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U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

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FILE: WAC 04 064 51416 Office: CALIFORNIA SERVICE CENTER Date: **AUG 03 2005**

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)

ON BEHALF OF PETITIONER:



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.

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 residential care home that seeks to employ the beneficiary as its utilization review coordinator. The petitioner endeavors to classify the beneficiary as a nonimmigrant worker in a specialty occupation pursuant to § 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. On appeal, counsel submits a brief.

Section 214(i)(1) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1184(i)(1), 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 its utilization review coordinator. Evidence of the beneficiary's duties includes: the I-129 petition; the petitioner's "December 23, 2003" 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: assuring effective and efficient utilization of residential care facility and services; assisting in the promotion and maintenance of quality care through analysis, review and evaluation of utilization practices within the facility; ensuring ongoing concurrent and retrospective review of the facility's utilization of resources to identify problems, such as under-utilization, over-utilization and inefficient scheduling, and documenting the impact of corrective action; coordinating and integrating the functioning of quality improvement, utilization management, financial reimbursement and resident care; orchestrating resident care among caregivers through the continuum from pre-admission of residents based on age, cultural and individual personal needs; supporting and acting as liaison with biller/collector in coordinating procedures and policies, between payers, providers and residents; serving as the primary resident information resource for payers; collaborating with administrators and other health care providers to develop resident care guidelines; performing admission review process which shall be initiated within the first working day following the resident's admission to the facility; reviewing, identifying performance gaps, implementing remediation activities to ensure compliance with security, safety, and insurance requirements; implementing and conducting ongoing assessment of clinical performance, measures to evaluate the effectiveness of care provided by other health care workers to residents; developing a volunteer program per the guidelines established in facility's volunteer program; collaborating with other health care workers to prepare for resident and family participation in the treatment plan and continuing care plan; treating all residents with care and compassion and with special regard for age specific consideration; demonstrating knowledge of the principles of growth and development, over the lifespan and possessing the ability to assess data reflective of the resident's status and interpreting the appropriate information needed to identify each resident's requirement relative to ages from young adulthood, adults, and geriatrics, maintaining confidentiality of all resident information to comply with legal and ethical standards of residents care; and participating in staff unit meetings. The petitioner indicated that the position required a bachelor's or master's degree in the field of nursing or a related field. The petitioner indicated that the position requires a higher degree of knowledge and skill than a typical RN or staff nurse position.

The director found that the proffered position was not a specialty occupation because the job is primarily that of a registered nurse. Citing to the Department of Labor's *Occupational Outlook Handbook* (the *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 that the majority of the duties were those of a nurse. The director found that the remaining duties included responsibilities normally associated with a health service manager. The director noted that the petitioner is a health service provider with no employees. The director found that an advanced degree may or may not be required and the complexity of the duties do not relate to those found in large facilities where a Master's degree may be preferred. Additionally, the director noted that the beneficiary would not be qualified to perform the duties of a health service manager. 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, counsel states that the proffered position of a utilization review coordinator requires a higher degree of knowledge and skill than a typical RN or staff nurse position. Counsel states that the beneficiary will practice in a specialized area of nursing that has different, higher requirements than that of general nursing.

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.Minn. 1999)(quoting *Hird/Blaker Corp. v. Sava*, 712 F. Supp. 872, 1095 (S.D.N.Y. 1989)).

First, the AAO does not agree with the petitioner's assertion that the proffered position would normally require a bachelor's degree in nursing or a related field. The proffered position is similar to that of a nurse supervisor. In its *Handbook*, 2004-2005 edition, the DOL states the following about the training and educational requirements for registered nurse positions:

There are three major educational paths to registered nursing: a bachelor's of science degree in nursing (BSN), an associate degree in Nursing (A.D.N.), and a diploma. . . . Generally, licensed graduates of any of the three types of educational programs qualify for entry-level positions as staff nurses.

[S]ome 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.

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. The *Handbook* states the following about head nurses or nurse supervisors:

Head nurses or nurse supervisors direct nursing activities, primarily in hospitals. They plan work schedules and assign duties to nurses and aides, provide or arrange for training, and visit patients to observe nurses and to ensure that the patients receive proper care. They also may ensure that records are maintained and equipment and supplies are ordered.

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. A recent CIS policy memo 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. The *Handbook* states:

The occupation, 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, as described herein. As such, it is concluded that the petitioner has not demonstrated that the proffered position is a specialty occupation within the meaning of the regulations. Thus, the petitioner has not shown that a bachelor's degree or its equivalent is required for the position being offered to the beneficiary.

The petitioner has submitted no information to establish the second criterion - that a specific degree requirement is common to the industry in parallel positions among similar organizations. The record also does not include any evidence from professional associations regarding an industry standard. In addition, no documentation to support the complexity or uniqueness of the proffered position was submitted. The petitioner has, thus, not established the criteria set forth at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(A)(1) or (2).

Nor is there evidence in the record to establish the third criterion at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(A): that the petitioner normally requires a degree or its equivalent for the position.

Finally, the AAO turns to the criterion at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(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.

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.

Beyond the decision of the director, there is no evidence that establishes that the home care facility is open and functioning. The petitioner indicated in a letter dated March 24, 2004 that it has no employees. The Form Schedule C for tax year 2002 indicated gross receipts or sales of \$9,373. Without such evidence, the petitioner has not established that the beneficiary is coming to the United States to perform services temporarily in a specialty occupation as required by Section 101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b) of the Act; 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b).

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.