
HOUSE BILL No. 1278

AM127802 has been incorporated into January 20, 2026 printing.

Synopsis: Nursing matters.

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January 20, 2026

Second Regular Session of the 124th General Assembly (2026)

PRINTING CODE. Amendments: Whenever an existing statute (or a section of the Indiana Constitution) is being amended, the text of the existing provision will appear in this style type, additions will appear in **this style type**, and deletions will appear in ~~this style type~~.

Additions: Whenever a new statutory provision is being enacted (or a new constitutional provision adopted), the text of the new provision will appear in **this style type**. Also, the word **NEW** will appear in that style type in the introductory clause of each SECTION that adds a new provision to the Indiana Code or the Indiana Constitution.

Conflict reconciliation: Text in a statute in *this style type* or ~~this style type~~ reconciles conflicts between statutes enacted by the 2025 Regular Session of the General Assembly.

HOUSE BILL No. 1278

A BILL FOR AN ACT to amend the Indiana Code concerning professions and occupations.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Indiana:

1 SECTION 1. IC 21-41-18 IS ADDED TO THE INDIANA CODE
2 AS A **NEW CHAPTER** TO READ AS FOLLOWS [EFFECTIVE
3 JULY 1, 2026]:

4 **Chapter 18. Graduate Programs in Mental or Behavioral
5 Health**

6 **Sec. 1. This chapter does not apply to Ivy Tech Community
7 College or Vincennes University.**

8 **Sec. 2. Each state educational institution that offers a two (2)
9 year graduate degree program in mental or behavioral health shall
10 evaluate the graduate degree program to determine the feasibility,
11 if any, of providing the graduate degree program in a specifically
12 structured manner to allow a full-time student to complete the
13 graduate degree within:**

14 **(1) one (1) year; or
15 (2) five (5) years if the graduate degree program is combined
16 with a baccalaureate degree program.**

17 **Sec. 3. Not later than July 1, 2028, each state educational**

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1 **institution shall offer at least one (1) graduate degree program in**
2 **one (1) or more of the following disciplines that is specifically**
3 **structured to allow a full-time student to complete the graduate**
4 **degree as described in section 2(1) or 2(2) of this chapter:**

5 (1) Social work.
6 (2) Clinical addiction counseling.
7 (3) Mental health counseling.
8 (4) Marriage and family therapy.
9 (5) School counseling.
10 (6) Counseling.
11 (7) Psychology.

12 Sec. 4. (a) Not later than November 1, 2028, each state
13 educational institution shall report to the commission for higher
14 education, in a form prescribed by the commission for higher
15 education, information regarding each graduate degree program
16 that the state educational institution is offering in compliance with
17 section 3 of this chapter.

18 (b) Not later than November 1, 2032, each state educational
19 institution shall report to the commission for higher education, in
20 a form prescribed by the commission for higher education, the
21 following information for each graduate degree program described
22 in section 3 of this chapter offered by the state educational
23 institution:

24 (1) For each of the immediately preceding four (4) academic
25 years, a description of each graduate degree program.

26 (2) The estimated student cost savings of the graduate degree
27 program.

28 (3) For a graduate degree program that allows completion
29 within one (1) year, the number of students:

30 (A) enrolled in the graduate degree program; and

31 (B) who completed the graduate degree program on
32 time;

33 for each of the immediately preceding four (4) academic
34 years.

35 (4) For a graduate degree program combined with a
36 baccalaureate degree program that allows for completion
37 within five (5) years, the number of students:

38 (A) enrolled in the graduate degree program; and

39 (B) who completed or are on track to complete the
40 graduate degree program on time;

41 for each of the immediately preceding four (4) academic
42 years.

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(5) Any other information requested by the commission for higher education.

(c) The commission for higher education shall post the reports submitted under this section on the commission for higher education's website.

Sec. 5. The commission for higher education may consider graduate degrees described in section 3 of this chapter completed within the time frame described in section 2 of this chapter for the purposes of the higher educational operating funding outcomes based formula created by the commission for higher education under IC 21-18-16-2.

Sec. 6. This chapter expires July 1, 2033.

SECTION 2. IC 25-23-1-3, AS AMENDED BY P.L.148-2023, SECTION 12, IS AMENDED TO READ AS FOLLOWS [EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2026]: Sec. 3. At any time there is a vacancy **or expiration of a term**, the Indiana State Nurses Association shall recommend to the governor a list of qualified nurses for appointment to the board in the number of not less than twice the number of:

(1) nurse vacancies to be filled; **or**

(2) nurse appointments to be made.

SECTION 3. IC 25-23-1-20.1, AS AMENDED BY P.L.148-2023, SECTION 16, IS AMENDED TO READ AS FOLLOWS [EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2026]: Sec. 20.1. (a) As used in this section, "eligible associate or bachelor's degree registered nursing program" means **an a practical nursing program or an** associate or bachelor's degree registered nursing program that:

(1) is accredited by the board; and

(2) has an annual rate of successful completion of the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) score of at least eighty percent (80%).

(b) As used in this section, "nursing program" means any of the following:

(1) A licensed practical nursing program.

(2) An associate degree nursing program.

(3) A diploma nursing program.

(4) A baccalaureate degree nursing program.

(c) An eligible associate degree or bachelor's degree registered nursing program that has been operating for at least five (5) years may increase enrollment in the program at any rate the program considers appropriate. An institution that has been operating an eligible nursing program for at least five (5) years may increase the enrollment in any eligible nursing program at any rate the

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1 **institution considers appropriate.**

2 (d) A nursing program that:

3 (1) is operated by a postsecondary educational institution, as
4 defined in IC 21-7-13-6(a)(1);

5 (2) was accredited by the board on a date after June 30, 2020;
6 and

7 (3) has been operating for at least one (1) year;

8 may increase its enrollment rate by not more than one hundred percent
9 (100%).

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