



Pre Health Dreamers

BIG THINGS HAVE DETERMINED BEGINNINGS...

Thursday, September 9, 2021

Dear Nursing Program Directors,

Pre-Health Dreamers (PHD) is currently working to ensure educators understand the California laws and policies that aid undocumented students in pursuing health-related careers, specifically nursing.

We are disheartened to relay that we have received messages from students and educators concerned about admission requirements that prevent undocumented students from advancing to nursing programs based on their immigration status.

In support of the PHD community and educators across the state, we invite all nursing programs in California to join in our efforts to create welcoming admission requirements and spaces for undocumented students pursuing nursing programs at their campus.

As the director of Pre-Health Dreamers, I would like to ensure that you are aware of some California policies that promote the success of undocumented students in higher education and licensure. I would also like to emphasize that more and more undocumented students will be denied from your programs as this concern is pushed aside and not prioritized.

California Education Code § 66270 (added by S.B. 183 (Lara, 2018)), provides that "any program or activity conducted by any postsecondary educational institution that received, or benefits from, state financial assistance or enrolls students who receive state student financial aid" is prohibited from denying admission to applicants because of their immigration status. This law applies equally to nursing programs in California.

We ask that nursing programs reevaluate their admissions requirements and the language provided on their websites to reflect CA law and avoid policies that may deny access to undocumented students inadvertently. Statements like the examples copied below not only discourage students from continuing their education but are also misleading and/or incorrect:

- "You must have a social security number to apply."
- "Licensure or credentialing requirements can include evidence of the right to work in the United States."

- "Legal residents without a social security number can begin the nursing program, but as the clinical sites toughen their requirements, a student without a social security number may be denied acceptance to a clinical site at any point during the program. Nursing students who cannot participate in the clinical portion of the nursing program are not allowed to continue in the program. This means that nursing students without a social security number may start the program but may not be able to complete the program."

California law also explicitly prohibits hospitals and other clinical sites from denying undocumented nursing students admission to unpaid "healing arts" training programs because of their "immigration status." S.B. 1139 § 2, Cal Bus. & Prof. Code § 2064.4(a). Nursing falls within the broad meaning of the term "healing arts," which, as used in the Business and Professions Code, includes nurses, dentists, and other health care professionals in addition to physicians. See generally, Cal. Bus. & Prof. Code, Div. 2.

We ask that you connect with nursing programs and clinical sites to ensure that undocumented students without social security numbers are fully included in their programs. We also ask that decision-makers support nursing programs in strengthening partnerships with clinical sites that welcome students without status or social security numbers.

PHD looks forward to working with you to ensure campuses in California get closer to meeting the fundamental goals of equity and inclusion. We appreciate your support in this action.

Please contact Yadira Ortiz, Executive Director, for more information at yadi@phdreamers.org.

In union,

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