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U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services

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FILE: WAC 04 063 51665 Office: CALIFORNIA SERVICE CENTER Date: **MAR 07 2005**

IN RE: Petitioner: [REDACTED]  
Beneficiary [REDACTED]

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*  
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 provides home health services and seeks to employ the beneficiary as an in service coordinator in its nursing department. 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 does not qualify as a specialty occupation. On appeal counsel submits a brief stating that the offered position qualifies as a specialty occupation.

The issue to be discussed in this proceeding is whether the proffered position qualifies as a specialty occupation.

Section 101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b) of the Act, 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b), provides, in part, for the classification of qualified nonimmigrant aliens who are coming temporarily to the United States to perform services in a specialty occupation.

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.

The term "specialty occupation" is further defined at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(ii) as:

[A]n 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.

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 are 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) the 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) the Form I-290B with counsel’s brief. The AAO reviewed the record in its entirety before issuing its decision.

The petitioner is seeking the beneficiary’s services as an in service coordinator in its nursing department. Evidence of the beneficiary’s duties includes the I-129 petition with attachment and the petitioner’s response to the director’s request for evidence. According to this evidence the beneficiary would: plan and conduct orientation training programs for new nursing personnel (20 per cent of the time); teach routine nursing procedures and demonstrate techniques for providing nursing care (20 per cent of the time); prepare work schedules (15 per cent of the time); maintain records of patients and their medical history (10 per cent of the time); communicate with physicians to secure information on required nursing care and personnel (20 per cent of the time); and work with the Director of Nursing in solving problems of in-service training, transfers, and discipline of nursing personnel (15 per cent of the time). The petitioner requires a minimum of a bachelor’s degree in nursing for entry into the proffered position.

CIS often looks to the Department of Labor’s *Occupational Outlook Handbook (Handbook)* when determining whether a baccalaureate or higher degree or its equivalent is normally the minimum requirement for entry into a particular position. In the 2004-2005 edition of the *Handbook* at 302, the *Handbook* 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 (ADN), and a diploma. BSN programs, offered by colleges and universities, take about 4 years to complete. . . . ADN programs, offered by community and junior colleges, take about 2 to 3 years to complete. . . . Diploma programs, administered in hospitals, last about 3 years. . . . Generally, licensed graduates of any of the three types of educational programs qualify for entry-level positions as staff nurses. *Id at 302.*

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. . . [S]ome career paths are open only to nurses with bachelor’s or advanced degrees. A bachelor’s degree often is necessary for administrative positions and 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 the *Handbook* does note:

Some nurses move into the business side of health care. Their nursing expertise and experience on a healthcare team equip them with the ability to manage ambulatory, acute, home health, and chronic care services. Employers – including hospitals, insurance companies, pharmaceutical manufacturers, and managed care organizations, among others – need RNs for health planning and development, marketing, consulting, policy development, and quality assurance. . . .

The proffered position appears to resemble a nursing position beyond the entry-level registered nurse, but it is not analogous to an administrative nursing position. A recent Service 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.<sup>1</sup> 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.

A review of the *Handbook* finds no requirement of a baccalaureate or higher degree in a specialized area for employment in the proffered position. Any of the three career paths noted above are sufficient for the beneficiary to perform the duties associated with the offered position. Experience and good performance can lead to promotion for a registered nurse to more responsible positions, such as assistant head nurse or head nurse/nurse supervisor. Likewise, good performance and experience can equip a nurse to perform the duties of an in service coordinator in the healthcare field. There is no requirement, however, that a nurse, or any other healthcare professional performing the duties of an in service coordinator, have a baccalaureate or higher degree or its equivalent as a minimum requirement for entry into that position. Thus, the petitioner has not established the first criterion of 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(A).

The petitioner has failed to establish that a degree requirement is common to the industry in parallel positions among similar organizations, or that it normally requires a degree in a specific specialty for entry into the proffered position, and offers no evidence in this regard. The petitioner has not, therefore, established the referenced criteria at 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(A)(2) or (3).

Finally, the petitioner has not established that the duties of the proffered position are so complex or unique that they can only be performed by an individual with a degree in a specific specialty. Nor has it been

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<sup>1</sup> Memorandum from Johnny N. Williams, Executive Associate Commissioner, INS Office of Field Operations, Guidance on Adjudication of H-1B Petitions Filed on Behalf of Nurses, HQISD 70/6.2.8-P (November 27, 2002).

established that the duties of the offered position are so specialized and complex that knowledge required to perform them is usually associated with the attainment of a baccalaureate or higher degree in a specific specialty. 8 C.F.R. § 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(A)(2) and (4). The duties described are general and routine nursing duties for in service nursing coordinators and similar positions. A baccalaureate level education in a specific specialty is not required for entry into the position and the duties described by the petitioner are routinely performed in the industry by nursing or administrative personnel with less than a baccalaureate level education.

The petitioner also asserts that a previous agency decision has classified the offered position as a specialty occupation. This reference will not sustain the petitioner's burden of establishing H-1B qualification in the petition now before the AAO. This record of proceeding does not contain the entire record of proceeding in the petition referred to by counsel. Accordingly, no comparison of the positions can be made. Each nonimmigrant petition is a separate proceeding with a separate record. See 8 C.F.R. § 103.8(d). In making a determination of statutory eligibility, the AAO is limited to the information contained in the record of proceeding. See 8 C.F.R. § 103.2(b)(16)(ii). It warrants noting that Congress intended this visa classification for aliens that are to be employed in an occupation that requires the theoretical and practical application of a body of highly specialized knowledge. Congress specifically stated that such an occupation would require, as a *minimum* qualification, a baccalaureate or higher degree in the specialty. CIS regularly approves H-1B petitions for qualified aliens who are to be employed as engineers, computer scientists, certified public accountants, college professors, and other such professions. These occupations all require a baccalaureate degree in the specialty occupation as a minimum for entry into the occupation and fairly represent the types of professions that Congress contemplated when it created that visa category. In the present matter, the petitioner has offered the beneficiary a position as an in service coordinator in its nursing department. For the reasons discussed above, the proffered position does not require attainment of a baccalaureate or higher degree in a specific specialty as a minimum for entry into the occupation, and approval of a petition for another beneficiary based on identical facts would constitute material error, gross error, and a violation of 8 C.F.R. § 214.2 paragraph (h).

The petitioner has failed to establish that any of the four factors enumerated above are present in this proceeding. It is, therefore, concluded that the petitioner has not demonstrated that the offered position is a specialty occupation within the meaning of the regulations. Accordingly, the AAO shall not disturb the director's denial of the petition.

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 and the appeal shall accordingly be dismissed.

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