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Dated: October 8, 2003.

Jeffrey Shuren,

Assistant Commissioner for Policy.

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Health Resources and Services Administration

Proposed Revisions to Nurse Practitioner and Nurse-Midwifery Education Program Guidelines

AGENCY: Health Resources and Services Administration, HHS.

ACTION: Notice of request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) invites comments on the proposed revised Nurse Practitioner and Nurse-Midwifery Education Program Guidelines for use in the Advanced Education Nursing Grant Program.

DATES: Comments must be postmarked by December 3, 2003.

ADDRESSES: Written comments should be submitted to the Division of Nursing, Bureau of Health Professions (BHP), Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Room 9-35, Parklawn Building, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, Maryland 20857. Respondents should provide a rationale for their suggested changes or additions. All comments will be available for public inspection and copying at the Division of Nursing, BHP, Room 9-35,

Parklawn Building at the address above weekdays between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Irene Sandvold, Division of Nursing, BHP, HRSA, at (301) 443-6333.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Guidelines for Nurse Practitioner and Nurse-Midwifery Programs were initially developed in 1976 through a process that included consultation with appropriate educational and professional nursing and medical organizations, and public comment. The original final guidelines were published in the **Federal Register** (43 FR 43416) as regulation on November 29, 1977. On August 27, 2001 HHS issued a final rule in the **Federal Register** (66 FR 44981) that rescinded and removed most of the BHP regulations, including the previous guidelines related to nurse practitioner and nurse-midwifery education programs. This action was taken by the Department in its effort to simplify government procedures.

These proposed Guidelines implement Section 811(c) of the PHS Act, which states that—

Nurse Practitioner and nurse-midwifery programs eligible for support under this section are educational programs for registered nurses (irrespective of the type of school of nursing in which the nurses received their training) that—

(1) Meet guidelines prescribed by the Secretary, and

(2) Have as their objective the education of nurses who will upon completion of their studies in such programs be qualified to effectively provide primary health care, including primary health care in homes and in ambulatory care facilities, long-term care facilities, acute care, and other health care settings.

These Guidelines are intended to promote the quality of nurse practitioner and nurse-midwifery programs funded by the Division of Nursing. Definitions in these Guidelines are those used by other Federal and State health entities. The Department invites comments on the following proposed Guidelines for the Nurse Practitioner and Nurse-Midwifery Education Program.

Federal Nurse Practitioner and Nurse-Midwifery Education Program Guidelines

Overview

Nurse practitioner education programs funded under this authority are graduate level programs that can provide evidence of accreditation from a recognized body or by a State agency, approved for such purpose by the U.S.

Department of Education. In addition, programs are expected to be consistent with the current *Advanced Nursing Practice: Curriculum Guidelines & Program Standards for Nurse Practitioner Education* and current *Criteria for Evaluation of Nurse Practitioner Programs, A Report of the National Task Force on Quality Nurse Practitioner Education*. Both documents are available from the National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties, 1522 K Street, NW #702, Washington, DC 20005; telephone: (202) 289-8044. At a minimum, graduates must be prepared to meet national competencies established in *Nurse Practitioner Primary Care Competencies in Specialty Areas: Adult, Family, Gerontological, Pediatric, and Women's Health*. This document is available online at <http://www.nonpf.com>; <http://www.aacn.nche.edu/Education/NPCompetencies.htm>; and can be obtained from the HRSA Information Center (1-800-CALL-HRSA).

Nurse-Midwifery education programs must provide evidence of pre-accreditation or accreditation from the American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM), Division of Accreditation, recognized for this purpose by the U.S. Department of Education, prior to Notice of Grant Award. Programs must comply with the following criteria, as applicable:

(a) the current *Criteria for Pre-accreditation of Education Programs in Nurse-Midwifery and Midwifery with Guidelines for Elaboration and Documentation of Pre-accreditation Criteria*; or

(b) The current *Criteria for Accreditation of Education Programs in Nurse-Midwifery and Midwifery with Guidelines for Elaboration and Documentation of Accreditation Criteria*.

At a minimum, graduates of these programs must be prepared to meet national competencies established in *The Core Competencies for Basic Midwifery Practice*. The above three documents are available from the ACNM at Suite 900, 818 Connecticut Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20006; telephone: (202) 728-9860.

Organization and Administration

A nurse practitioner or nurse-midwifery education program should actively collaborate with nurses and other health professionals who have expertise relevant to nurse practitioner or nurse-midwifery practice and primary health care, to assist in the initial and ongoing planning, implementation, and evaluation of the program.