

2014 - 2017

# Board of Registered Nursing



# Strategic Plan

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## California Board of Registered Nursing Members

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## Message from the Board President

The Board of Registered Nursing is pleased to present its 2014-2017 Strategic Plan. The strategic planning process has been a collaborative effort between Board Members, Board staff, and the public. We have identified key issues and goals for which the Board will address in the years to come. The resulting strategic plan focuses the Board on established goals, while allowing for flexibility to address new challenges that lie ahead. We continue to be guided by the Board's mission – to protect and advocate for the health and safety of the public by ensuring the highest quality registered nurses in the state of California.

The Board continually strives to attain meaningful improvements in our programs and services. Moving forward, two areas of focus will be efficiency and consistency. You will see these threads running throughout the document. As we enter a period of growth and change in the nursing profession, the Board is committed to providing the highest level of service possible and aligning this commitment with the Governor's efforts to sustain California's economic recovery.

This Strategic Plan is the foundation for the Board as we strive to be one of the leading regulatory agencies of the Registered Nursing profession. We believe this plan offers a roadmap to the future with clear focus on building the basic framework for the regulation and oversight of the Nursing profession.

As President of the Board of Registered Nursing, I invite all interested stakeholders to join in working with us over the next four years to achieve the goals outlined in this strategic plan. I would like to thank everyone involved in the planning and development process of the 2014-2017 Board of Registered Nursing Strategic Plan.

Raymond Mallel  
President, Board of Registered Nursing

## **Our Mission**

The Board of Registered Nursing protects and advocates for the health and safety of the public by ensuring the highest quality registered nurses in the state of California.

## **Our Values**

### ***Consumer Protection***

We make effective and informed decisions in the best interest, and for the safety of Californians.

### ***Trust***

We communicate with credibility and truthfulness. Our communications are open and authentic with all stakeholders.

### ***Effectiveness***

We make informed decisions that make a difference and have a positive, measurable impact.

### ***Integrity***

We are committed to honesty, ethical conduct, and responsibility.

# California Board of Registered Nursing

The Board of Registered Nursing (BRN) is a state governmental agency established by law to protect the public by regulating the practice of registered nurses. The BRN is responsible for implementation and enforcement of the Nursing Practice Act, the laws related to nursing education, licensure, practice, and discipline. The Nursing Practice Act created a nine-member Board which serves as the BRN decision-making body.

The nine-member Board is composed of four members of the public and five registered nurses. The five registered nurses include two direct-patient care nurses, an advanced practice nurse, a nurse administrator, and a nurse educator. Seven of the members are appointed by the Governor and two of the public members are appointed by the Legislature. Each member serves a four-year term and can be re-appointed, although the member cannot serve more than two consecutive terms.

The BRN regulates California registered nurses and has over 408,000 RN licensees providing healthcare services in a variety of settings. Settings where registered nurses practice include: health departments, health maintenance organizations, home health agencies, hospitals, private practice, schools, and skilled nursing facilities. Regardless of the title or setting, the registered nurse's practice is governed by the Board of Registered Nursing.

The BRN performs a variety of activities in its mission to protect consumers, including:

## **1. Setting RN Educational Standards**

The BRN sets educational standards for nursing programs which prepare individuals to become licensed as registered nurses.

## **2. Approving California Nursing Programs**

There are over 140 pre-licensure nursing programs and over 20 advanced practice programs which have been approved because they meet BRN educational standards.

## **3. Evaluating Licensure Applications**

Applications are evaluated to determine whether the applicant meets all licensure requirements. To be licensed the applicant must:

- complete the educational requirements
- pass a national licensing examination
- be cleared through a background check for conviction of any crime which might make the applicant ineligible for licensure

#### **4. Issuing and Renewing Licenses**

Registered Nursing licenses are issued to applicants who meet the licensing requirements. The license must be renewed every two years.

#### **5. Issuing Certificates**

The BRN issues certificates to eligible public health nurses, nurse practitioners, nurse anesthetists, nurse midwives, clinical nurse specialists, and furnishing numbers to Nurse Practitioners and Nurse Midwives. The BRN also maintains a list of eligible psychiatric/mental health nurse specialists.

#### **6. Taking Disciplinary Action**

If a nurse violates the Nursing Practice Act, the BRN may take disciplinary action against the nurse's license. Grounds for discipline focus on behaviors that place patients at risk of harm. The disciplinary action is dependent on the nature and severity of the violation and what is necessary to protect the public. The disciplinary action becomes a part of the RN's file and is accessible to the public.

#### **7. Managing a Diversion Program**

The BRN's Diversion Program is an alternative to the discipline process for nurses whose practice may be impaired due to substance use disorder or mental illness. This confidential program protects the public while enabling the nurse to be rehabilitated.

#### **8. Operating an Online License Verification System**

The BRN's online license verification system allows the consumer to validate the status of a nurse's license. Consumers may access the license verification system to learn if:

- the person is licensed as an RN
- the license is active, inactive, or lapsed
- the nurse has any BRN certificates
- there is any disciplinary action against the license
- online services are available seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

## Significant Board Accomplishments

The strategic planning process encompassed an evaluation of the Board's previous strategic plan. The Board has accomplished the following twelve goals since the adoption of the 2006 strategic plan.

### **BRN Website Improvements**

The Board of Registered Nursing website, [www.rn.ca.gov](http://www.rn.ca.gov), was re-designed and leveraged as a source of education and outreach. The changes and additions included: introduction of an e-newsletter, updated brochures, posting Board meeting agendas and minutes as well as other reports and surveys, e-mail subscription enrollment, and the posting legislative updates to the Nursing Practice Act.

### **Electronic Transfer of Fingerprint Data**

In order to eliminate the manual entry of individual fingerprinting information, the Board partnered with the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA), the Office of Information Services (OIS), and the Department of Justice (DOJ) to implement an electronic transfer of fingerprinting data.

### **BRN Serving Enforcement Legal Pleadings**

Beginning in October 2009, BRN enforcement staff began serving all accusations and petitions to revoke probation.

### **BRN Preparing Default Decisions**

Beginning in 2010, the Attorney General's Office delegated the preparation of default decisions to BRN staff under the direction of DCA attorneys. This delegation continues to save the Board valuable time in their investigation timeframes.

### **Retroactive Fingerprinting**

All active licensees licensed prior to August 1990 have either submitted fingerprints to the Board or have been made inactive and issued a citation and fine for non-compliance.

### **Webcast of Board Meetings**

In 2009, the Board began regularly providing live webcast access to Board meetings. Previously recorded Board meeting webcasts can be viewed on the BRN web site along with written agendas and meeting minutes. In addition, all meeting materials are sent to board members electronically to eliminate wasteful copying and printing.

### **Out of State Disciplinary Actions Comparison Project**

In March 2010, the Board reviewed all disciplinary actions taken by other Boards of Nursing against current California licensees and took disciplinary action when necessary. In October 2010, BRN became a full member of the National Council of State Boards of Nursing and now receives immediate notification if a California Registered Nurse has been disciplined in another state.

### **Restructure of Enforcement Division**

The restructure of the Enforcement Division included the creation of a complaint intake unit, two regional special investigator units, and a discipline unit as well as added staff to the probation and diversion programs. As a result of the restructure, processes were streamlined and BRN reduced their discipline timelines from three to **two** years.

### **Increased Usage of Citation and Fine**

The Board increased the usage of citation and fine authority over the past five years for less egregious violations of the Nursing Practice Act. The Board issued 115 citations in FY 2008/09 and issued 769 in FY 2012/13 which was an increase of 569%.

### **International Application Evaluation Improvements**

BRN licensing staff improved the international application evaluation process. The improvement resulted in more in depth evaluation of clinical and didactic training materials to ensure applicants have completed legally required education and training to become licensed in California as a RN.

### **Fraudulent International Educational Documents**

BRN licensing staff improved the international application evaluation process to better identify fraudulent documents. As a result, the Board has investigated and successfully prosecuted individuals who provided fraudulent transcripts and or diplomas.

### **Unapproved Nursing Programs**

The Board improved the process of investigating unapproved distance learning programs and successfully disciplined licensed nurses and referred any unlicensed individuals to the Attorney General's Office for civil injunction.

### **Prelicensure Regulations**

BRN prelicensure regulations were reviewed, updated and finalized in 2010. This was a collaborative effort between Board members, Board Staff, Deans and Directors of the nursing programs and the public.

## OUR STRATEGIC GOALS

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### **1 LICENSING**

The Board promotes licensing standards to protect consumers and allow access to the profession.

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### **2 ENFORCEMENT**

The Board protects the health and safety of consumers through the enforcement of the laws and regulations governing the practice of nursing.

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### **3 CONTINUING EDUCATION**

The Board establishes continuing education standards to ensure excellence in practice and promote public safety.

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### **4 EDUCATIONAL OVERSIGHT**

The Board advances higher education standards to increase the quality of education and ensure consumer protection.

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### **5 LAWS AND REGULATIONS**

The Board ensures that statutes, regulations, policies and procedures strengthen and support their mandate and mission.

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### **6 ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**

The Board builds an excellent organization through proper Board governance, effective leadership and responsible management.

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### **7 OUTREACH**

The Board informs consumers, licensees and stakeholders about the practice and regulation of the profession.

## **GOAL 1: LICENSING \***

*The Board promotes licensing standards to protect consumers and allow access to the profession.*

- 1.1 Partner with the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) to create an online application submission tool through the BreEZe system.
- 1.2 Review existing application processes, and make improvements as necessary, to ensure the timely, efficient, and accurate processing of all applications. Ensure proper staff training, if necessary.
- 1.3 Ensure adequate staffing levels to achieve the Board's mandated goals and objectives in the areas of licensing. Pursue additional staff resources and budgetary authority, if necessary.
- 1.4 Provide training to licensing staff to assist in their identification of fraudulent domestic and international documents and programs and partner with external agencies to assist the Board in minimizing fraud.
- 1.5 Examine compact agreement standards and issue a Board position.
- 1.6 Determine feasibility of conducting in-person site inspections of international schools to evaluate the quality of their education, per code Business and Professions Code 2736 (a) (2).

*\*Objectives in each goal are listed in order of priority.*

## **GOAL 2: ENFORCEMENT**

*The Board protects the health and safety of consumers through the enforcement of the laws and regulations governing the practice of nursing.*

- 2.1 Maximize the use of interim suspension and PC 23 orders for egregious offenses to ensure consumer protection.
- 2.2 Partner with the Attorney General's Office and the Office of Administrative Hearings to review enforcement processes, and make improvements as necessary, to ensure that complaints are investigated and adjudicated in the most timely and efficient means possible.
- 2.3 Successfully hire and onboard new enforcement employees and evaluate the impact of these newly authorized positions have on the effectiveness of our enforcement program. Pursue additional staff resources and budgetary authority, if necessary.
- 2.4 Modify the Board's case assignment methodology to align with statewide geographic locations and investigator workload.
- 2.5 Partner with the Attorney General's Office to explore the feasibility of creating a data exchange interface between our agencies to facilitate communication and streamline the formal discipline process.
- 2.6 Evaluate the current process for Board review of disciplinary cases and make improvements as necessary to increase timeliness of decision-making.
- 2.7 Complete retroactive fingerprinting of licensees.
- 2.8 Improve onboarding of new Board members to ensure members are quickly and thoroughly educated on Board processes.
- 2.9 Create a webinar for expert witnesses to educate them on Board operations.

## **GOAL 3: CONTINUING EDUCATION**

*The Board establishes continuing education standards to ensure excellence in practice and promote public safety.*

- 3.1 Establish a Continuing Education Unit to conduct continuing education audits of licensees, education providers and individual courses, and pursue additional staff resources and budgetary authority to staff the unit.
- 3.2 Analyze the need to revise the Board's continuing education guidelines to include provisions on allowable and/or non-allowable continuing education topics.
- 3.3 Amend regulations to address online continuing education courses.
- 3.4 Update the Board's website to include continuing medical education information.

## **GOAL 4: EDUCATIONAL OVERSIGHT**

*The Board advances higher education standards to increase the quality of education and ensure consumer protection.*

- 4.1 Conduct a salary and educational requirements evaluation of the Nurse Education Consultant classification and pursue changes to increase recruitment and retention.
- 4.2 Explore feasibility of a BRN internship program to educate and recruit qualified nurses for Nurse Education Consultant positions (contingent upon completion of objective 4.1).
- 4.3 Identify and seek clarification to strengthen regulatory language for initial program approval including curricula criteria to ensure nurses are prepared for current and future healthcare practices.
- 4.4 Investigate the need to provide guidance on simulation training and online clinical nursing courses and amend regulations, if necessary.

## **GOAL 5: LAWS AND REGULATIONS**

*The Board ensures that statutes, regulations, policies and procedures strengthen and support their mandate and mission.*

- 5.1 Create a greater presence in the legislative arena to more proactively address issues affecting the Board and the nursing profession.
- 5.2 Pursue modification of the Business and Professions Code 494 to adjust action timeframes.
- 5.3 Partner with the Department (DCA) to utilize their omnibus bill in order to clean up language in the Nursing Practice Act.
- 5.4 Modify regulatory language to include additional violation types in the cite and fine program.
- 5.5 Amend regulation to require applicants to provide a copy of their existing nursing licenses, when licensure is a graduation requirement of their educational nursing program.

## **GOAL 6: ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS**

*The Board builds an excellent organization through proper Broad governance, effective leadership and responsible management.*

- 6.1 Leverage new BreEZe technology to enhance online services for applicants and licensees, including real-time application status and deficiency updates.
- 6.2 Evaluate the effectiveness of the current voice response system and make modifications, if necessary, to improve call routing and reduce call wait time.
- 6.3 Explore the feasibility of establishing an independent Information Technology Support Unit within the Board. Pursue additional staff resources and budgetary authority, if necessary.
- 6.4 Create and implement a workforce succession plan that guides the Board's overall workforce continuity and addresses the Board's critical need to hire and retain Nurse Education Consultants.
- 6.5 Develop an onboarding program for new employees.
- 6.6 Establish a Legislation and Regulations Unit to monitor legislation and to facilitate the Board's regulatory and statutory change initiatives. Pursue additional staff resources and budgetary authority, if necessary.
- 6.7 Design and implement a space management plan to accommodate program growth.
- 6.8 Improve internal communication and collaboration between functional work units.
- 6.9 Create best practices manuals tailored to each functional work unit within the Board.

## **GOAL 7: OUTREACH**

*The Board informs consumers, licensees and stakeholders about the practice and regulation of the profession.*

- 7.1 Educate the public and the legislature on the roles and responsibilities of registered nurses and other healthcare workers.
- 7.2 Develop and implement an outreach strategy to target identified high need groups.
- 7.3 Increase Board visibility at national committees and conferences to encourage a more leading role in national policy decision-making.
- 7.4 Develop webinars to educate stakeholders on application requirements, diversion and continuing education units.
- 7.5 Revise the Board's website to ensure ease of use and accessibility.

## **STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS**

The DCA's SOLID Planning Solutions unit developed this strategic plan by conducting a preliminary meeting with the Executive Officer and Board staff to learn about the Board's background, to identify key focus areas, to define roles and responsibilities, and establish a customized strategic planning schedule.

To understand the environment in which the Board operates and identify factors that could impact the Board's success, SOLID conducted an environmental scan and analysis of the internal and external environments by collecting information through the following methods:

- An online survey sent to 5,300 stakeholders, comprised of Registered Nursing professionals, professional associations, California colleges, Board staff and others who expressed interest in the strategic direction of the Board. The online survey received 601 responses.
- Telephone interviews with Board members during December 2013 and January 2014.
- Focus group discussion with Board staff on January 14, 2014.

The most significant themes and trends identified from the environmental scan were discussed by the Board during a strategic planning session facilitated by SOLID on March 3, 2014. This information guided the Board in development of its mission and values, while directing the strategic goals and objectives outlined in this 2014 – 2017 strategic plan.

# **BOARD OF REGISTERED NURSING KEY STAKEHOLDERS**

## **Individuals**

Consumers  
Registered Nurses  
Registered Nurse students and applicants  
Employers of RNs  
Healthcare practitioners  
BRN Employees

## **Organizations**

Nursing organizations and associations  
Health care related organizations  
National Council of State Boards of Nursing  
Nursing education programs  
Colleges and Universities  
Contractors providing services to the Board

## **Government Entities**

Governor's Office  
Legislature  
Department of Consumer Affairs  
State Oversight Agencies  
Division of Investigation (DCA)  
Office of Attorney General  
Office of Administrative Hearings  
Health-related Governmental agencies



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**Prepared by**  
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California Department of Consumer Affairs  
Adopted: 04/03/2014

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*This strategic plan is based on stakeholder information and discussions facilitated by SOLID for the California Board of Registered Nursing from December 2013 to March 2014. Subsequent amendments may have been made after Board adoption of this plan.*