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U.S. Department of Homeland Security
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Washington, DC 20536

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

[redacted]

FILE: WAC 02 055 52821 Office: CALIFORNIA SERVICE CENTER Date: APR 23 2004

IN RE: Petitioner: [redacted]
Beneficiary:

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

ON BEHALF OF PETITIONER:

[redacted]

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identifying data deleted to prevent clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy

INSTRUCTIONS:

This is the decision of the Administrative Appeals Office 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.

Marc Johnson
For Robert P. Wiemann, Director
Administrative Appeals Office

DISCUSSION: The service center director denied the nonimmigrant visa petition and the matter is now before the Administrative Appeals Office (AAO) on appeal. The appeal will be dismissed. The petition will be denied.

The petitioner is a skilled nursing facility that seeks to employ the beneficiary as a registered nurse/night shift supervisor. The petitioner endeavors to classify the beneficiary as a nonimmigrant worker in a specialty occupation pursuant to section 101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (the Act), 8 U.S.C. § 1101 (a)(15)(H)(i)(b).

The director denied the petition because the proffered position is not a specialty occupation and the beneficiary is not qualified to perform a specialty occupation. On appeal, counsel submits a letter from the petitioner. Counsel also indicates that a brief and/or additional evidence will be submitted to the AAO within 30 days. As of this date, however, the AAO has not received any additional evidence into the record. Therefore, the record is complete.

The AAO will first address the director's conclusion that the position is not a specialty occupation.

Section 214(i)(l) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (the Act), 8 U.S.C. § 1184 (i)(l), defines the term "specialty occupation" as an occupation that requires:

(A) theoretical and practical application of a body of highly specialized knowledge, and

(B) attainment of a bachelor's or higher degree in the specific specialty (or its equivalent) as a minimum for entry into the occupation in the United States.

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.

Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS) interprets the term "degree" in the criteria at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(A) to mean not just any baccalaureate or higher degree, but one in a specific specialty that is directly related to the proffered position.

The record of proceeding before the AAO contains: (1) Form I-129 and supporting documentation; (2) the director's request for additional evidence; (3) the petitioner's response to the director's request; (4) the

director's denial letter; and (5) Form I-290B and supporting documentation. The AAO reviewed the record in its entirety before issuing its decision.

The petitioner is seeking the beneficiary's services as a registered nurse/night shift supervisor. Evidence of the beneficiary's duties includes: the I-129 petition; the petitioner's November 19, 2001 letter in support of the petition; and the petitioner's response to the director's request for evidence. According to this evidence, the beneficiary would perform duties that entail providing professional nursing services. Although not explicitly stated, it appears that the petitioner requires a baccalaureate degree in nursing for the proffered position.

The director found that the proffered position was not a specialty occupation. Citing to the Department of Labor's *Occupational Outlook Handbook* (*Handbook*), 2002-2003 edition, the director noted that the minimum requirement for entry into the position was not a baccalaureate degree or its equivalent in a specific specialty. The director found further that the petitioner failed to establish any of the criteria found at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(A).

On appeal, the petitioner's administrator states that the proposed duties, which include supervising and training other registered nurses, licensed vocational nurses, and nurses aides, are so complex that a baccalaureate degree in nursing is required. She further states that, although a person without a baccalaureate degree is not barred from filling the position, a person with a baccalaureate degree "more often than not would be more competent to tackle the job." Upon review of the record, the petitioner has established none of the four criteria outlined in 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(A). Therefore, the proffered position is not a specialty occupation.

The AAO turns first to the criteria at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2 (h)(4)(iii)(A)(*1*) and (*2*): a baccalaureate or higher degree or its equivalent is the normal minimum requirement for entry into the particular position; a degree requirement is common to the industry in parallel positions among similar organizations; or a particular position is so complex or unique that it can be performed only by an individual with a degree.

Factors often considered by CIS when determining these criteria include: whether the *Handbook* reports that the industry requires a degree; whether the industry's professional association has made a degree a minimum entry requirement; and whether letters or affidavits from firms or individuals in the industry attest that such firms "routinely employ and recruit only degreed individuals." *See Shanti, Inc. v. Reno*, 36 F. Supp. 2d 1151, 1165 (D.Min. 1999)(quoting *Hird/Blaker Corp. v. Slattery*, 764 F. Supp. 872, 1102 (S.D.N.Y. 1991)).

The AAO routinely consults the *Handbook* for its information about the duties and educational requirements of particular occupations. The AAO concurs with the director that the proffered position is not a specialty occupation. No evidence in the *Handbook*, 2004-2005 edition, indicates that a baccalaureate or higher degree, or its equivalent, is required for a supervisory nurse/registered nurse position. Furthermore, the petitioner's administrator states that a person without a baccalaureate degree is not barred from filling this position.

It is noted that the *Handbook* does not elaborate on administrative nursing positions within this classification, although reference is made to two nursing positions within the classification of registered nurse that appear analogous to the proffered position - head nurses or nurse supervisors. The proffered position appears to resemble a nursing position beyond the entry level registered nurse, but it does not appear to be analogous to an administrative nursing position.

The AAO notes that on November 27, 2002, CIS issued a policy memorandum on H-1B nurse petitions (nurse memo) that provides the following commentary on administrative nursing positions: "Nursing Services Administrators are generally supervisory level nurses who hold an RN, and a graduate degree in nursing or health administration. (See Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Dep't of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook* at 75.)" The *Handbook* reference is to the classification of medical and health services managers. On page 75, the *Handbook* states:

> The term "medical and health services manager" encompasses all individuals who plan, direct, coordinate and supervise the delivery of healthcare. Medical and health services managers include specialists and generalists. Specialists are in charge of specific clinical departments or services, while generalists manage or help to manage an entire facility or system.

In this case, the petitioner has not demonstrated that the proffered position is an administrative position, which would require a registered nurse with a master's degree in nursing or health administration. Rather, the proposed duties are similar to those of a head nurse or nurse supervisor. It is noted that the beneficiary holds a baccalaureate degree in nursing. In this matter, nothing in the proffered position's job description indicates that the beneficiary would be working in a nursing specialty that requires a higher degree of knowledge or skill. The duties of the position are routine. An individual who does not possess a BSN or its equivalent would be able to successfully execute the duties that the petitioner describes.

The record does not include any evidence regarding parallel positions in the petitioner's industry or from professional associations regarding an industry standard. Nor does it include any documentation to support the complexity or uniqueness of the proffered position. The petitioner has, thus, not established the criteria set forth at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(A)(*1*) or (*2*).

The AAO now turns to the criterion at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(A)(*3*) – the employer normally requires a degree or its equivalent for the position. As the petitioner does not address this issue on appeal, it will not be discussed further.

Finally, the AAO turns to the criterion at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(iii)(A)(*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 states that the baccalaureate program in nursing provides training in nursing administration whereas the associate program in nursing does not. The AAO cannot assume, however, that the additional training that the baccalaureate program provides is solely related to the alleged complexity of the proffered position. Simply going on record without supporting documentary evidence is not sufficient to meet the burden of proof in this proceeding. *See Matter of Treasure Craft of California*, 14 I&N Dec. 190 (Reg. Comm. 1972). To the extent that they are depicted in the record, the duties do not appear so specialized and complex as to require the highly specialized knowledge associated with a baccalaureate or higher degree, or its equivalent, in a specific specialty. Therefore, the evidence does not establish that the proffered position is a specialty occupation under 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(A)(*4*).

As related in the discussion above, the petitioner has failed to establish that the proffered position is a specialty occupation. Accordingly, the AAO shall not disturb the director's denial of the petition.

The director also found that the beneficiary would not be qualified to perform the duties of the proffered position if the job had been determined to be a specialty occupation. However, as the AAO is dismissing the appeal because the job is not a specialty occupation, it will not discuss the beneficiary's qualifications.

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.

ORDER: The appeal is dismissed. The petition is denied.