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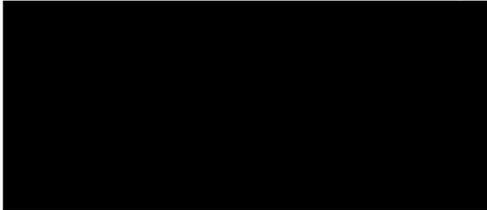


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U.S. Department of Justice
Immigration and Naturalization Service



OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS
425 Eye Street N.W.
ULLB, 3rd Floor
Washington, D.C. 20536



File: WAC-01-145-52177 Office: California Service Center

Date: **JAN 16 2003**

IN RE: Petitioner:
Beneficiary:



Petition: Petition for a Nonimmigrant Worker Pursuant to Section 101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b)

IN BEHALF OF PETITIONER:



INSTRUCTIONS:

This is the decision in your case. All documents have been returned to the office that originally decided your case. Any further inquiry must be made to that office.

If you believe the law was inappropriately applied or the analysis used in reaching the decision was inconsistent with the information provided or with precedent decisions, you may file a motion to reconsider. Such a motion must state the reasons for reconsideration and be supported by any pertinent precedent decisions. Any motion to reconsider must be filed within 30 days of the decision that the motion seeks to reconsider, as required under 8 C.F.R. 103.5(a)(1)(i).

If you have new or additional information that you wish to have considered, you may file a motion to reopen. Such a motion must state the new facts to be proved at the reopened proceeding and be supported by affidavits or other documentary evidence. Any motion to reopen must be filed within 30 days of the decision that the motion seeks to reopen, except that failure to file before this period expires may be excused in the discretion of the Service where it is demonstrated that the delay was reasonable and beyond the control of the applicant or petitioner. Id.

Any motion must be filed with the office that originally decided your case along with a fee of \$110 as required under 8 C.F.R. 103.7.

FOR THE ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER,
EXAMINATIONS

Robert P. Wiemann, Director
Administrative Appeals Office

DISCUSSION: The nonimmigrant visa petition was denied by the director and is now before the Associate Commissioner for Examinations on appeal. The appeal will be dismissed.

The petitioner is a staffing solutions and business development consulting business with ten employees and a gross annual income of \$1 million. It seeks to employ the beneficiary as a medical and health service staff for a period of three years. The director determined the petitioner had not established that there is a specialty occupation available for the beneficiary.

On appeal, counsel submits additional information.

8 C.F.R. 214.2(h)(4)(ii) defines the term "specialty occupation" as:

an occupation which requires theoretical and practical application of a body of highly specialized knowledge in fields of human endeavor including, but not limited to, architecture, engineering, mathematics, physical sciences, social sciences, medicine and health, education, business specialties, accounting, law, theology, and the arts, and which requires the attainment of a bachelor's degree or higher in a specific specialty, or its equivalent, as a minimum for entry into the occupation in the United States.

The director denied the petition because the petitioner had not submitted any valid contracts to demonstrate that the beneficiary will be employed in a specialty occupation. On appeal, counsel submits two signed contracts between the petitioner and Courtyard Care Center and Valley House Care Center, and states, in part, that the Service has approved several similar petitions. Counsel further states that the petitioner conducted a survey and found that other businesses had the same degree requirement.

Counsel's statement on appeal is not persuasive. The Service does not use a title, by itself, when determining whether a particular job qualifies as a specialty occupation. The specific duties of the offered position combined with the nature of the petitioning entity's business operations are factors that the Service considers. In the initial I-129 petition, the petitioner described the duties of the offered position as follows:

. . . administration of operations, directing and coordinating activities of medical, nursing, technical and clerical service and maintenance personnel of healthcare facilities . . . develop or expand medical programs or health services for research, rehabilitation, and community health promotions; implement and

administers programs and services for health care or medical facility. Establish work schedules and assignments for staff, according to workload, space and equipment availability; prepares activity reports to inform management of the status and implementation plans of programs, services, and quality initiatives; consults with medical, business, and community groups to discuss service problems, coordinate activities and plans, and promote health programs.

Pursuant to 8 C.F.R. 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(A), to qualify as a specialty occupation, the position must meet one of the following criteria:

1. A baccalaureate or higher degree or its equivalent is normally the minimum requirement for entry into the particular position;
2. The degree requirement is common to the industry in parallel positions among similar organizations or, in the alternative, an employer may show that its particular position is so complex or unique that it can be performed only by an individual with a degree;
3. The employer normally requires a degree or its equivalent for the position; or
4. The nature of the specific duties is so specialized and complex that knowledge required to perform the duties is usually associated with the attainment of a baccalaureate or higher degree.

The petitioner has not met any of the above requirements to classify the offered position as a specialty occupation.

First, it is noted that in a similar petition, counsel compares the proffered position to that of a health services manager. The Service does not agree with counsel's argument that the beneficiary is a health services manager, an occupation that would normally require a master's degree in health services administration, long-term care administration, health sciences, public health, public administration, or business administration, or a bachelor's degree for some entry-level positions in smaller facilities and at the departmental level within healthcare organizations. (It is noted that the beneficiary holds a bachelor of nursing degree.)

In its Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2002-2003 edition, at page 75, the Department of Labor (DOL) describes the job of a health services manager as follows:

The structure and financing of healthcare is changing rapidly. Future medical and health services managers must

be prepared to deal with evolving integrated healthcare delivery systems, technological innovations, an increasingly complex regulatory environment, restructuring of work, and an increased focus on preventive care . . . Increasingly, medical and health services managers will work in organizations in which they must optimize efficiency of a variety of interrelated services, for example, those ranging from inpatient care to outpatient follow-up care.

In smaller facilities, top administrators handle more of the details of daily operations. For example, many nursing home administrators manage personnel, finance, facility operations, and admissions, and have a larger role in resident care.

The petitioner has not demonstrated that the beneficiary will be performing complex health service managerial duties such as managing finance and facility operations. It is also noted that counsel states that: "This job description is allied to the job of a Medical and Health Service Manager, however, in a staff capacity and not on [sic] a managerial capacity."

The duties that the petitioner endeavors to have the beneficiary perform are primarily those of a registered nurse/supervisory nurse. In contrast to the description of a health services manager, at page 268 of its Handbook, the DOL describes the position of a registered nurse/supervisory nurse as follows:

. . . RNs also develop and manage nursing care plans...

Head nurses or nurse supervisors direct nursing activities. They plan work schedules and assign duties to nurses and aides, provide or arrange for training, and visit patients to observe nurses and to ensure proper delivery of care. They also may see that records are maintained and equipment and supplies are ordered.

The types of duties the petitioner ascribes to the beneficiary fall within the scope of a registered nurse/nurse supervisor position rather than a health services manager position. For example, the petitioner states that the beneficiary will "[e]stablish work schedules and assignments for staff, according to workload, space and equipment availability" and "[prepare] activity reports to inform management of the status and implementation plans of programs, services, and quality initiatives..." Such duties fall within the administrative and supervisory tasks associated with a registered nurse, as described above. Thus, the petitioner has not shown that a bachelor's degree or its equivalent is required for the position being offered to the beneficiary.

Second, although the petitioner's past hiring practices indicate that it normally requires a baccalaureate degree in nursing for the proffered position, the petitioner's reasoning is problematic when viewed in light of the statutory definition of specialty occupation. The petitioner's creation of a position with a perfunctory bachelor's degree requirement will not mask the fact that the position is not a specialty occupation. As with employment agencies as petitioners, the Service must examine the ultimate employment of the alien, and determine whether the position qualifies as a specialty occupation. Cf. Defensor v. Meissner, 201 F.3d 384 (5th Cir. 2000). The critical element is not the title of the position or an employer's self-imposed standards, but whether the position actually requires the theoretical and practical application of a body of highly specialized knowledge, and the attainment of a bachelor's degree in the specific specialty as the minimum for entry into the occupation as required by the Act.¹ To interpret the regulations any other way would lead to absurd results: if the Service was limited to reviewing a petitioner's self-imposed employment requirements, then any alien with a bachelor's degree could be brought into the United States to perform a menial, non-professional, or an otherwise non-specialty occupation, so long as the employer required all such employees to have bachelor's degrees. See id. at 388.

In this case, although the petitioner claimed to have hired only individuals with a bachelor's degree in nursing for its "medical and health service staff/manager" positions, the position, nevertheless, does not meet the statutory definition of specialty occupation. The position, itself, does not require the theoretical and practical application of a body of highly specialized knowledge. Therefore, even though the petitioner has required a bachelor's degree in the past, the position still does not require a bachelor's degree in a specific specialty.

Third, the petitioner did not present any documentary evidence that businesses similar to the petitioner in their type of operations, number of employees, and amount of gross annual income, require the services of individuals in parallel positions. Counsel has provided the names of four other businesses that prefer a baccalaureate degree in nursing for the proffered position. Such information, however, is insufficient evidence of an industry standard. It does not demonstrate that a baccalaureate degree in nursing is required rather than preferred.

¹ The court in Defensor v. Meissner observed that the four criteria at 8 C.F.R. 214.2(h)(4)(iii)(A) present certain ambiguities when compared to the statutory definition, and "might also be read as merely an additional requirement that a position must meet, in addition to the statutory and regulatory definition." Supra at 387.

Finally, the petitioner did not demonstrate that the nature of the beneficiary's proposed duties is so specialized and complex that the knowledge required to perform the duties is usually associated with the attainment of a baccalaureate or higher degree.

It is also noted that nowhere in the record is there a comprehensive description of the beneficiary's proposed duties from an authorized representative of the facility where the beneficiary is to perform her duties. Without such a description, the petitioner has not demonstrated that the proffered position meets the statutory definition of specialty occupation. For this additional reason, the petition may not be approved.

Further, with respect to counsel's objection to denial of this petition in view of the approval of a similar petition in the past, the Associate Commissioner, through the Administrative Appeals Office, is not bound to follow the contradictory decision of a service center. Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra v. INS, 2000 WL 282785 (E.D.La. 2000), aff'd, 248 F.3d 1139 (5th Cir. 2001), cert. denied, 122 S. Ct.51 (U.S. 2001).

The petitioner has failed to establish that any of the four factors enumerated above are present in this proceeding. Accordingly, it is concluded that the petitioner has not demonstrated that the offered position is a specialty occupation within the meaning of the regulations.

The burden of proof in these proceedings rests solely with the petitioner. Section 291 of the Act, 8 U.S.C. 1361. The petitioner has not sustained that burden.

ORDER: The appeal is dismissed.