

TOPIC: DEGREE AUTHORIZATION ACT – FLORIDA HOSPITAL COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCES

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I. SUMMARY

This item recommends authorization for Florida Hospital College of Health Sciences (FHCHS) to operate in Colorado.

II. BACKGROUND

The Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) has statutory responsibility for administration of Title 23, Article 2 of the Colorado Revised Statutes, commonly referred to as the Degree Authorization Act, which sets out the terms under which certain types of institutions¹ may offer degrees or degree credits. Persons or organizations that violate the provisions of the statute are subject to legal penalties.

All private colleges and universities, out-of-state public colleges and universities, seminaries and bible colleges are required to register with the Colorado Department of Higher Education (DHE) and to meet criteria in CCHE Policy Section I Part J, Degree Authorization Act, in order to be granted authorization to offer degrees within Colorado. Such authorization must be received by the institution prior to: offering any program of instruction, academic credits, or degrees; opening a place of business; soliciting students or enrollees; or offering educational support services.

The Commission administers the Degree Authorization Act by determining an institution's eligibility to operate pursuant to statute and CCHE policy. Policy requires Commission action for institutions to be authorized at any level.

II. STAFF ANALYSIS

FHCHS is applying for probationary authorization. It is a private non-profit institution currently operating out of Orlando, Florida and specializing in Nursing and Allied Health Education. It currently holds accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and has held this accreditation since 1996. Under the Degree Authorization Act rules and regulations, an institution will hold probationary authorization until an on-site review from the accreditation body is conducted and approved.

¹ (1) Colorado publicly supported colleges and universities; (2) properly accredited private colleges and universities; (3) postsecondary seminaries and bible colleges; and (4) private occupational schools authorized by the Division of Private Occupational Schools.

As required by the Degree Authorization Act, FHCHS submitted the initial documentation concerning its organization, programs and finances. Department staff empanelled an evaluation team to review the application. Staff provided the team with statutory references, DAA rules and regulations, the FHCHS application materials and supporting documents and charged the team with assessing if the institution has the ability to provide appropriate student services at the proposed Colorado site and has the financial ability to support all operations at the new site.

The evaluation team noted minor deficiencies to which the applicant provided additional documentation. After reviewing the response by representatives at the institution, the evaluation team provided a favorable recommendation for authorization (final report attached). Upon state authorization, FHCHS plans to offer Associate of Science degrees in Nuclear Medicine and Radiography and will work with the Colorado State Board of Nursing to gain approval for its Bachelor of Science in Nursing.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Commission approve probationary authorization for Florida Hospital College of Health Sciences.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

C.R.S. §23-2-102
C.R.S. §23-2-103
C.R.S. §23-2-103.3