

CHAPTER 241

EDUCATION - POSTSECONDARY

SENATE BILL 13-178

BY SENATOR(S) Hudak, Giron, Grantham, Jahn, Kerr, Newell, Todd, Aguilar, Brophy, Crowder, Kefalas, Lundberg, Nicholson, Steadman;
also REPRESENTATIVE(S) Hamner, Kraft-Tharp, May, Navarro, Schafer, Coram, Fischer, Gerou, Ginal, Hullinghorst, Labuda, Landgraf, Lebsock, Melton, Mitsch Bush, Pabon, Pettersen, Rosenthal, Tyler, Vigil, Young.

AN ACT**CONCERNING AUTHORIZING RED ROCKS COMMUNITY COLLEGE TO OFFER A PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES PROGRAM AS A PROGRAM OF GRADUATE EDUCATION.**

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

SECTION 1. Legislative declaration. (1) The general assembly hereby finds and declares that:

(a) The health care industry is relying, in part, on the physician assistant profession to meet certain provider needs in the present and in the future that will otherwise be unmet without these providers;

(b) The accreditation standards for physician assistant programs require that all currently accredited programs confer graduate degrees upon those students who initially enroll in the physician assistant program after 2020;

(c) Further, in order to meet the eligibility requirements of the accreditation review commission on education for the physician assistant, a single institution must be clearly identified as the sponsor of the program, must be authorized under applicable law to provide a program of graduate education, must be accredited by a recognized regional accrediting agency, and must be authorized by the accrediting agency to confer a graduate degree upon those students who complete the physician assistant program;

(d) Physician assistant programs that are not in compliance with these degree requirements by January 1, 2021, will have their accreditation withdrawn;

Capital letters indicate new material added to existing statutes; dashes through words indicate deletions from existing statutes and such material not part of act.

(e) Red Rocks community college's physician assistant program (RRCCPAP) is accredited through the accreditation review commission on education for the physician assistant. Red Rocks community college offers a certificate program in physician assistant studies and prepares the student for the national exam through a twenty-five-month-long program designed to train individuals to provide primary care to the medically underserved. Admission requirements include a bachelor's degree and 2,000 hours of paid medical experience. The RRCCPAP currently offers an on-line master of medical science degree through an affiliation with St. Francis university in Pennsylvania.

(f) In order to continue to meet the eligibility requirements and ensure that Red Rocks community college can continue to prepare students to serve as physician assistants, Red Rocks community college must be authorized to confer a masters of physician assistant studies degree on students completing the RRCCPAP on its own, and not through an affiliation with St. Francis university in Pennsylvania.

(2) Therefore, the general assembly declares that it is in the best interests of the state of Colorado to authorize Red Rocks community college to seek accreditation for and offer its physician assistant program as a program of graduate education.

SECTION 2. In Colorado Revised Statutes, 23-60-211, **add** (3) as follows:

23-60-211. Degrees. (3) PURSUANT TO SECTION 23-60-213, RED ROCKS COMMUNITY COLLEGE MAY OFFER A GRADUATE PROGRAM IN PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES.

SECTION 3. In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add** 23-60-213 as follows:

23-60-213. Red Rocks community college - physician assistant master's program. NOTWITHSTANDING ANY OTHER PROVISION OF LAW TO THE CONTRARY, RED ROCKS COMMUNITY COLLEGE IS AUTHORIZED TO CONFER A GRADUATE DEGREE UPON A STUDENT WHO COMPLETES THE PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT STUDIES PROGRAM AND SHALL SEEK ACCREDITATION FOR THE PROGRAM.

SECTION 4. Act subject to petition - effective date. This act takes effect at 12:01 a.m. on the day following the expiration of the ninety-day period after final adjournment of the general assembly (August 7, 2013, if adjournment sine die is on May 8, 2013); except that, if a referendum petition is filed pursuant to section 1 (3) of article V of the state constitution against this act or an item, section, or part of this act within such period, then the act, item, section, or part will not take effect unless approved by the people at the general election to be held in November 2014 and, in such case, will take effect on the date of the official declaration of the vote thereon by the governor.

Approved: May 17, 2013