

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 20, 2008

TO: College of Nursing Students

FROM: Dr. Debra C. Davis
Dean, College of Nursing

RE: Procedure for Establishing a Clinical Affiliation Agreement and a Letter of Agreement

The purpose of this memo is to help you understand the clinical affiliation agreement process at the College of Nursing. This is the process that you and your faculty will use to plan for your practicum experiences. The key is to work closely with your faculty and to start your planning early and to follow all the steps. Our goal is to make sure you have an excellent practicum experience.

The College of Nursing has clinical affiliation agreements with over 250 agencies. The purpose of the clinical affiliation agreement is to guide and direct the working relationship between the USA College of Nursing and Agencies in providing learning opportunities for nursing students. An agreement must be in place before students can begin practicum activities. Some clinical sites have very specific requirements for students to meet prior to being approved for a clinical experience in their facility. For example some sites may require a student to attend an orientation session at the facility or to undergo a background check. Students and faculty should check the agency list. We highly recommend that you consider completing your practicum requirements at a site that has an affiliation agreement in place. For your review, the list of agencies is posted on the College of Nursing's website. [Go to <http://www.usouthal.edu/nursing/>, click on **Current Students** and click on **Clinical Affiliations**. In addition, under the **Current Students** menu if you click on **Forms**, you will find other useful forms that you may need (*Letter of Notification and Appreciation, CON insurance information, Two-Page Letter of Agreement, etc.*.)]

After choosing a site that has a current clinical agreement with the College of Nursing, the next step is to discuss the site with your faculty and seek help in identifying a qualified preceptor. The College has a one-page Letter of Notification and Appreciation that you can download from the program site under Clinical Affiliation Agreements. You will take this letter with you to the clinical site and ask that your preceptor and the responsible agency representative sign the form indicating their willingness to precept you. You will return the signed form to your faculty prior to beginning your practicum.

In situations where it is not possible for you to use one of the agencies that has an agreement with the College of Nursing, we will have to negotiate an agreement prior to your beginning your practicum experience. This can be a lengthy process sometimes requiring up to three months to complete. The most expedient way to establish a new agreement is to use the College of Nursing's Letter of Agreement. This two-page legally binding document is used with Agencies that students do not use on a regular basis. The Letter of Agreement covers a specific student, for specified time frame. Changes cannot be made to the two-page agreement without the USA attorney's approval. However, we are always willing to try and resolve any issues in order to negotiate the agreement. Please contact your faculty immediately with complete information including the name of the agency, contact person, address and phone number.

Some agencies will request that instead of the Letter of Agreement that a clinical affiliation agreement be established. The College of Nursing has a standard agreement that will be forwarded to the agency once your faculty has provided us the name of the agency, contact person, address and phone number. Conversely, the agency can provide us with their own agreement to consider if they have a standard form. Please note however, that this process is time consuming, as it requires review and approval by attorneys from USA and the agency.

In the process of setting up the practicum experience, you may be asked about liability insurance. The University of South Alabama maintains professional liability coverage insuring the University of South Alabama, its employees, agents, servants, and students with limits of liability coverage of not less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence, and \$3,000,000 annual aggregate. You can download the letter referencing USA's professional liability trust fund for the agency from the College website.

Likewise, the College of Nursing requires that the agency have the same limit of liability coverage for their employees, agents, or servants. As evidence of such coverage, the agency must furnish us with a copy of a CERTIFICATE OF INSURANCE prior to your beginning your practicum. Please note however, that certain state agencies have insurance coverage under state statutes and differ from what the contract requires.

Please ensure that all times that your faculty member is your contact regarding affiliation agreements.

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