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**Talking Points for Nurses**  
**SB 328 by Grimsley and HB 543 by Pigman**  
**Nursing Education**

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**Background:**

To address the nursing shortage in Florida, the 2009 Legislature modified how the Board of Nursing oversees nursing education programs. The intent of these modifications was to increase the number of nursing programs and qualified nurses in Florida. Since 2009, the number of nursing education programs has increased by 105%. Over time, not all programs have been able to meet the minimum average graduate licensure passage rate specified by law and some have been put on probation or terminated. These closures led to reductions between the 2014-15 and 2015-16 academic years.

- The number of nursing student seats decreased by 16%.
- Enrollment in nursing programs decreased by 15%, with the greatest student decrease occurring in associate degree in nursing bridge programs.
- The number of students graduating from nursing programs decreased by 12%.

To ensure program quality the law also requires that nursing education programs become accredited within five years of enrolling students; as of December 2016, 93 programs have achieved accreditation.

**Some Key Points:**

- Approximately 36% of Florida nursing education programs that had graduates taking the licensure exam had passage rates that were 10% or more below the national average in 2014. That grew to 42% in 2015. Most of the nursing programs performing below the required passage rate were created since 2009 and are unaccredited.
- Florida law requires approved nursing education programs to have a minimum graduate licensure exam passage rate. If a program's passage rate falls 10 percentage points below the national average for two consecutive calendar years, the program is placed on probation. Associate programs accounted for 63% of 128 programs that were below the legislative standard in 2015. As of June 2016, the Board of Nursing placed 14 of the programs with low licensure exam passage rates on probation and terminated 11 of the programs.

*Source: Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability*

**HB 543 Bill Analysis:**

Among other things, the bill requires any nursing education program that is on probation to notify its students and applicants of its status in writing. The notice must also provide information on the implications of the program's probationary status on the student or applicant and his or her employment and educational opportunities. The bill prohibits a nursing education program that was terminated or closed from reapplying for approval for 3 years.

The bill Clarifying that the BON retains the authority to terminate a nursing education program if it declines to grant an extension of probationary status or if the program fails to achieve the required graduation passage rate at the end of any such extension.