

LEGAL RIGHTS



By **Atty. Johnson Lazaro**

Wanted: Foreign Nurses

tered nurses in the U.S. are foreign-born. This means that hospitals may not function well if nurses from countries like the Philippines are not given the opportunity to work here.

The current U.S. nurses are overworked and stressed. As a result, patients suffer. A 2002 Journal of the American Medical Association study, which looked at general, orthopedic and vascular surgery patients at hospitals, found a 31% increase in patient mortality when a nurse's workload rose to eight from four patients.

For nurses who are in the U.S., it is expected that Congress will deal with this crisis by increasing the number of green cards for foreign nurses. It is best to be prepared. Knowing the requirements will be the key to obtaining a quick approval on the nurse immigration application. Prepare your supporting documentation.

Immigration would require the following from a nurse applicant: Nursing degree or diploma, Nurse license from

country where the nursing degree was obtained, Proof that the alien who will be employed as a professional nurse, Certificate from the Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools (CGFNS), holds a permanent, full, and unrestricted license to practice professional nursing in the state of intended employment; or has passed the National Council Licensure Examination for Registered Nurses (NCLEX-RN) administered by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing.

The VisaScreen Certificate verifies that the foreign health care worker's education, training, licensing, experience, and English competency are comparable to American health care workers. The VisaScreen would be needed if an adjustment of status is filed for the nurse.

Opportunities should be opening soon for foreign nurses. And when this happens, everyone should win. Filipino nurses can realize their dreams of working in the U.S. and more Americans would receive better healthcare.

Atty. Lazaro represents immigrants in all Federal Courts in the United States. Lazaro and Associates specializes in difficult immigration cases as well as business immigration and family unification. The firm's offices are located in San Francisco, Fremont, Union City California, and Makati, Philippines Telephone (415)278-9577. E-mail: Law@LazaroLaw.com; Website: www.LazaroLaw.com.

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MORE people are dying and getting sick. One of the causes: shortage of nurses. This is a fact that we've known all along. In 2005 Congress addressed the issue by easing the limit on foreign nurses allowed entry into the U.S. Lawmakers allocated an additional 50,000 green cards aimed at foreign nurses. But the problem is far from solved.

Our office in Manila is saturated with calls from qualified nurses ready to immigrate but there are not enough visas to go around. Filipino nurses are in demand in the U.S. The nursing programs here aren't able to fulfill the demand of an aging U.S. population.

The nursing shortage is putting the pressure on Congress to increase the number of green cards for nurses. About 4% of regis-

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