March 13, 2020

Dear Nursing Educators:

The Board is contacting you regarding the impact of COVID-19 on education programs and scheduled classroom and clinical experiences. There is a concern that education programs may need to close and/or health care settings could restrict or refuse student clinical experiences due to a localized outbreak, a quarantine directive by the Georgia Department of Public Health (GDPH), or other related issues.

The Board believes that the regulations contained in Rules 410-8 provide flexibility to programs and enable faculty to use their educational expertise to make necessary changes within the parameters of the rules without prior approval of the Board. It will be important for programs to retain all related documentation from the program or from the clinical sites showing the COVID-19 impact on the program’s ability to meet clinical hours and other related student requirements. At this time, education programs may want to contact and work with clinical sites regarding the plans and procedures they may be considering related to COVID-19. Also, programs may need to consider assisting students with rescheduling, including deferment of clinical hours until any quarantine issues are resolved. The Board will certainly consider the circumstances and situations faced by each program based on COVID-19 when reviewing annual reports and during future site visits.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and GDPH continue to update information and alerts for COVID-19. The Board has posted a link to the GDPH coronavirus website (www.dph.georgia.gov) for readers to access updated resources and the latest developments. In addition, as the Board receives updates from GDPH and other entities, we will provide the information to stakeholders and nursing associations to share with their members and interested parties.

Please contact the Board at jcleghorn@sos.ga.gov if there are additional questions.

Sincerely,

Jim Cleghorn
Executive Director