



U.S. Customs and Border Protection

Requirements and Terms of Admission for Certain Nonimmigrant Health Care Workers Who Require VisaScreen Certificates

FACT SHEET

May 7, 2009

On September 23, 2003, the final rule regarding Certificates for Certain Health Care Workers (HCW) was published in the Federal Register and immediately became effective. The final rule outlined changes in the requirements and terms of admission for nonimmigrant health care workers with regard to the validity and usage of the Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools (CGFNS) Certificate. Under regulation 8 CFR 212.15 (e) or (h), the requirement of a CGFNS certificate has not changed and remains in effect.

Under section 343 of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) of 1996, international educated health care professions, such as: Registered Nurses, Physical Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Physician Assistants, Clinical Laboratory Technicians, Clinical Technicians, Speech Language Pathologist, Speech Language Audiologists, Licensed Practical or Vocational Nurses seeking temporary or permanent occupational visas as well as those who are seeking Trade NAFTA (TN) status, must first obtain a CGFNS/ICHP VisaScreen Certificate as part of the visa process. VisaScreen is administered by the International Commission on Healthcare Professions (ICHP) a division of CGFNS International.

CGFNS Certificate Validity and Usage

The presentation is required at the time of admission, change, adjustment of status, or extension. Therefore, an expired certificate renders the individual inadmissible at the time of application for admission, change, adjustment, or extension of status. The certification requirement is treated in the same manner as the licensure requirement. Both licensure and certification must be valid at the time it is presented.

- The VisaScreen Certificate is valid for 5 years from the date of issuance.
- It must be used within five years of its issue date; otherwise a new VisaScreen Certificate must be obtained.
- The CGFNS issues certificate with an expiration date and does not automatically renew.
- A non-immigrant health care worker must present the VisaScreen Certificate to a consular officer at the time of visa issuance or a Customs and Border Protection Officer at the time of application for admission.
- The regulation requires that a valid CGFNS certificate be presented to DHS each time the applicant applies for admission, changes, adjusts, or extends.

Therefore, an expired certificate renders the individual inadmissible at the time of admission, change, adjustment or extension of status. The certification requirement is treated in the same manner as the licensure requirement. Both licensure and certification must be valid at the time it is presented.