



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, March 10, 2016

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Indiana Examines Nursing Programs and Licensure Pass Rates *Students Should Consider Exam Pass Rates When Selecting Programs*

INDIANAPOLIS – Licensure examination pass rates for Indiana’s aspiring nurses vary widely by college sector, degree type and institution, according to data presented at the Indiana Commission for Higher Education’s March meeting today. To practice in the nursing profession, individuals must complete an approved postsecondary program *and* pass a licensure examination.

“Nursing is a high-need career field in Indiana, with many postsecondary options for those hoping to enter the profession. Licensure examination pass rates are an important consideration for students when selecting a nursing program,” Indiana Commissioner for Higher Education Teresa Lubbers said. “The Commission will begin sharing this data as part of its commitment to providing students useful information to help them choose the best college for their investment of time and money.”

Data provided by Indiana’s State Board of Nursing found that the four-year average pass rate (2012-2015) for students in associate-degree registered-nurse (RN) programs was 87.8 percent for the public-sector, 83.3 percent for the not-for-profit sector, and 58.4 percent for the for-profit sector. Within the for-profit sector, four-year average pass rates range from 21 percent at Indiana Dabney University (now closed) to 95 percent at Harrison College.

In contrast, four-year average licensure exam pass rates for students in bachelor-degree RN programs is above 80 percent in every college sector. [View results for every RN and licensed practical nurse \(LPN\) program in Indiana by clicking here.](#)

Indiana’s State Board of Nursing (ISBN) monitors and collects data on license exam pass rates for all Indiana nursing programs. If a nursing program has a license exam pass rate below 80 percent for three consecutive years, the ISBN requires the program to submit a one-year Plan of Correction. If the program fails to meet the 80 percent threshold after one year on the Plan of Correction, ISBN may move to place the program on conditional accreditation and, without evidence of further improvement, could initiate withdrawal of accreditation for the program.

“This is an important first step to provide prospective nursing students useful information about Indiana’s nursing programs,” Toni Herron, Education Compliance Officer for the Indiana State Board of Nursing, said. “Our board is committed to continued collaboration with the Commission for Higher Education to find more ways to ensure Indiana’s nursing programs are high quality and provide significant value to our state’s future nurses.”

In 2015, the ISBN shut down Indiana Dabney University’s nursing program for consistently low licensure examination pass rates. Based on the most recent three-year average pass-rates, ISBN reviewed the following nursing programs at its March 3, 2016 meeting and requested plans of correction: Brightwood College; Brown Mackie Fort Wayne; Fortis College; ITT Indianapolis, Merrillville, Newburg and South Bend; and, MJS School of Nursing. The Indiana Professional Licensing Agency has extensive information about nursing education and licensing requirements [online here.](#)

On Tuesday, March 8, 2016, this information was presented to the Board of Proprietary Education (BPE), which authorizes Indiana’s for-profit colleges. Discussion focused on the mostly low pass rates for students in for-profit nursing programs and ways BPE can assist ISBN in protecting student consumers from particularly low-quality programs.

Representatives from Harrison College shared information about their successful associate-degree registered-nurse program. Harrison College’s four-year average was 94.3 percent—the second highest among all nursing programs in every sector. The BPE was created in 2012 and is administered, staffed and led by the Commission for Higher Education.

To supplement its existing Return on Investment Reports and protect student consumers, the Commission has posted this nursing licensure examination pass rate data [here](#). Including pass rate data for nursing is an important step in the Commission’s efforts to provide Hoosiers a clear, comprehensive picture of college value and to ensure quality programs—particularly in the for-profit sector.