

CGFNS LIAISON MEETING -- February 17, 2004

AILA / CGFNS LIAISON PHONE MEETING – February 17, 2004

Present for CGFNS:

**Donna Richardson, CGFNS Director of Operations and Governmental Affairs,
Judith Pendergast, CGFNS Director of Planning, Marketing and Communications,
Amos Sydnor, CGFNS Manager of Credentials**

Present for AILA:

**Randall Caudle - AILA Health Care Professional Committee Chair,
Sherry Neal - AILA Health Care Professional Committee,
Paige Taylor - AILA Health Care Professional Committee,
Frank Novak - AILA Health Care Professional Committee,
Aggie Hoffman - AILA Health Care Professional Committee,
Deborah Notkin – AILA National First Vice President,
Crystal Williams – AILA National Director of Liaison & Information,
Cora Tekach – AILA National Associate Director of Liaison & Information**

**NEXT MEETING: Quarterly Meetings – Next Meeting
In-person in June at AILA Annual Conference**

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1.	Are there any informational articles you would like to list out for AILA attorneys to read? (i.e. “VisaScreen: Visa Credentials Assessment” by Judith Pendergast)	The information that we have on the web and that is part of our informational packet—specifically, we have a one-pager that says how to become a nurse in the U.S. and then there are also several articles on nurses and the transition of foreign educated nurses to the U.S., several of those have been offered by our Director of Research and Evaluation as well as our CEO and then certainly anything that has been written in the last two years by Linda Akin from the University of Pennsylvania with regard to the nursing shortage—I think are excellent background articles, as well as articles that Peter Burhaus also has offered. There is also an article release to ILW on VisaScreen. Cites to the articles that Dr. Catherine Davis has written as well as the list referencing Linda Akin and Peter Burhaus’s article will follow. Also, look at CGFNS website for articles on how to become a nurse in the U.S. and the frequently asked questions about VisaScreen. CGFNS is also in the process now of doing the final edit on a new handbook for VisaScreen as well as revisions to the VisaScreen and all of their other applications. This will be out for publication this spring. The title is <u>The Path to the VisaScreen Certificate</u> .

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		References: CGFNS. Characteristics of foreign nurse graduates in the United States workforce, 2000-2001. Philadelphia: Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools, 2002. Davis, CR and Nichols, BL. The changing U.S. nursing workforce. Nursing Administration Quarterly, 26 (2), 43-51, 2002. Davis, CR and Kritek, PB. Healthy work environments: Foreign nurse recruitment best practices (pp. 2-11). Washington, D.C.: American Organization of Nurse Executives, 2003.
2.	For VisaScreen application, can an applicant submit all required documentation except the TOEFL score first to get the application going (to get a priority date), and supplement the TOEFL score later?	To have an application processed, CGFNS needs to receive a completed application, the fee, secondary school information, a transcript or a license. Four of those items will trigger the review process. Sometimes CGFNS receives documents and English scores before receipt of an application. When that occurs, CGFNS will set up a temporary file until they receive an application. The applicant can take their English proficiency scores before they submit their application, so there is no requirement that one precedes the other. All of the English proficiency scores are valid for a two-year period. That is not a timeframe that was set by CGFNS. That is the timeframe that is set by the English proficiency industry and that has also been affirmed by the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services when they reviewed which English proficiency tests DHS would require for healthcare professionals. The two-year period begins the date that they took the examination. If they have begun the VisaScreen process and we receive everything that we need to evaluate their credentials before two years have passed, then the language scores remain valid. If they took their exam in 2000 and sent their application in the end of 2002 but we do not receive all of their documents and requirements until the end of 2003 then they would need to retake the examination.
3.	Can you describe how mail is dealt with upon arrival at CGFNS (intake, sorting, and distribution)?	Mail is delivered by courier from the U.S. Postal branch and also by DHL and Federal Express. Any trackable mail is signed for upon receipt and then also goes through a special in house login process that we have developed for tracking that mail as well. The mail is opened every day and sorted after we have checked the mail for currency, checks, and credit card information. Any mail that has currency, credit card information, or monies is sent directly to finance where they enter that mail and then it goes to data entry. All mail that does not contain currency or currency information is then directed to the data entry department. Our goal is to have the information entered within a 48-hour period after it goes to data entry. Around the deadline for one of our exams that 48-hour period may lengthen

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		to ten business days. We have hired a second shift and so we have doubled our data entry staff in trying to make sure that we can meet the goal that we have set. Everything is date-stamped upon receipt. It is also date-stamped once it is entered into the system and all envelopes as well as documents inside the envelopes are then posted to the file so that we keep all envelopes as well as the documents.
4.	Once an application is received in the mail, how long will it take to do initial processing and put the status online?	Question 4 was covered in 3. But, once the mail has been opened and logged in, it goes to data entry. Our goal is to have it entered within a 48-hour period and those are 48 hours during business days. So if something came in on Friday then we would be looking at it being entered by Tuesday.
5.	How many VisaScreen applications are received daily?	These are tracked by month. There were a little over a 1,000 for January 2004. Those applications may come in individually or like I said we may receive 100 in one envelope if they are coming from a recruiter or employer, and then in addition to those are the ones that are received online. We receive about 30% online—it has gone up gradually. We have found that our applicants are reticent to supply information in online. We have been encouraging recruiters and employers to register online and to pay by credit card because it is speedier and the information goes in right away. A lot of the individual applicants have limited computer use. We still receive the majority of our applications in hard form.
6.	How many VisaScreen applications are processed daily?	We are processing a little over 1,000 VisaScreen applications a month. Meaning that we are issuing over a 1,000 a month. So when you say processing I am taking that to mean you are asking how many are issued. That has gone up with the utilization of our new information system that has allowed us to process the applications faster and it allows us to match at least the ETS scores faster, but there is still a problem matching English scores. ETS, which does the TOEFL, TSE, and TWE exam, truncates names. They don't have enough characters for all of the letters, so only about 42% of the names on the disk that they send once a month will match automatically. We don't truncate the names and ETS is not able to increase the number of characters because of the volume of exams that they administer. So 42% will match automatically when we put the disk in our system and then the other 58% are matched manually which means they are alpha searched and then matched with a CGFNS identification number. You probably would not be surprised to know that in our system we have

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		<p>11,000 people named Maria Lopez. So that is why it is very important for the applicant to include all names on our application. We are working with ETS so that they are going to provide a space on their registration forms for the CGFNS I.D. number, which would also increase the matching capabilities. IELTS, which is the other English proficiency exam, right now does not have the capability of sending the results electronically so we get hard copies and those are matched manually. They are working on a process, which will allow electronic matching, but we don't have any idea when that will be finished. TOEIC, although it is administered by ETS, is sent to us in a hard copy form—they have not put those scores on a electronic disk as yet—so we are thrilled with the fact that we are issuing over a 1,000 VisaScreens a month and with the addition of more credentialers in the next couple of months, we anticipate that that volume will increase even more. We currently review 1,600-2,000 per month. There are a number of reasons why a VisaScreen application still may have outstanding requirements. It could be for any licenses that are still outstanding because we do require validation of all licenses. It could be for receipt of the English exam scores.</p>
		<p>FOLLOW-UP: Is there any guess about an increase in applications for July?</p>
		<p>No. Since no one seems to know how many TNs there are who are here or how many are here on H-1B and H-1C. We are just waiting for the applications. The follow-up question to that is—Have we seen a tremendous increase in applications since the final rules came out, and the answer to that is no. What we keep telling people when they call is that people need to get their applications in right away and not wait to the last minute. The other question that we have been putting to people is to identify how many TNs or people with temporary visas they employ so that they have some idea of how many are in their own institutions. This will help us identify how many we can expect.</p>
7.	What is the current processing time for VisaScreen clearance?	<p>A file does not become ready for review until we have received a completed application: the total fee, secondary school information, and a transcript or license. Once four of those items are in, we do a review. If all of the required documents in the format that is requested are here, we are looking at any where from 30 to 45 days to process the application. The biggest problem is getting the educational information provided in clinical and theory hours although it is on the nursing education form and the directions are very clear. We often receive the information back from the school either blank or with a line drawn through it. If we receive a nursing education form</p>

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8.	What are the factors that make completing a VisaScreen a long process?	<p>back and they do not list both the clinical and theory hours or the nursing courses we write them to request that they clarify that information. This happens frequently – even with countries that we have been dealing with for years. From the Philippines that information is usually very clear. For other countries—the Ukraine, Poland, some of the South American countries, Australia and South Africa—It may not be completed. The other part of that is oftentimes it is not completed because they did not complete hours either in clinical or theory for that particular course.</p> <p>The factors that make completing a VisaScreen a long process include acquiring the documentation, and then also reviewing that information to ensure that it does meet the requirements. With some countries it takes longer than others to receive the information. With Korea, you get the information within a month after it has been requested and they send it in a form that is needed. That is because the Korean government has made a commitment to assist their nurses in migration. In the Philippines, the Philippines will not issue a validation of a license if the applicant owes any outstanding renewal fee and the required renewal fees must be paid, whether or not that person is still working in the Philippines. There are some people that owe ten years of renewal fees. The other problem is that unlike what happens here in the States where you get a renewal notice, the Philippine regulatory commission believes it is the responsibility of the health care professional to know that their license needs to be renewed every three years even though they issue a lifetime license, but that does not always happen. So those are some of the factors that make it a long process. The other is that they sometimes hold applications—they may fill out the application but they may not mail them until they have several because of the cost of mailing validations. There are some countries where we frequently receive the transcript information in a format that is not accepted here. For example, the former Soviet Union schools have a tendency to combine or to integrate hours for different areas of nursing whereas we actually want schools to provide these hours of theoretical instruction and clinical practice exclusively in each area of nursing. So it is not uncommon to find that schools in the former Soviet Union will combine obstetrics with gynecology—they will also combine psychiatry with neurology. We actually require that those areas be separated. So we often have to write back to the school to request that this information is broken down. We have also seen that some of the Latin American countries will combine maternal infant with pediatric nursing. So in that case we would also be required to write back for a breakdown. There is a huge problem in the United Kingdom in that many of their hospital-based diploma programs</p>

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		<p>from the late 80 and early 90 have closed or they have merged into university programs. We find it difficult to actually receive transcripts of their training. They will then have the Nursing and Midwifery Council, which is the licensing authority in the United Kingdom, send us a syllabus, or they send us a copy of the nursing basic training records which do not always provide complete details related to the required areas of nursing for VisaScreen evaluation. We often have searched archives to find other applicants who might have been sent to the very same schools around the same date as the applicant in question. If we are able to find a match then we have to refer those cases to our credentials committee. This is an external group that meets 3-4 times a year and is comprised of administrators, hospital representatives, and nurses to review applicant's cases where the applicants have some hardships. We were just in Mexico to meet with their educational representatives and their ministry of health to look at what they can do to assist us in getting documents. They did mention that if we are receiving applications from nurses who are educated outside of Mexico City that it is very difficult to get the schools to comply with those transcript requests. A lot of those schools do not have information systems—they are still dealing with files that are in boxes and so they are looking at some internal measures that would facilitate them sending transcripts for Mexican nurses in a much more expedited fashion than has occurred in the past and they are looking at that because they are expecting, with the changes in NAFTA, that there will be more Mexican nurses who will be migrating to the U.S. We have not seen an increase from Mexico, but we have seen an increase with applicants from Chile and from Columbia. With Mexico there are a number of collaborative agreements with states such as Texas, Oregon, and Illinois that are focusing on courses in nursing as well as English proficiency and cultural diversity to facilitate the migration of the Mexican nurses. [They] have been concerned that there was not parity for those in Mexico with those from Canada.</p>
9.	Are there certain countries that take significantly longer to get information from?	SEE ANSWERS FOR #8.
10.	Can VisaScreen be expedited?	With regards to VisaScreens being processed quicker, the installation of our new information system has allowed us to do that. Before 2002 we had four different systems that were not integrated. If we had received documents for one of our other programs, they did not reflect in all systems. Now that we have an integrated system, if we have documents that we have received for an applicant for our certification program, we can

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now utilize them for VisaScreens. So that does make the process more efficient. Also, the work that we have done in matching the English scores has also allowed us move the process quicker. We have also been doing some educational programs with recruiters and applicants with regard to filling out the application as well as meeting the Nursing Council and nursing educators in key foreign countries like India, China, Mexico, and the Philippines to explain the process and why we are requesting the information and why it needs to be provided in the format that we have requested. We think that that is helping move the process along. And then, of course, there is a 212R process that streamlines the process for nurses who are from the English exempt countries.

FOLLOW-UP: Have you thought about implementing some sort of expedite process for an additional fee?

That is certainly something that we are looking at but what we have been concentrating on is upgrading and enhancing our staff and our processes so that we are current. With being able to process the applications now within 30-45 days of receiving all of the required documents, we know that that is working. What we have been encouraging people to do is to provide the nursing councils and their schools either with Federal Express or DHL envelopes prepaid so that when the school says that they have mailed it and that they can confirm that they mailed it as well as confirming that we have received it so that you know that we know the document is here.

FOLLOW-UP: Can the applicant use documents that were previously submitted?

If we can use the transcript and the nursing education form, what we need in addition to that are all licenses validated that have ever been held. For our certification program what is required is the initial license from the country of education and a current license. We keep a file for seven years. If there has been no activity in seven years that file is destroyed. The person's name and their I.D. number remains the same but we would not have those previously submitted documents. Our definition of activity is extremely broad, so if during those seven years we receive a letter from the applicant changing their address or asking a question then that seven years starts again. We are now receiving VisaScreen applications for people to whom we issued our certificate in 1990. If we didn't hear from them between 1990 and 2004 their file has been destroyed. Also, after January 2001 we stopped accepting photocopies of licenses, so if they were in our system before January 2001 we may have a copy of a license but that would not suffice for VisaScreen. We need to receive that license validation directly from the licensing authority. Even if the applicant cannot

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		<p>remember their I.D. number, when we put their information into the system it will alert us to the fact that we have a file on that applicant and then that information will be in the system. With our new information system the fields show up automatically so once we put that application into the system the application is in. If we have a secondary school diploma that should show up as well. The transcript would also show up on the system. The license validation might not, if it does show up it would say "not acceptable" and if we have the application, secondary school diploma and the transcript and the fee it would trigger that file to be ready for review. Upon reviewing the file, if we found that we needed a license validation, a letter would go out to the applicant. Our new information system also automatically generates letters so there is an automatic generation of a letter when we receive and input the application. They will get a letter that says "welcome" and if they are a new applicant and have never been in our system before, they will also get an I.D. card—that is something new that we have instituted. Thirty days after that they receive a letter indicating what is needed and then at the 60-day interval after that they would receive a letter saying what is still outstanding. If an applicant applies on line and provides an e-mail, then every time we receive a document an automatic e-mail will go out to the applicant, and we are also in the process of upgrading the system so that we would be able to do that for new applicants who apply with a hard copy if they supply us with an e-mail address. We will notify the attorney if the applicant has filed an authorization for third party notification. The authorization establishes the third party as the recipient of all correspondence. We will not duplicate correspondence. So when the applicant signs that authorization for release form, all information goes to the person's address on that third party authorization.</p>
11.	What is the CGFNS fee for VisaScreen?	The fee for VisaScreen is \$325.00. There are no plans to raise or lower that fee. It is competitive with the certification fees that NBCOT and FCCPT charge. In fact, ours is cheaper.
12.	Does the VisaScreen have an expiration date?	The VisaScreen is now required to have a expiration date five years after the issuance. As of January this year, we have changed the look of our certificate. The certificate now carries a picture of the applicant and also has an expiration date. If there is an applicant for whom we do not have a picture because we did not always require pictures for VisaScreens, there will still be a place on the certificate that has the frame for the picture and that says no photo available. We will not hold a VisaScreen certificate for a photo.

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13.	Can attorneys work with you or do you deal only with the applicant?	If the applicant desires CGFNS to give information to a third party whether it is an attorney, their husband, their sister in law, or mother—they have to sign an authorization release form. The form is available online and is also sent out with all applications now. We ask that they only designate one person because otherwise we get five different people who will call in the same day regarding information. The authorization release form is good for 2 years and it can be revoked at any time in writing. With our new information system an applicant can check their status on line using their identification number and they can establish a password and user name. They are free to provide that information to whomever they want. But, if someone calls on the phone, we must have them designated as the third party recipient. If they e-mail us or send us a letter, we must have that authorization.
14.	How can attorneys contact your office for information (phone, fax and/or e-mail)? Any plans to expand types of communication methods?	Attorneys can contact our office for information by phone, fax, e-mail, or postal mail. You can also access the on-line information as long as you have your client's password or user name. We also have a new system that will be open to the public March 1 st and that is an online reporting system. We just completed a three-month pilot with a number of immigration attorneys and recruiters and hospitals and it went well and we are doing some revision. That reporting system will allow you to pull up information on your client and instead of having to go in and put in individual passwords, if we have received the authorization release form from your client you will be given a user name and password which will allow you pull up a comprehensive report on all of your clients whether it is 30 or 3,000 and that information will let you know the status of the application—whether there are any outstanding documents and whether or not certificates have been issued. Once the service has been completed, the information will remain on the on-line report for 30 days and then that information is dropped. We will be publicizing the on-line reporting system on our website and through a press release and there will be a form for you to fill out if you are interested in participating in that online reporting system. For those of you who already have authorization from your client—since those authorizations are already in the system—once we set up your user name and password, then all of those applicants will be dropped into a report that will be accessible only to you.
15	Does CGFNS have a weekly newsletter or e-mail that	Our website is being redesigned and as part of that process we are thinking of having areas of the website for particular

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	attorneys can subscribe to?	constituencies, such as immigration law. One area would have different information specific to the reader, and the possibility of an e-newsletter is being talked about. If you are on our mailing list, you will receive any press releases as well as <u>Health Scope</u> that we publish quarterly.
16.	Do you have suggestions for attorneys on how to make CGFNS's job easier? Are there common application mistakes or documentary mistakes by attorneys/applicants that you see often?	When you look at the application, make sure that all of the information is provided. Also, make sure the information is in the form that is needed—that the applicants write out their school information instead of using acronyms. Also, our new applications will have a place to make sure that they can provide us with an address so that we can use that information as well. There are a lot of St. Joseph's Schools of Nursing. The other thing is that we are finding that there are people that have been married more than once or twice and so the diploma is in their maiden name, their nursing license is in their first married name and then they may have a third license in their second married name. When those documents come to us, especially when they are not accompanied by the authorization form, we may not be able to match them up. It is extremely important that the applicant remember what their name was at the time that a document was issued to them and that they use that as well as putting all of the names that they have used on the application. The other thing is, try to be as accurate as they can when they put down their dates of attendance. Also, since the nurse is responsible for requesting her own documents, make sure that she understands what is needed so that she can provide the information to the school so that the school understands they need to fill out clinical and theory hours for the nursing courses.
17.	What is the best method for a college or university to communicate with CGFNS when the college/university is being asked repeatedly for something they have already sent to CGFNS?	If anyone believes that they've sent us something already and we're asking for it again, identify the person's name, I.D. number, and when they sent that document. Certainly, if they sent it by trackable mail and they have a tracking number and date that does help us to locate a document. The other thing is that they could communicate with us by e-mail again communicating with a specific person like myself, Judy or Amos or Dottie, as opposed to the information going into the support e-mail. Then the other thing is to make sure that they read the request that they received for that information. Because even though they may have sent us the nursing education form, we may have had that in 2000 or 1999 for a certification program. If we do not have a transcript, then we need a transcript and sometimes the schools confuse the request for the transcript with the nursing education form. For a VisaScreen, we require the full transcript and the nursing education form be completed.

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		<p>Prior to 2002, we were not requesting full transcripts for the certification program, although some schools would just send it automatically. So we might not have a full transcript for somebody who was in the system before 2002 for the certification program.</p>
18.	<p>The regs say that CGFNS is to issue certificates for medical technicians and technologists. We wrote CGFNS to see about getting a certificate for an ultrasound technologist. CGFNS said they do not do them, and that CIS agrees, but we have nothing from CIS to confirm. On their face, the regs would appear to require certificates from such technologists. Has CGFNS gotten anything in writing from CIS to confirm that they are not required? What kinds of medical technologists are issued CGFNS certificates?</p>	<p>The regulation states that there are seven professions who are required to have a VisaScreen. Among those seven professions are the medical laboratory technologists and the medical laboratory technician, or as defined by INS, clinical laboratory scientists or clinical laboratory technician. Those are specific professions, but I know the Department of Labor puts everybody under medical technology. The nuclear medical technologist is not a clinical laboratory scientist. The dental technician is not a clinical laboratory technician. The ultrasound technologist is not a clinical laboratory technologist. Clinical laboratory scientists and technicians are those people who deal with blood and body fluids in laboratories. So your ultrasound technologist, the sonographer, the dental technician, the nuclear medical technologist, the ophthalmology technician, do not have to have VisaScreen. I have written letters to remind Nebraska and Texas over the last three years explaining the difference. I have never received a response back from those applicants that INS did not accept the explanation. I would be happy to furnish you with copies of those letters so that you can utilize them if you are dealing with INS officials who do not understand the difference.</p>
19.	<p>A physical therapist in the U.S. held a temporary Michigan P.T. license. Temp license expires and he is unable to pass the P.T. exam in order to obtain permanent license. Are they still issued the VisaScreen?</p>	<p>No we do not do a VisaScreen for them, because they are supposed to have an unencumbered valid license, and so once that temporary license expires they are not licensed unless they hold another physical therapy license. They would not be eligible.</p>
20.	<p>When a foreign educated nurse applies for the CGFNS exam or certification program, the nurse must submit a request to the school of nursing to submit the transcripts to the CGFNS and license validation forms directly from the agency of licensure. Then CGFNS must</p>	<p>We must receive their transcript and their license validation in order to determine if they're eligible to sit for the exam. Even when they sit for the exam, once we receive the results, we review their file in order to determine their eligibility to receive our permit. If the nurse fails the CGFNS exam and applies to a State Board of Nursing, another process begins. Let's say the nurse applied for the District of Columbia, which requires the certification exam, and she fails the CGFNS exam so she is not eligible to sit for the state licensing exam for the District of Columbia. So she goes to Maryland and applies for the NCLEX</p>

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	receive this and review this to determine if the nurse is eligible to be approved to sit for the exam. If the nurse then fails to pass the CGFNS, and then applies to a state board of nursing another process begins. Some states want the CGFNS to verify to the board of nursing that the nurse's transcripts has been reviewed and found equivalent and the license has been validated. However, the CGFNS will only provide these services by the CES, at additional cost and delay to the nurse applicant. Since the CGFNS received and evaluated the nurse's transcripts and license, in order to approve the nurse to sit for the CGFNS exam, why is the fee of the CES required? This is an example where workload could be reduced to the CGFNS.	examination, the state licensing exam for Maryland. Maryland does not require the certification exam. What Maryland requires is a credentials evaluation report. We would be able to utilize some of the information that we have for the certification program to review for the credentials evaluation report. The credentials evaluation report that Maryland requires is a full course-by-course report of the nurse's education. Florida also requests information on pharmacology be included in their report. If we have the transcript, the nurse can request that we send those transcripts to the state, if the state will accept them from a third party.
21.	Why are the English exam scores only valid for two years? Would it be possible to have a three-year validity period?	English scores are valid for two years. Two years from the time that they took the exam. We did not set the two-year validity period. That is the accepted validity period in the English proficiency testing arena and the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services affirmed that two-year validity period when they approved the English proficiency exam for use by INS.
22.	The online applicant system has produced some improvements. Is there any way to correct an error in the online system? Can an e-mail address be set up specifically for corrections to the online system?	The applicant can correct name, information, and address information. We are in the process now of looking at a subgroup in the on-line system that would allow corrections to be noted, as well as errors and data entry to be communicated to us without going through the support system.
23.	What are the pass rates for first and repeat test takers for the various countries?	We are in the process of putting out 2003 data, but right now what we know is that 85% of the nurses who take our exam and pass it on the first try will pass the NCLEX state licensing examination. The rates are different for those nurses who are from the English exempt countries and our researchers tell us

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		that difference is related to English proficiency. Nurses from the U.K., Australia, Canada, South Africa, New Zealand, Ireland, have higher passage rates than for those from the Philippines, India and Nigeria. Approximately 23,000 applicants took the CGFNS exam in 2003. We do have a per-country breakdown and that should be available in the research study that is being put together. A third of the applicants pass the exam on the first try. That's the same as with the NCLEX state licensing exam. Our exam is a blueprint of the NCLEX exam, which is why it is a definitive predictor for the NCLEX examination. The five largest countries of exam participants are Philippines, India, Canada, Nigeria, and former USSR.
24.	How many applicants took the CGFNS in 2003? Is there a per country breakdown?	SEE ANSWER TO 23.
25.	Are there any anticipated changes in the CGFNS exam?	Yes, we are now giving the exam four times a year. We are, in fact, going to give two additional exams this year to accommodate the applicants from Canada and Mexico and those will be given in selected sites. There are also changes in the exam format to reflect the changes that are occurring in the NCLEX examination. There will be diagrams, pictures, and graphs on the exam from now on to reflect the similar questions on the NCLEX examination.
26.	How long does it take to get academic and license verification from India, Philippines, and Canada	Academic and license verification vary from country to county. The Philippines is using an expedited process and we usually can get their information within three months or so. With Canada, it just depends upon the province. With India, it depends upon the nursing consul. There are problems, I understand, getting documents from Tamilnadu just because they have set up tremendous hurdles for the nurses. They have to apply in person, supply three forms of identification, birth certificate, pictures, and other things.
27.	Can you give us detailed info on the NY Credential (fees and processing)?	We provide that service for New York through a contract that we have with them. We do not do an evaluation of the credentials. We receive the documents, verify that they came from the issuing body, and then we forward those documents to New York. New York had over a 100 cases of fraud that involved University personnel, so they do not allow the nurse to personally request her transcript or her license validation. The nurse must fill out an authorization form and submit that with her application. We then send that request to the school and the

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		licensing authority with whatever appropriate fee they have indicated to us in the past, or that we've been able to get over the internet. Then that information must come directly back to us and then all that information is duplicated and then sent to New York. The fee for the New York credentials verification service is \$275. The first three years of the contract it was \$125. That process does take longer since we have to request the documents, and we usually have to send three requests. We send the initial request with the authorization forms. If we don't receive the documents in 60 days, we send out a second request. We wait for another 60 days and then we send out a third and final request. Then after 180 days have lapsed, we will process what we have and send that to New York. If we have not received any documents then New York will repeat the process asking the applicant to provide them with documents and then they send those documents to the school and the licensing authority asking them to confirm their validity.
28.	Occupational Therapists require certification from the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy (NBCOT) and Physical Therapists require Foreign Credentialing Commission on Physical Therapy (FCCPT). Are the NBCOT and FCCPT sufficient enough for the required certification? Is the VisaScreen required by the CGFNS, and IF yes, WHY?	The occupational therapist Board as well as the Credentialing Commission on Physical Therapy are the two other groups that have been approved by CIS to do the Visa Certification for those specific professions. We have also been approved to do those two professions. We have established professional standards committees for each of those professions and those committees are composed of professionals from those schools and regulators, and then they helped establish the standards that would be utilized by our credential evaluators when we review the education. Those standards are based upon the standards of education that are required for their counterparts here in the United States. VisaScreen is a trademark term for CGFNS' process.
29.	What is the staffing level of the CGFNS? Any anticipated increases in staffing?	We presently have 146 people on staff and plan to have 200 on staff before the end of the year. Now you contrast that to three years ago, when I came on board, we had 74 staff.
30.	Is it true that you are six months behind just in opening mail?	No.
31.	The U.S. CIS has indicated that it will accept a "CGFNS Certificate" in lieu of a license, in the case of foreign nurses. We have a client who is	Licensed practical nurses are not required to have our certificate because we do not have a qualifying exam for licensed practical nurses.

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	proposing to sponsor several L.P.N.s who all have received their CGFNS Report (evaluation confirming that their education is the equivalent of L.P.N. education in the U.S.) but, across the Reports the words "Not a CGFNS Certificate Holder" are printed. What does this mean?	
32.	What is the "CGFNS Certificate" that the U.S. CIS will accept as temporary evidence of nursing qualification? How can our client obtain those "Certificates" from CGFNS	The CGFNS certificate is the certificate that is issued when a nurse has passed our qualifying exam and met the English proficiency requirement. It is only issued for registered nurses and they must (1) be eligible to take the exam, (2) pass the exam, and (3) either pass the English proficiency exam, or demonstrate that they are exempt from the exam.
33.	English test exemption qualification: A nurse has an AS degree or earned more than half of the credits abroad and transferred to a university in the US and received a BS degree. Is the nurse exempt from English test requirements for VisaScreen?	If the nurse is a graduate of an entry-level nursing program in the United States or Canada excluding Quebec, the UK or Ireland, New Zealand, or Australia, they would be exempt from the English test for VisaScreen. The problem is, if you have a nurse who completed their nursing education in a non-English exempt country but who comes to the U.S. and then completes a master's program, they do not meet the criteria to be exempt from the English test because they completed their entry-level nursing in a non-exempt country. If the nurse starts her education in a country that's non-exempt, but then she comes here and she finishes an entry-level program, (diploma, associate degree or baccalaureate), she would meet the English exemption. Nursing is schizophrenic. There are three entry levels in the United States: diploma a hospital-based program; an associate degree program that is with a community college; and then a baccalaureate degree program that is with a college or university. Some countries have two levels, like an associate degree level or a baccalaureate level. If they completed either of those entry-level programs in a foreign country that is not English exempt, then they would not meet the English exempt requirement unless they came here and then completed an entry-level program. If they are coming here to complete an entry-level program, they're probably going into an associate degree program or a baccalaureate program, because they would have had to have completed something like a hospital based program to have been a first level generalist nurse in their country.

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34.	Will CGFNS administer exams in Karachi, Pakistan on a regular basis in the near future?	<p>We've been administering exams in Karachi. A decision about a testing center at any time is based upon how many applications we have received for that exam and the political situation and the safety situation in that country. We had sites open in Mexico and Monterrey for the last two exams, but we had no applicants. Cochin is closed for our March and July exam and that is because of administrative complications in administering the exam in that city, but we are continuing to give the exams in New Delhi and in Bangalore. We've given the exam the last two times in Chile. For years we never had any applicants, the last two times we had 23 and we also have opened a site in Beijing. We need to have at least 10 applicants for a site to be opened.</p>
35.	Would CGFNS/ICHP disclose the standards it uses to determine whether an alien's education, training, license, and experience are comparable with that required for an American healthcare worker?	<p>No.</p> <p>FOLLOW-UP: Could you tell us how the standards are established?</p> <p>The standards are established by individual credentials committees. We have a standards committee for each profession for whom we have been approved to do a VisaScreen, and those standards committees are comprised of professionals representing the profession. They are educators and regulators and they are from the United States. They meet, they go over what the standards are for the professionals here in the United States looking at the courses, the requirements for clinical experience, the requirements for certification, the requirements for licensure. The Committee looks at the requirement for the entry-level professional and then once they have drafted the standards, the standards are sent out to the professional organization and the school. They are reviewed and commented upon, and then the standards committee affirms the standards and those standards as recommended are sent to our Board of Directors. The Chair of that committee makes a presentation and then explains the standards, how they were developed, and then the Board will accept their recommendation. There have been times when the hours that we accept for a particular course may be less than what is required by the State of Florida or Georgia or Maryland or Ohio because those are very strict states.</p> <p>FOLLOW-UP: Is the credential review for the CGFNS exam the same standard as used in the VisaScreen?</p> <p>Yes. They have to have completed four areas of nursing, medical surgical adult nursing, pediatrics, obstetrics and</p>

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		<p>psychiatric nursing. On the license, the state determines licensure and so you may have someone who took the certification exam and passed it and we give them a certificate. They will have to pass the state licensing exam and meet the requirements of the state to sit for that exam, and it's up to the state what they will accept.</p> <p>FOLLOW-UP: You don't disclose your standards because of a fraud concern?</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>FOLLOW-UP: Are the standards disclosed to CIS?</p> <p>Yes, but they do not approve the standards. We were approved based upon our experience over the last 25 years, the fact that over half the states require our certification exam, and that our certification exam is a valid predictor of the nurse's success on NCLEX. So they know that if the nurse has a VisaScreen and she has her certificate, but she hasn't passed the state licensing exam, they know when she does enter the U.S. and sits for the exam she more than likely will pass the exam on the first try and therefore, meets that requirement that when their feet touch the ground that they will be able to work in the occupation for which they received the visa. New York, although they don't require our exam, and they do their own credentials evaluation, if the nurse holds our certificate once they have done a review of their education, they will give the nurse a limited permit to practice in New York for a year. After a year she will have had to pass the state licensing exam.</p>
36.	<p>Nurse certified statements are restricted to those states that verify that a nurse's foreign licenses are authentic and unencumbered. Would CGFNS/ICHP provide a list of such states?</p>	<p>We are restricted on that. This is a 212R question. So I'll do all of 212R at the same time. 212R is an alternative process for VisaScreen. 212R requires that the nurse must have a valid and unrestricted license in a state that verifies foreign licenses as authentic and unencumbered, and for 212R those states were identified as Florida, Georgia, New York, and Illinois. The nurse must also have graduated from a nursing program where the instruction was in English and was located in Australia, Canada (except Quebec), Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa, the United States and the United Kingdom. We also have extended that to Trinidad and Tobago. There are other states that are inquiring about being included, and we are in the process of reviewing those states. (Michigan was added March 31, 2004)</p> <p>FOLLOW-UP: Does your statement mean that if other states could potentially be eligible for 212R if they were to request this designation from you?</p>

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		If they requested and met the criteria, yes.
37	Has CGFNS designated any countries other than Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Trinidad as possessing nursing programs eligible for nurse certified statements?	Trinidad/Tobago were designated in 2004.
38.	Has CGFNS designated any nursing programs established after November 12, 1999 as eligible for nurse certified statements?	<p>Right now our criteria says that the school must be approved and that means by the government entities that approve this school. So, when you talk about a nursing program here, it's not necessarily talking about a school. It's talking about a nursing program. There are some people out there trying to put programs together and those programs would have to be approved because right now those programs don't have governmental approval. You have new schools in the former USSR, three-month and six-month schools, that are supposedly churning out nurses from applicants who had previously been physicians, but those schools have not been approved by the government. As opposed to the Philippines, which has approved a one- and two-year nursing program for physicians who wish to become nurses.</p> <p>FOLLOW-UP: There is one school in the Philippines that does that, that's approved?</p> <p>There are a couple of schools, but again they are government approved schools of nursing. Whenever we review the education of nurses or any other health professional, we look and see what country they graduated from, what are the requirements for entry into the program and for graduation and for licensure, and has that program been certified by the country, or whomever has that responsibility.</p>
39.	Would CGFNS post the Section 212(r) designations above on its website?	On website already. Trinidad recently added by CGFNS.
40.	Would CGFNS consider setting up a process in the future where extremely sympathetic cases or beyond normal processing times cases	Individual attorneys can email CGFNS directly. CGFNS will write a letter to the embassy or CIS that the application is under review, if necessary.

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	can be brought to their attention by AILA's Health Care Professional Committee?	
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Additional Information:

Tell applicant not to change any information or data on documents submitted to CGFNS. If there is any evidence of tampering, forgery, etc. the file is closed. This means not eligible for CGFNS forever!

*CGFNS closes files with false but what some consider immaterial information, because it brings up issues about character and raises questions as to validity of all information. It leads one to questions whether nurses may lie about giving patient medicine. An applicant MUST GIVE TRUE and VALID INFORMATION.

FRAUD IS NOT COMMON, BUT IT DOES HAPPEN AND THE ENTIRE CASE IS CLOSED AND MAY BE REPORTED TO A STATE. IF CLOSED, IT MUST GO TO APPEALS COMMITTEE UPON REQUEST WHICH DELAYS IT 6-9 MONTHS. MAY NOT BE FORGIVEN BY THE APPEALS COMMITTEE.