdiction
- 106 administering a board recognized licensing examination;
- 107 (4)(A) Have practiced nursing as a registered professional nurse for a period of time
- 108 as determined by the board or have graduated from a nursing education program within
- 109 the four years immediately preceding the date of the application; or
- 110 (B) If the applicant graduated from a nontraditional nursing education program which
- 111 meets the requirements in subsection (e) of this Code section, have practiced nursing
- 112 as a registered professional nurse in a health care facility for at least one year in the
- 113 three years preceding the date of the application and such practice is documented by the
- 114 applicant and approved by the board;
- 115 ~~(C) If entered a nontraditional nursing education program as a licensed practical nurse~~
- 116 ~~and graduated from such program and practiced nursing as a registered professional~~
- 117 ~~nurse in a health care facility for less than one year in the three years preceding the date~~
- 118 ~~of the application, have completed a 350-hour postgraduate preceptorship arranged by~~
- 119 ~~the applicant under the oversight of a registered professional nurse and where such~~
- 120 ~~applicant is transitioned from the role of a licensed practical nurse to a registered~~
- 121 ~~professional nurse. The preceptorship shall have prior approval of the board and~~
- 122 ~~successful completion of the preceptorship shall be verified in writing by the preceptor;~~
- 123 ~~or~~
- 124 ~~(D) If entered a nontraditional nursing education program as a military medical~~
- 125 ~~corpsman or paramedic and graduated from such program and practiced nursing as a~~
- 126 ~~registered professional nurse in a health care facility for less than one year in the three~~
- 127 ~~years preceding the date of the application, have completed a 700-hour postgraduate~~
- 128 ~~preceptorship arranged by the applicant under the oversight of a registered professional~~
- 129 ~~nurse. Such preceptorship shall include clinical practice in a health care facility in~~
- 130 ~~pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, medical-surgical, mental illness, and transition~~
- 131 ~~into the role of a registered professional nurse. The preceptorship shall have prior~~
- 132 ~~approval of the board and successful completion of the preceptorship shall be verified~~
- 133 ~~in writing by the preceptor;~~

- 134 (5) Have satisfactory results from a fingerprint record check report conducted by the  
 135 Georgia Crime Information Center and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, as  
 136 determined by the board. Application for a license under this Code section shall  
 137 constitute express consent and authorization for the board or its representative to perform  
 138 a criminal background check. Each applicant who submits an application to the board  
 139 for licensure by examination agrees to provide the board with any and all information  
 140 necessary to run a criminal background check, including, but not limited to, classifiable  
 141 sets of fingerprints. The applicant shall be responsible for all fees associated with the  
 142 performance of such background check; and
- 143 (6) Meet such other criteria as established by the board.
- 144 (d) An applicant for reinstatement who has previously held a valid license in Georgia shall:
- 145 (1) Submit a completed written application and fee;
- 146 (2) Have practiced nursing as a registered professional nurse for a period of time as  
 147 determined by the board or have graduated from an approved nursing education program,  
 148 as defined in Code Section 43-26-3, within the four years immediately preceding the date  
 149 of the application;
- 150 (3) Have satisfactory results from a fingerprint record check report conducted by the  
 151 Georgia Crime Information Center and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, as  
 152 determined by the board. Application for a license under this Code section shall  
 153 constitute express consent and authorization for the board or its representative to perform  
 154 a criminal background check. Each applicant who submits an application to the board  
 155 for licensure by examination agrees to provide the board with any and all information  
 156 necessary to run a criminal background check, including, but not limited to, classifiable  
 157 sets of fingerprints. The applicant shall be responsible for all fees associated with the  
 158 performance of such background check; and
- 159 (4) Meet such other criteria as established by the board.
- 160 (e) A nontraditional nursing education program shall meet the following requirements:
- 161 (1) Is part of an institution of higher education that is approved by the appropriate  
 162 regulatory authorities of its home state;
- 163 (2) Holds regional and specialty accreditation by an accrediting body or bodies  
 164 recognized by the United States Secretary of Education or the Council for Higher  
 165 Education Accreditation;
- 166 ~~(3) Requires its program applicants to be a licensed practical/vocational nurse, military~~  
 167 ~~medical corpsman, or paramedic;~~
- 168 ~~(4)~~(3) Requires its students to pass faculty determined program outcomes, including  
 169 competency based assessments of nursing knowledge and a summative performance  
 170 assessment of clinical competency of a minimum of ~~2-1/2~~ two and one-half days

171 developed by faculty subject matter experts that follows nationally recognized standards  
172 for educational testing; and  
173 ~~(5)~~(4) Its graduates pass a board recognized licensing examination at a rate equivalent  
174 to the minimum rate required for board approved traditional nursing education programs."

175 **SECTION 3.**

176 This Act shall become effective upon its approval by the Governor or upon its becoming law  
177 without such approval.

178 **SECTION 4.**

179 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.