

# SENATE, No. 620

## STATE OF NEW JERSEY 213th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2008 SESSION

**Sponsored by:**

**Senator JOSEPH F. VITALE**

**District 19 (Middlesex)**

**Senator DANA L. REDD**

**District 5 (Camden and Gloucester)**

**SYNOPSIS**

Requires newly licensed registered professional nurse to attain baccalaureate degree in nursing within 10 years of initial licensure.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel



**(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 10/3/2008)**

1 AN ACT concerning educational requirements for registered  
2 professional nurses and amending P.L.1947, c.262.

3

4 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State  
5 of New Jersey:

6

7 1. Section 4 of P.L.1947, 262 (C.45:11-26) is amended to read  
8 as follows:

9 4. a. Qualifications of applicants. An applicant for a license to  
10 practice professional nursing shall submit to the board evidence in  
11 such form as the board may prescribe that said applicant: (1) has  
12 attained his or her eighteenth birthday; (2) is of good moral  
13 character, is not a habitual user of drugs and has never been  
14 convicted or has not pleaded nolo contendere, non vult contendere  
15 or non vult to an indictment, information or complaint alleging a  
16 violation of any Federal or State law relating to narcotic drugs; (3)  
17 holds a diploma from an accredited 4-year high school or the  
18 equivalent thereof as determined by the New Jersey State  
19 Department of Education; (4) has completed a course of  
20 professional nursing study in an accredited school of professional  
21 nursing as defined by the board and holds a diploma therefrom.

22 Notwithstanding anything herein contained, any person who  
23 possesses the educational and school of professional nursing  
24 qualifications for registration required by the law of this State at the  
25 time of his or her graduation from an accredited school of  
26 professional nursing shall be deemed to possess the qualifications  
27 (3) and (4) prescribed hereinabove in this subsection.

28 Notwithstanding anything herein contained, any person who  
29 shall have qualifications (1) and (2) and shall have graduated from a  
30 school of professional nursing, which need not be an accredited  
31 school, shall be deemed to have qualifications (3) and (4) upon  
32 complying with such reasonable requirements as to high school and  
33 school of nursing studies and training as the board may prescribe;  
34 provided, however, that such person shall make application in form  
35 prescribed by the board within 1 year from the effective date of this  
36 act and shall satisfactorily complete such reasonable requirements  
37 and successfully pass the examinations, which examinations shall  
38 be limited to subject matters in the curriculum required by the board  
39 at the time of the applicant's graduation, provided for in subsection  
40 b. hereof, within 2 years after the date of the filing of such  
41 application.

42 b. License.

43 (1) By examination. The applicant shall be required to pass a  
44 written examination in such subjects as the board may determine,  
45 which examination may be supplemented by an oral or practical

**EXPLANATION** – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is  
not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

1 examination or both. Upon successfully passing such examinations  
2 the applicant shall be licensed by the board to practice professional  
3 nursing.

4 (2) By ~~indorsement~~ endorsement without examination. The  
5 board may issue a license to practice professional nursing without  
6 examination to an applicant who has been duly licensed or  
7 registered as a registered or professional nurse by examination or by  
8 original waiver under the laws of another State, territory or  
9 possession of the United States, or the District of Columbia, or any  
10 foreign country, if in the opinion of the board the applicant has the  
11 qualifications required by this act for the licensing of professional  
12 nurses, or equivalent qualifications.

13 c. Fees. An applicant for a license ~~by examination shall pay~~  
14 to the board at the time of application a fee of \$25.00 and at the  
15 time of each application for re-examination a fee of \$20.00. An  
16 applicant for a license without examination shall pay to the board at  
17 the time of application a fee of \$15.00 ~~shall pay such fees as shall~~  
18 be established by regulation by the board or the Division of  
19 Consumer Affairs in the Department of Law and Public Safety.

20 d. Nurses registered under a previous law. Any person who on  
21 the effective date of this act holds a subsisting certificate of  
22 registration as a registered nurse issued pursuant to the provisions  
23 of the act repealed by section 22 of this act shall be deemed to be  
24 licensed as a professional nurse under this act during the calendar  
25 year in which this act shall take effect, and such person and any  
26 person who heretofore held a certificate of registration under said  
27 act hereby repealed as aforesaid shall be entitled to a renewal of  
28 such license as in the case of professional nurses licensed originally  
29 under this act.

30 e. Title and abbreviations used by licensee. Any person who  
31 holds a license to practice professional nursing under this act shall  
32 during the effective period of such license be entitled to use the title  
33 "Registered Nurse" and the abbreviation "R.N." ~~【The effective~~  
34 ~~period of a license or a renewal thereof shall commence on the date~~  
35 ~~of issuance and shall terminate at the end of the calendar year in~~  
36 ~~which it is issued, and shall not include any period of suspension~~  
37 ~~ordered by the board as hereinafter provided】.~~

38 f. Notwithstanding the provisions of this section to the contrary,  
39 a person who is initially issued a license to practice professional  
40 nursing, beginning on or after the effective date of P.L. , c.  
41 (pending before the Legislature as this bill), shall be required to  
42 attain a baccalaureate degree in nursing within 10 years of initial  
43 licensure, in accordance with regulations adopted by the board, as a  
44 condition of renewal of the license. If a licensee is not able to  
45 attain the degree within 10 years of initial licensure, upon  
46 application of the licensee in a form and manner determined by the  
47 board, the board may grant a one-time conditional renewal of the

1 license, if the licensee agrees to meet the baccalaureate degree  
2 requirement of this subsection within a period of no more than two  
3 years.  
4 (cf: P.L.1966, c.186, s.2)

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6 2. This act shall take effect on the 90th day after enactment.

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STATEMENT

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11 This bill would require registered professional nurses (RNs) who  
12 are initially licensed by the New Jersey Board of Nursing, on or  
13 after the effective date of the bill, to attain a baccalaureate degree in  
14 nursing within 10 years of their initial licensure. The bill authorizes  
15 a licensee who is not able to attain the degree within a 10-year  
16 period to request a one-time (up to two-year) extension of the  
17 requirement in order to complete the degree.

18 The purpose of this bill to encourage newly-licensed RNs to  
19 advance their education in order to deliver the best quality care to  
20 their patients in an increasingly complex health care environment.  
21 Studies comparing patient outcomes with the educational  
22 background of nurses demonstrate that in hospitals with higher  
23 proportions of nurses educated at the baccalaureate level or higher,  
24 surgical patients experienced lower mortality and failure-to-rescue  
25 rates.

26 Under the provisions of this bill, RNs will continue to be able to  
27 enter the nursing profession through associate degree and diploma  
28 nursing programs. These new nurses will then have 10 years to  
29 advance their professional education and complete a baccalaureate  
30 degree in nursing. The requirements of the bill will not affect  
31 nurses who received their nursing license prior to the effective date  
32 of the bill, although it is the sponsor's intent that currently licensed  
33 nurses also seek to advance their education and training.

34 The bill also deletes obsolete language concerning licensure fees  
35 and duration of licenses, which is now provided for in Chapter 1 of  
36 Title 45 of the Revised Statutes.