

New Alliance Promotes Corporate Responsibility and Ethical Recruitment Practices Regarding Foreign-Educated Nurses

While migration of health workers is an inevitable and potentially mutually beneficial part of globalization, concerns have been raised around the world about the active recruitment of foreign-educated nurses. These concerns include the impact of this activity on source countries' health systems, the labor rights of nurses being recruited and the adequacy of clinical and cultural orientation programs once they arrive in the United States.

The new, nonprofit Alliance for Ethical International Recruitment Practices (Alliance) aims to address these issues and ensure that recruitment practices of foreign-educated nurses to the United States are ethical, responsible, and transparent. The Alliance is governed by a multi-stakeholder board that includes six sectors: unions, professional associations, foreign nurse associations, employers, recruiters, and licensure and regulatory bodies. It was created to promote and monitor compliance of the Voluntary Code of Conduct for the Ethical Recruitment of Foreign-Educated Nurses to the United States (Code).

Drafted by a task force in 2009, the Code has already been endorsed by almost 100 national and international healthcare groups.

The New Certified Subscriber Program

In May 2010, the Alliance launched a subscription program for organizations that agree to follow the Code. By agreeing to comply with minimum standards, striving to achieve best practices, and fully cooperating with the monitoring and remediation process, recruitment firms and employers who subscribe to the Alliance can demonstrate their commitment to ethical practices and social responsibility.

“By taking this step, Alliance subscribers can demonstrate their leadership in the area of corporate responsibility,” commented Patricia Pittman, Ph.D., chair of the Alliance. “We believe this voluntary model, which is global in nature and does not require a huge bureaucracy, can transform international healthcare recruiting and set an example for other fields of recruitment.”

During the pilot phase of the new program, which runs from May 2010 to May 2011, employers and recruiters can participate in the subscription and monitoring process at no cost. Upon completion of the pilot, subscribers will be charged a fee on a sliding scale.

Pittman points out that any organization that is involved with recruiting foreign-educated nurses, either directly or indirectly, should consider becoming an Alliance subscriber. Eligible organizations include:

- Recruiting firms who contract with foreign-educated nurses in a source country to assist in their U.S. migration;
- Staffing companies who recruit, place, and employ foreign-educated nurses in U.S. healthcare provider organizations; and
- Hospitals, health systems, and long-term care organizations that employ foreign-educated nurses.

The subscription process has two phases. In Phase I, potential subscribers submit an online application and either an administrative plan for Code compliance or a narrative establishing current compliance. Provisional Subscribers have up to six months to implement the plan and request an interview with the Alliance for certification. Organizations that submit a narrative establishing current compliance will be contacted by the Alliance to arrange a certification interview. In Phase II, organizations that have completed the provisional phase successfully and agree to abide by the Alliance's monitoring process, including remediation if necessary, are then awarded Certified Subscriber status. These Certified Subscribers are then listed on the Alliance's Web site and allowed to use the Alliance's certification seal in their promotional materials.

The primary mechanism for monitoring Code compliance is the Alliance Nurse Survey Program, a three-part confidential survey to be completed by nurses who have been through or are currently moving through the recruitment process. The Alliance also accepts "open reports" via a portal on their Web site.

The Alliance's Web site, www.fairinternationalrecruitment.org, contains a number of resources which can be accessed and downloaded by interested parties, including resources on nurses' labor rights, background studies on the recruitment of foreign-educated nurses, the full text of the Code, an online application and instructions for Provisional and Certified Subscribers, lists of code-compliant subscribers, nurse survey forms, an open reporting mechanism, industry news, and additional information.

What Stakeholders are Saying about the Alliance and the Voluntary Code of Conduct



"The Code represents a 'stamp of approval' to the healthcare community as well as external and internal stakeholders that your organization is a preeminent healthcare leader and subscribes to transparent, ethical recruitment practices for international professionals. The Code sets you apart from other organizations and clearly raises the bar for recruitment excellence as measured by objective evidence and established best practices."

- Lydia Ostermeier, National Association for Healthcare Recruitment



"Regardless of nationality, no nurse should be exploited. It is imperative that the Alliance for Ethical International Recruitment Practices continue to be supported in its work to protect international nurse recruits."

- Norma Amsterdam, Nurse Alliance of SEIU Healthcare



"The Code clearly demonstrates our commitment to ethical recruitment practices. It separates us from non-subscriber organizations and helps distinguish us in the eyes of our customers, the healthcare professionals we recruit, and the hospitals and healthcare facilities we serve."

- Marcia Faller, O'Grady Peyton International



“Recruiters and employers who are Certified Subscribers of the Alliance are required to meet recruitment standards that are ethical and transparent. These standards were developed to protect foreign-educated nurses throughout the recruitment process – employment/placement, migration, and acculturation. The seal of the Alliance should give nurses the confidence and assurance that they are dealing with a reputable vendor or recruiter.”

- Sara Gabriel, National Association of Indian Nurses of America



“The Certified Subscriber Seal reinforces our credibility with hospitals. They want assurance that the recruitment process we use in finding nurses is ethical, transparent, and responsible. Using recruiters and placement agencies that carry the Seal gives them confidence that they are dealing with reputable partners.”

- Corazon Bautista, GlobalCare, Inc.



“State boards of nursing believe ethical recruitment practices are important to ensure compliance with state nurse licensing laws and to help the newly licensed nurse understand his or her legal responsibilities.”

- Kathy Apple, National Council of State Boards of Nursing

For more information, contact the Alliance for Fair International Recruitment Practices

www.fairinternationalrecruitment.org

PO Box 57199, Washington, DC 20037 / Tel: 1-800-915-6540