



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**FURTHER INFORMATION ON FEBRUARY 14 ANNOUNCEMENT:
CGFNS DENIES VISASCREEN® CERTIFICATES FOR PHILIPPINE NURSES WHO PASSED THE
COMPROMISED JUNE 2006 PHILIPPINE LICENSURE EXAMINATION**

BY: Barbara L. Nichols, Chief Executive Officer, Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools (CGFNS International)

Philadelphia, February 20, 2007--The VisaScreen Certification Program is a federally mandated immigration screening program for certain foreign health professionals seeking an occupational visa to the United States. CGFNS is designated by U.S. immigration law to administer this program. Pursuant to its mandate under Section 212(a)(5)(C) of the U.S. Immigration Nationality Act, CGFNS has determined that those Philippine nurses who were sworn in as licensed nurses in the Philippines following their passing the compromised June 2006 licensure examination are not eligible for the issuance of a *VisaScreen* certificate. CGFNS has further determined that the June 2006 passers are able to overcome this bar and qualify for issuance of a *VisaScreen* certificate by taking the equivalent of Tests 3 and 5 on a future Philippine nursing exam.

CGFNS acknowledges that those nurses who have been sworn in as registered nurses as a result of their passing the June 2006 licensure exam are validly licensed in the Philippines. CGFNS raises no question of their lawful right to practice nursing in the Philippines. U.S. immigration law, however, requires CGFNS to make a determination as part of the *VisaScreen* process about several elements of the visa applicants' education, training, license and experience -- including their comparability to U.S. nurses. After reviewing the circumstances concerning the irregularities of the June 2006 nursing licensing exam, CGFNS concluded that the licensure process for the June 2006 licensure exam is not comparable to that required of U.S. nurses, and that U.S. immigration law therefore prohibits issuance of a *VisaScreen* Certificate to individuals who passed this exam. The *VisaScreen* certification process is an Immigration process -- not a licensure process -- that must be satisfied to obtain an occupational visa to work in the United States. Passing NCLEX is a licensure requirement to practice nursing in the United States, but it is not a substitute for the federal *VisaScreen* rule.

Finally, it should be noted that some stories in the Philippine media have confused the *VisaScreen* Certificate -- issued pursuant to U.S. immigration law -- with the CGFNS Certification Program (CP), which is provided to facilitate the licensure of foreign-educated nurses in the majority of U.S. States. The *VisaScreen* Certificate is required of **all** foreign-national nurses who seek occupational visas under U.S. immigration law -- regardless of which State in the United States that they intend to practice.

CGFNS is an internationally recognized authority on credentials evaluation and verification pertaining to the education, registration and licensure of nurses and healthcare professionals worldwide. CGFNS is an immigration-neutral, nonprofit organization with 30 years of experience in certifying the credentials of over 450,000 internationally educated nurses and other healthcare workers.

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