

CGFNS reauthorized to certify health care workers

CGFNS International and its division, the International Commission on Healthcare Professions (IChP), were reauthorized by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to continue certifying health care workers born outside the United States in seven occupations covered under section 212(a)(5)(C) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). The approval is valid for five years beginning November 19, 2009, and comprises a visa credentials assessment certification for registered and licensed vocational nurses, physical therapists, speech language pathologists, audiologists, medical technologists, medical technicians, occupational therapists and physicians assistants seeking employment in the United States. This certification process was established by Congress in 1996 and is required for all non-citizens in those occupations.

BREAKING NEWS

CGFNS was notified of the reauthorization on November 9, 2009. CGFNS was initially granted a five-year authorization in November 2004 as a certification organization by the Department of Homeland Security, Citizenship and Immigration Services. Prior to that, CGFNS operated under the authority of interim rules previously issued by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service's Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996.

"CGFNS is pleased with the U.S. Government's five-year reauthorization to allow us to continue providing a certification service for health care workers seeking U.S. employment. Its recognition of our more than 30 years' experience certifying the credentials of health care workers born outside the United States

is gratifying. No other organization in the country is authorized to certify health care professionals from all seven occupations," said Barbara L. Nichols, Chief Executive Officer of CGFNS International. "In the past 12 years, we have issued 90,000 International Commission on Healthcare Professions *VisaScreen*® certificates to foreign-born health care professionals seeking to work in the United States."

The International Commission on Healthcare Professions *VisaScreen*® certificate is issued after a complete evaluation of a professional's credentials to verify that they meet the minimum statutory requirements. The International Commission on Healthcare Professions administers this screening process. The certificate must be presented to:

- a U.S. Embassy or Consulate for visa approval
- a border agent to have Trade NAFTA (TN) status granted
- or USCIS to change or adjust immigration status.

The *VisaScreen*® program is comprised of:

- 1) a credentials review of the applicant's professional education and all of the licenses/certification/registration that the applicant has held
- 2) for registered nurses, successful completion of either the CGFNS Qualifying Exam or the NCLEX-RN® (for registered nurses)
- 3) successful completion of designated examinations demonstrating English language proficiency.

The *VisaScreen*® certificate is valid for five years and must be renewed if the person has not been awarded permanent status.

CGFNS publishes new book for health care professionals

This book is dedicated to all foreign-educated health professionals whose knowledge, dedication and deeds live on through their caring spirit.

A primary resource for foreign-educated allied health professionals (other than nurses) has just been published by CGFNS International and Springer Publishing Company. *The Official Guide for Foreign-Educated Allied Health Professionals: What You Need to Know About Health Care and the Allied Health Professions in the United States* provides invaluable insight about providing safe, competent health care in the United States. The challenges they face in pursuing their dreams to practice in the U.S. range from leaving their home countries to obtaining a U.S. work visa, attaining licensure and employment in the United States, understanding and communicating within the U.S. health care system and adjusting to a new life.

The book is now available for the purchase price of \$40.00 and can be ordered online from Springer Publishing at <http://www.springerpub.com/cgfn-allied>.

CGFNS International has secured complementary copies of the book for health care professionals who applied for its *VisaScreen*® service in 2009 as a special promotion. Emails will be sent to those who are eligible for this promotion.

Based on 30 years of providing credentials evaluation and verification services pertaining to the education, registration and licensure of health care professionals worldwide, CGFNS International teamed with Springer Publishing Company to publish this guide for foreign-educated allied health professionals who seek to practice in the United States. CGFNS International CEO Barbara L. Nichols, DHL, MS, RN, FAAN, and CGFNS International Director of Global Research and Test Administration Catherine R. Davis, PhD, RN, serve as editors for the book.

Complimentary copies are now available to 2009 VisaScreen® health care professional applicants

ISPN program launched in Vietnam

CGFNS International, with its 30 years' experience testing international nurses, has announced the launch of a program to strengthen international nursing education and practice by introducing the International Standards for Professional Nurses (ISPN) program in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. The ISPN program was introduced in Hanoi on November 17, 2009, and in Ho Chi Minh City on November 22, 2009.



The International Standards for Professional Nurses program consists of two components: a verification of first-level, general nurse status and an examination to assess nursing knowledge.

The examination is the CGFNS Qualifying Exam®, which has been administered worldwide since 1977 to educated nurses educated outside the United States who wish to practice in the United States. The exam satisfies that component of both the CGFNS Certification Program and the *VisaScreen*®: Visa Credentials Assessment program.

"The CGFNS Qualifying Exam®," said Barbara L. Nichols, CEO, CGFNS International, "is being unbundled from the CGFNS Certification Program to create an exam component for the ISPN so nurses in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia can measure their nursing knowledge against established international standards."

Doan Hong Nam, President, IIG Vietnam, has been named the CGFNS country representative for Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. He said, "I am delighted to bring the ISPN program to Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. This program will provide the international benchmarking that we desire to strengthen nursing education and practice. Our nurses aspire to achieve international standards and I am confident that they will take full advantage of this opportunity to participate in this program."

First-level, general nurses residing in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia who wish to participate in the CGFNS-ISPN program must have graduated from a government-approved nursing school and have their statuses verified. The first ISPN administration of the CGFNS Qualifying Exam® is scheduled for 2010.

BREAKING NEWS

The exam's foundation is formed by the four major areas of nursing – adult health nursing, nursing of children, psychiatric/mental health nursing and maternal/infant nursing.

For more details about the CGFNS-ISPN program in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, go to www.cgfnsvietnam.com.

CGFNS publishes new book for health care professionals

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

In the book's Foreword, Barbara Sanders, PhD, PT, SCS, Associate Dean, College of Health Professions, Texas State University, writes: "This book has been developed and written by some of the leading health care professionals in the United States today. It is a definitive source for information on understanding the myriad of requirements as the health care professional moves through the process of securing an occupational visa, licensure and employment in the United States."

Our thoughts and prayers are with those affected by the tragic weather events in the Asia Pacific region. For news from us regarding our services there, please click on the link below:

<http://www.cgfns.org/sections/announcements/news/2009/10-01-09-weather.shtml>

CGFNS 2010 Qualifying Exam® schedule

The CGFNS Qualifying Exam®, one component of the Certification Program, tests your nursing knowledge/understanding compared to how it is taught and practiced in the United States. The exam uses objective, multiple-choice and alternate item type questions designed by testing experts to help predict your likelihood of passing the NCLEX-RN® (National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses) examination.

The instructions of your Certification Program application form asks you to select two different exam dates and a location.

Go to the **Test center locations and numbers** on the CGFNS Web site at <http://www.cgfns.org/sections/programs/cp/qecenters.shtml> and select one or two locations for your test and enter the city's corresponding number on your application.

Then go to the **CGFNS Qualifying Exam® dates** on the

CGFNS Web site at <http://www.cgfns.org/sections/programs/cp/qedates.shtml> and select two dates for your test and enter the dates on your application.

Choose your exam date and location thoughtfully. Your application fee will be forfeited if you miss the exam and had not requested a change of date or location 10 weeks prior to that exam date. If you miss the exam, you will have to pay to reschedule the exam at a later date.

When you become eligible for the exam, we will try our best to schedule you for your first choice. An exam may be cancelled at a particular center if there are too few applicants rostered for a particular center, an unstable political environment, natural disaster, or other adverse conditions. If your first choice is not available, you will be scheduled for your second choice.

| Examination date | Deadline for new applications* | Deadline for reapplications* | Deadline to change location/test date |
|------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 10 March 2010 | 16 December 2009 | 13 January 2010 | 30 December 2009 |

*Application deadlines are firm unless extended by CGFNS. See our Web site at <http://www.cgfns.org/sections/programs/cp/cp-qe.shtml>

Frequently asked applicant questions

What is a CGFNS ID number?

CGFNS ID numbers are assigned to applicants when they place their first order for a CGFNS service. The CGFNS ID number is emailed or mailed depending on the preferred form of communication that you selected in your application.

What can I check online?

First you need to "Create New Web User" at <https://www.cgfns.org/cerpassweb/login.jsp> if you haven't already. You can use the same link to return and login as a returning user. Once logged into CGFNS Connect, you can check the status of your application, whether we received your documents and/or credentials from

schools/licensing authorities, whether you have been sent your ID number and more. You can also contact us by phone or through the Contact Us form on our Web site at <https://www.cgfns.org/cerpassweb/processContactUs.do>

Who do I designate as my CES report recipients?

CES report recipients include a state board of nursing, a school or a potential employer. For each recipient, indicate the type of report and purpose of the request. You are automatically sent a copy of the report that is sent to the two recipients you choose. There is no need to designate yourself as one of the recipients.

What if I make a mistake on my application; how do I delete it?

Regardless of whether you submitted or found an incorrect entry online or made an incorrect entry on your paper application, you will need to write CGFNS a letter explaining the mistake you made and your instructions to make it correct.

How do I replace my CGFNS certificate if it's lost or damaged?

You can order a replacement certificate for the Certification Program for \$100. Apply online by clicking <https://www.cgfns.org/cerpassweb/intro.jsp>. Once you log in, click on PLACE ORDER, click on begin selection at the bottom of the page and click on ADDITIONAL SERVICES and order your replacement certificate. Or mail a letter with payment to CGFNS.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Helpful Web sites

English proficiency examination providers

www.ets.org www.ielts.org

United States Citizenship and Immigration Services

www.uscis.gov/portal/site/uscis

Click below for the PDF:

[CGFNS services needed by nurses educated outside the United States for licensure by U.S. State Boards of Nursing](#)

Customer Service phones are busy

CGFNS International places a high priority on ensuring that applicants have a thorough understanding of the application process in order to make well-informed decisions.

However, due to the high volume of calls we receive, our phone lines have been extremely busy. The CGFNS Call Center is open Monday through Friday, 8am to noon U.S. Eastern Time.

When you telephone us, typically your call will be answered by a voice prompt that will give you instructions on how to be connected to the appropriate Customer Service Representative. If you are connected to the operator, they will direct your call to the appropriate representative to answer your questions. Please understand that the operator may not know the answers to your questions, they are only directing your call.

Please tell the operator which service you are inquiring about: the Credentials Evaluation Service, the Credentials Verification

Service for New York State, VisaScreen® or the Certification Program (with the CGFNS Qualifying Exam®). If you are calling about the International Consultants of Delaware, please call between 12:30pm and 3:30pm U.S. Eastern Time.

If you haven't applied for a service and are calling to find out which service you need to apply for, please be advised that it will depend on the U.S. state where you are going to practice. Contact the state board of that particular state to find out which of our services they require.

Once the operator transfers you to the extension for your particular service, you will be placed in a queue and there may be several calls ahead of you. While you are on hold you will hear other options for contacting CGFNS. Also know that your call will be answered by a human being, so we kindly ask for your patience.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

CGFNS contact information

| | |
|---|---|
| CGFNS Customer Service* | +1 (215) 349 8767 |
| Automated Voice Response Telephone System | +1 (215) 599 6200 |
| Appointments* | +1 (215) 222 8454 |
| Mailing address | Suite 400, 3600 Market Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104-2651 |
| CGFNS Web site | http://www.cgfns.org |
| CGFNS Connect | https://www.cgfns.org/cerpassweb/intro.jsp |
| Apply/Check Status | https://www.cgfns.org/cerpassweb/intro.jsp |
| Email | https://www.cgfns.org/cerpassweb/processContactUs.do |

*check sidebar on <https://www.cgfns.org/cerpassweb/processContactUs.do> for times

Frequently asked applicant questions

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Do I need an International Commission on Healthcare Professions VisaScreen® certificate if I am a Canadian entering the United States on a Trade NAFTA visa?

Yes. Certificates are required for health care workers entering the United States on permanent and temporary occupational visas, including the Trade NAFTA Visa categories.

In Quebec, who has to take the English language proficiency exam for VisaScreen®?

If you were educated in Quebec you need take the English language proficiency exam. The criteria to be exempt is that you must be educated in the United States, Canada (except Quebec), the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia or New Zealand.

In Quebec, who does not need to take the English language proficiency exam for the 212(r) Certified Statement?

Graduates of the designated nursing schools in Quebec that meet 212(r) certified statement criteria: McGill University in Montreal, Vanier College in St. Laurent, John Abbott College in Sainte Anne de Bellevue, Dawson College in Montreal, and Heritage College in Gatineau, who have passed the NCLEX-RN and have a current, unrestricted license in one of the five U.S. designated Section 212(r) states: Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Michigan, or New York are exempt from English Language proficiency requirement of the 212(r) Certified Statement.

When I check my status, it states I owe an additional fee of \$75 for the CGFNS language Report: English. What does this mean?

If you are applying to a state that requires the CGFNS Language Report (an English proficiency report included with CES report for select Boards of Nursing), there is an additional fee of \$75. You will need to take the English exam and have the scores sent to CGFNS so that we can include it in your CES report.

How do I pay CGFNS online?

Order fees can be paid by credit card at this link <https://www.cgfns.org/cerpassweb/login.jsp>. CGFNS accepts Visa, MasterCard and Discover/Novus. American Express is not accepted.

How do I pay CGFNS by mail?

Send one of the following to CGFNS International, Suite 400, 3600 Market Street, Philadelphia PA 19104, USA:

- download and send a completed Credit Card Payment Form from <http://www.cgfns.org/sections/apply/forms.shtml> or
- an international money order or
- a certified bank check, made payable to CGFNS

Please include your CGFNS ID number, if already assigned. All payments must be in U.S. dollars drawn on a U.S. bank. Personal checks are not acceptable and do not send cash.

How do I request a refund? I overpaid CGFNS and have a credit.

Send CGFNS a letter or use the Contact Us form at <https://www.cgfns.org/cerpassweb/processContactUs.do> providing your full name, birth date and CGFNS ID number with an explanation and request for a refund of the overpayment.

Customer Service phones are busy

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

We want your application process to be pleasant. Here are some hints that may help you obtain the service you need:

- Make use of our 24-hour automated phone service, +1 (215) 599 6200, to verify receipt of documentation and examination scores, confirm application status and access other information. You will need to have your CGFNS ID number and birth date ready.
- Make use of the many resources on our Web site, including applications, forms and using the online application system CGFNS Connect. In addition, check out our FAQs under the Tools menu for answers to questions on specific subjects.
- Plan your calls. We experience peak call volumes on Mondays and on the first two business days of each month. Call on another day or at another time, if possible. Phone lines for CGFNS are open 8am to noon Monday through Friday, U.S. Eastern Time.
- Make an appointment. You may call +1 (215) 222 8454 to schedule a 30-minute appointment, on Wednesdays between 10am and 2pm, U.S. Eastern Time, in our office in Philadelphia.
- Keep us informed of any address changes.
- Send us a message! Use the Contact Us form on the Web site. Please **do not** use the online store, facebook or twitter, we cannot answer application questions through them. Finally, we endeavour to protect your privacy.

For applicants who have complaints regarding their Customer Service experience:

Please ask for the Customer Service Manager by sending us an email through the Contact Us form on our Web site at <https://www.cgfns.org/cerpassweb/processContactUs.do> Thank you for your patience.



Twitter
@cgfns



Facebook
<http://www.facebook.com/home.php#/pages/CGFNS-International/23155560578?ref=ts>



CGFNS news RSS feed
<http://www.cgfns.org> and click "News Feed" at the top of our home page