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U.S. Department of Justice

Immigration and Naturalization Service

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OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS
425 Eye Street N.W.
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Washington, D.C. 20536



FEB 10 2003

File: LIN-00-230-53253 Office: Nebraska Service Center

Date:

IN RE: Petitioner:
Beneficiary:



Petition: Petition for a Nonimmigrant Worker Pursuant to Section 101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b)

PUBLIC COPY

IN BEHALF OF PETITIONER:



INSTRUCTIONS:

This is the decision in your case. All documents have been returned to the office that originally decided your case. Any further inquiry must be made to that office.

If you believe the law was inappropriately applied or the analysis used in reaching the decision was inconsistent with the information provided or with precedent decisions, you may file a motion to reconsider. Such a motion must state the reasons for reconsideration and be supported by any pertinent precedent decisions. Any motion to reconsider must be filed within 30 days of the decision that the motion seeks to reconsider, as required under 8 C.F.R. 103.5(a)(1)(i).

If you have new or additional information that you wish to have considered, you may file a motion to reopen. Such a motion must state the new facts to be proved at the reopened proceeding and be supported by affidavits or other documentary evidence. Any motion to reopen must be filed within 30 days of the decision that the motion seeks to reopen, except that failure to file before this period expires may be excused in the discretion of the Service where it is demonstrated that the delay was reasonable and beyond the control of the applicant or petitioner. Id.

Any motion must be filed with the office that originally decided your case along with a fee of \$110 as required under 8 C.F.R. 103.7.

FOR THE ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER,
EXAMINATIONS

Robert P. Wiemann, Director
Administrative Appeals Office

DISCUSSION: The nonimmigrant visa petition was denied by the director and is now before the Associate Commissioner for Examinations on appeal. The appeal will be dismissed.

The petitioner is a health care business with 150 employees and a gross annual income of \$18,434,855. It seeks to extend its authorization to employ the beneficiary as a qualified mental retardation professional for a period of three years. The director determined the petitioner had not established that the proffered position is a specialty occupation or that the beneficiary is qualified to perform the duties of a specialty occupation.

On appeal, counsel submits a brief.

8 C.F.R. 214.2(h)(4)(ii) defines the term "specialty occupation" as:

an occupation which requires theoretical and practical application of a body of highly specialized knowledge in fields of human endeavor including, but not limited to, architecture, engineering, mathematics, physical sciences, social sciences, medicine and health, education, business specialties, accounting, law, theology, and the arts, and which requires the attainment of a bachelor's degree or higher in a specific specialty, or its equivalent, as a minimum for entry into the occupation in the United States.

The director denied the petition because the proffered position can be filled by a registered nurse, an occupation that does not require the minimum of a baccalaureate degree. The director further found that the petitioner had not established that the beneficiary's education, specialized training, and/or experience are equivalent to U.S. baccalaureate degree. On appeal, counsel states, in part, that the proffered position is that of a health services manager rather than a nursing position. Counsel also states that the proffered position requires the attainment of a bachelor's or higher degree in a related field and one year of experience in special education as the minimum for entry into the occupation. Counsel further states that the record contains job advertisements to demonstrate that the proffered position requires such degree, and the Service previously concluded that the beneficiary was qualified for the proffered position.

Counsel's statement on appeal is not persuasive. The Service does not use a title, by itself, when determining whether a particular job qualifies as a specialty occupation. The specific duties of the offered position combined with the nature of the petitioning entity's business operations are factors that the Service

considers. In the initial I-129 petition, the petitioner described the duties of the offered position as follows:

Teaches basic academic & living skills to mentally impaired in schools & other institutions. Plans curriculum & prepares lessons and other instructional materials. Confers with parents, administrators, testing specialists, social workers & others to develop individual educational program for students who are at different learning ability level including educable, trainable, & severely impaired [sic].

Pursuant to 8 C.F.R. 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(A), to qualify as a specialty occupation, the position must meet one of the following criteria:

1. A baccalaureate or higher degree or its equivalent is normally the minimum requirement for entry into the particular position;
2. The degree requirement is common to the industry in parallel positions among similar organizations or, in the alternative, an employer may show that its particular position is so complex or unique that it can be performed only by an individual with a degree;
3. The employer normally requires a degree or its equivalent for the position; or
4. The nature of the specific duties is so specialized and complex that knowledge required to perform the duties is usually associated with the attainment of a baccalaureate or higher degree.

The petitioner has not met any of the above requirements to classify the offered position as a specialty occupation.

First, the Service does not agree with counsel's argument that the beneficiary is a health services manager, an occupation that would normally require a master's degree in health services administration, long-term care administration, health sciences, public health, public administration, or business administration, or a bachelor's degree for some entry-level positions in smaller facilities and at the departmental level within healthcare organizations. (It is noted that the beneficiary holds an associate's degree in nursing conferred by a U.S. institution.)

In its Occupational Outlook Handbook (Handbook), 2002-2003 edition, at page 75, the Department of Labor (DOL) describes the job of a health services manager as follows:

The structure and financing of healthcare is changing rapidly. Future medical and health services managers must be prepared to deal with evolving integrated healthcare delivery systems, technological innovations, an increasingly complex regulatory environment, restructuring of work, and an increased focus on preventive care . . . Increasingly, medical and health services managers will work in organizations in which they must optimize efficiency of a variety of interrelated services, for example, those ranging from inpatient care to outpatient follow-up care.

In smaller facilities, top administrators handle more of the details of daily operations. For example, many nursing home administrators manage personnel, finance, facility operations, and admissions, and have a larger role in resident care.

The record reflects that the petitioner, which is a healthcare facility, employs 150 persons and has an approximate gross annual income of \$18 million. The proposed duties of a qualified mentally retardation professional are not those of health service manager, as described above. For example, there is no evidence that the position offered includes complex health service managerial duties such as managing finance and facility operations.

The duties that the petitioner endeavors to have the beneficiary perform are primarily those of a registered nurse. In contrast to the description of a health services manager, at page 268 of its Handbook, the DOL describes the position of a registered nurse as follows:

Registered nurses (RNs) work to promote health, prevent disease, and help patients cope with illness. They are advocates and health educators for patients, families, and communities. . . RNs also develop and manage nursing care plans; instruct patients and their families in proper care; and help individuals and groups take steps to improve or maintain their health.

The types of duties the petitioner ascribes to the beneficiary fall within the scope of a registered nurse position rather than a health services manager position. For example, the petitioner states that the beneficiary will be responsible for "[teaching] basic academic & living skills to mentally impaired in schools & other institutions..." Such duties fall within the tasks associated with a registered nurse, as described above. Thus, the petitioner has not shown that a bachelor's degree or its equivalent is required for the position being offered to the beneficiary.

Second, the petitioner has not shown that it has, in the past, required the services of individuals with baccalaureate or higher degrees in a specific specialty, for the offered position. It is noted that the petitioner's qualified mentally retardation professionals have degrees in a variety of fields such as foreign languages, literature, English, and accounting. Third, the petitioner did not present any documentary evidence that businesses similar to the petitioner in their type of operations, number of employees, and amount of gross annual income, require the services of individuals with baccalaureate degrees in a specific specialty in parallel positions. Finally, the petitioner did not demonstrate that the nature of the beneficiary's proposed duties is so specialized and complex that the knowledge required to perform the duties is usually associated with the attainment of a baccalaureate or higher degree.

The petitioner has failed to establish that any of the four factors enumerated above are present in this proceeding. The job fits the description of a registered nurse, rather than a health services manager. According to the DOL at page 269 of its Handbook, there is no requirement of a baccalaureate or higher degree in a specific specialty for employment as a registered nurse. The DOL states the following about the training and educational requirements for registered nurse/supervisor nurse positions:

There are three major educational paths to registered nursing: associate degree in nursing (A.D.N.), bachelor of science degree in nursing (B.S.N.), and diploma.

. . . Generally, licensed graduates of any of the three program types qualify for entry-level positions as staff nurses.

. . . some career paths are open only to nurses with bachelor's or advanced degrees. A bachelor's degree is often necessary for administrative positions, and it is a prerequisite for admission to graduate nursing programs in research, consulting, teaching, or a clinical specialization.

Upon review of the proposed duties, it appears that the proffered position is primarily that of a registered nurse in a healthcare facility. The DOL, which is an authoritative source for educational requirements for certain occupations, does not indicate that a bachelor's degree in a specialized area is the minimum requirement for any registered nurse position, including the type being offered to the beneficiary. Accordingly, it is concluded that the petitioner has not demonstrated that the offered position is a specialty occupation within the meaning of the regulations.

With respect to counsel's objection to denial of this petition in view of the approval of a similar petition in the past, the Associate Commissioner, through the Administrative Appeals Office, is not bound to follow the contradictory decision of a service center. Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra v. INS, 2000 WL 282785 (E.D.La. 2000), aff'd, 248 F.3d 1139 (5th Cir. 2001), cert. denied, 122 S. Ct.51 (U.S. 2001).

As the petitioner has not sufficiently established that the proffered position is a specialty occupation, the beneficiary's qualifications need not be examined further in this proceeding.

The burden of proof in these proceedings rests solely with the petitioner. Section 291 of the Act, 8 U.S.C. 1361. The petitioner has not sustained that burden. Accordingly, the decision of the director will not be disturbed.

ORDER: The appeal is dismissed.