

CNA Workforce Opportunities

Who We Are

The Gerontological Advanced Practice Nursing Association (GAPNA) represents advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs), including nurse practitioners, clinical nurse specialists, and other external providers who specialize in the care of older adults.

Where We Work

Many GAPNA members provide primary care to older adults living in nursing homes and they have a deep understanding of the industry. APRNs recognize quality outcomes, financial burdens, and workforce deficits impacting those living in nursing homes.

Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs) play a vital role caring for older adults. A dire shortage of CNAs has created a national workforce crisis impacting nursing homes; this will grow exponentially in the future.

The Problem (Now and Over the Next Decade)

Continuing with unfilled CNA positions contributes to lower quality of care for older adults (PHI, 2024) and nursing home closures (American Health Care Association & National Center for Assisted Living, 2024).



157,000

open CNA positions
across the country

(AHCA, 2024)



95%

of nursing homes
surveyed have open
CNA positions

(AHCA, 2024)



664,700

CNA job openings in
America's nursing homes

(PHI, 2025)



17% → 22%

Life expectancy is longer,
and the proportion of older
adults will increase from 17%
to 22% of the US population
including a doubling of
adults ages 85 and older

(AHCA, 2024)

It is imperative that there is a qualified workforce to meet the needs of the rapidly expanding older adult population.

What's Needed: Regulatory Change

The current federal regulations require nurse aide training be performed by or under the general supervision of a registered nurse who possesses a minimum of two years of nursing experience and at least one year of prior stated experience in the provision of long-term care (LTC) facility services. Code of Federal Regulations Requirement 483.152(a)(5)(i) of Title 42.

The current Nurse Aide Training and Competency Evaluation Program (NATCEP) instructor requirement to have one year of experience in LTC excludes many qualified nurses who have relevant experience in other health care settings. Narrowing the pool of candidate instructors when there is already a shortage exacerbates current workforce issues.

The aging and retirements of nurses have left the profession challenged to meet current patient care needs and prepare the future nursing workforce.



15,600 nursing homes caring for 1,157,714 residents (KFF, 2024)



Approximately 4% of nurses work in "rehabilitation or chronic care" which significantly limits the pool of potential CNA instructors meeting the existing requirements (State of the U.S. Health Care Workforce, 2024).

The Solution



Ask CMS to rescind the following language under §483.152(5)(i): "at least 1 year of which must be in the provision of long-term care facility services".



Expand the eligibility criteria



Increase access to nurse aide training



Increase the instructor pool



Enable more training programs to help grow the nursing home workforce with qualified caregivers

References

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Endorsed by the following organizations

American Health Care Association/National Center for Assisted Living (AHCA/NCAL)

Council for Nurse Assistant Education (CNAE)

FACETS Healthcare Training

National Association of Health Care Assistants (NAHCA)

LeadingAge

Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medical Association (PALTmed)

The Gerontological Advanced Practice Nurses Association (GAPNA)

The National Association of Directors of Nursing Administration in Long-Term Care (NADONA)