



STATE OF WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

PO Box 47890 • Olympia, Washington 98504-7890

Tel: (360) 236-4030 • FAX: (360) 586-7424 • TDD Relay Service: 1-800-833-6388

January 15, 2013

The Honorable Chris O. Gregoire
Governor of the State of Washington
Post Office Box 40002
Olympia, Washington 98504-0002

Dear Governor Gregoire:

In 2010 the legislature passed Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill (ESSB) 6582 to allow alternative training for home care aides and medical assistants to qualify for the nursing assistant-certified (NA-C) credential. The bill requires the secretary of health to report annually to the governor and the legislature on progress made to advance certified home care aides and medical assistants into nursing practice. This is the first of our progress reports.

Summary of Progress

The Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission approved the first two programs for alternative training on October 8, 2012. Since these are the first programs to be approved, no home care aides or medical assistants have applied for an NA-C credential.

Background

ESSB6582 was created in response to, "*a growing shortage of nurses as the proportion of the elderly population grows and the acuity of patients in hospitals and nursing homes becomes generally more severe.*" The bill required the commission to adopt criteria for alternative training programs. The criteria should meet requirements of a state-approved competency evaluation program consistent with 42 U.S.C. Section 1395i-3 (e) and (f) of the federal Social Security Act. The criteria must allow an applicant to take the competency evaluation by completing 24 hours of training on topics not addressed in home care aide or medical assistant training. This alternative training is often called "bridge training."

Rules

In late 2010 the commission met with stakeholders to create rules for the bridge training and compare training programs for home care aides and medical assistants with approved programs for NA-C training. The commission used stakeholder feedback and research to identify topics in the NA-C training that are not part of training for home care aides and medical assistants.

In 2011 the commission adopted requirements for bridge training programs for both home care aides and medical assistants, including curriculum and minimum education and training standards for program directors and instructors. The commission also created a process to approve and deny training programs, and for those completing a bridge training program to take the competency evaluation and apply for an NA-C credential. These requirements can be found in WAC 246-841-530 through 585.

Status of Programs

The commission received four applications for bridge training programs since rules were adopted. On October 8, 2012 the commission reviewed and approved two of these programs. The other two applications are still pending more information. These bridge training programs could begin training home care aides and medical assistants in November.

Other Key Work in Career Advancement for Entry Level Health Care Workers

Along with ESSB6582, the legislature passed ESSB6237 to establish state credentialing for medical assistants during the 2012 session. State credentialing for home care aides, established by Initiative 1029 in 2008 and Initiative 1163 in 2011, has been in existence since January 2012. ESSB6237 also requires the secretary of health to report to the legislature on career path opportunities and barriers for medical assistants and other entry level health care workers, of which we will concurrently report on. To prepare for the report, the department met with two groups of stakeholders over the summer to get feedback from key partners, including community, technical, and four-year colleges. We plan to transmit the report to the legislature before the 2013 session.

Although we don't yet have data on bridge training programs or applicants graduating from bridge training programs, we've established clear requirements for curriculum to allow home care aides and medical assistants to get the necessary training to gain an NA-C credential. We continue working with leaders and advocates in the professional community to develop bridge training programs. We hope to review and approve more applications soon.

If you have any questions about this report, please contact Mindy Schaffner, nursing education advisor for the commission, at mindy.schaffner@doh.wa.gov or 360-236-4745.

Sincerely,



Mary C. Selecky
Secretary

cc: Senator Randi Becker, Senate Health and Long-Term Care Committee
Representative Eileen Cody, Health Care & Wellness Committee
Jason McGill, Governor's Executive Policy Office
Mindy Schaffner, Department of Health