

Caregiver Training and Certification Timelines after the Pandemic's End | AL

The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) training unit and the Department of Health (DOH) worked diligently with stakeholders, including WHCA, throughout the pandemic to extend training and certification timelines for caregivers working in assisted living settings. This article offers clarification on the status of continued extensions in training and certification timelines and highlights specific training expectations.

Nurse Delegation

During the pandemic when it was difficult to find an available home care aide or nursing assistant training program, the nursing commission worked to allow newly hired, uncertified caregivers to perform delegated tasks without first needing basic caregiver training (meaning, home care aide or nursing assistant training). Because caregivers who perform delegated tasks must fall under the Uniform Disciplinary Act, these uncertified individuals hired during the timeline of the pandemic (until June 30, 2023) had to become a nursing assistant registered (NAR) and successfully complete the self-study delegation classes prior to performing delegated tasks. In these cases, the RN delegator does not need to review and confirm the caregiver has completed core basic training prior to delegating tasks. See Dear Provider letter [here](#) and updated regulations [here](#).

To summarize, if you hired a previously uncredentialed caregiver during the pandemic, and the person obtained a NAR and completed the nurse delegation class (9-hour nurse delegation and, if performing insulin injections, the additional 3-hour Focus on Diabetes), they can continue performing delegated tasks while they complete their training and certification as a home care aide or nursing assistant, based on their hire date. Once they complete training and certification, there is no need to renew the NAR.

If you hired an uncredentialed caregiver after June 30, 2023, the person must complete their home care aide or nursing assistant training within 120 days of starting work and be certified as a HCA or NAC by day 200; delegation cannot occur until the person is certified OR the person can demonstrate completion of the core basic training (home care aide or nursing assistant), nurse delegation classes, and have an active NAR. See WAC below for details:

WAC 246-840-930

Criteria for delegation.

- (1) Before delegating a nursing task, the registered nurse delegator decides the task is appropriate to delegate based on the elements of the nursing process:

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- (8) Verify that the nursing assistant or home care aide:

- (a) Is currently registered or certified as a nursing assistant or home care aide in Washington state without restriction;
- (b) Has completed both the basic caregiver training and core delegation training before performing any delegated task;
- (c) Has evidence as required by the department of social and health services of successful completion of nurse delegation core training;
- (d) Has evidence as required by the department of social and health services of successful completion of nurse delegation special focus on diabetes training when providing insulin injections to a diabetic client; and
- (e) Is willing and able to perform the task in the absence of direct or immediate nurse supervision and accept responsibility for their actions.

Timelines for uncredentialed NARs who are performing delegated tasks and must complete their basic training and certification are based on the date of hire:

Worker hired or rehired during the timeframe of:	Must complete basic training no later than:	Must be certified as a HCA or NAC to later than:
08/17/2019 – 09/30/2020	1/31/2023	05/31/2023
10/01/2020 – 04/30/2021	4/30/2023	08/28/2023
05/01/2021 – 03/31/2022	07/31/2023	11/27/2023
04/01/2022 – 09/30/2022	10/31/2023	02/27/2024
10/01/2022 – 06/30/2023	11/30/2023	03/28/2024
Beginning 07/01/2023	120 days from the date of hire	200 days from the date of hire

HCA OR NAC Training and Certification

Regardless of which training and certification a caregiver chooses to pursue, opportunities to get trained and certified have been extended based on the employee’s hire date.

For caregivers pursuing home care aide training and certification, it is [regulation](#) that the employee [apply to DOH](#) for a home care aide credential within 14 days of starting work, even if the person has not yet enrolled in training. This allows Prometric, the testing company, to anticipate a testing date at or around the 120 day mark and allows the student ample time to prepare for the test and, if necessary, retest before day 200.

For caregivers pursuing nursing assistant training and certification, they have 120 days to complete their training and must be certified as nursing assistants within 200 days of hire. Students enrolled in nursing assistant training programs are considered “[exempt employees](#)” meaning the home care aide training and certification requirements do not pertain to them.

The dates for training and certification as an HCA or NAC have been extended again and updated by DSHS and DOH in the following table:

Worker hired or rehired during the timeframe of:	Must complete basic training no later than:	Must be certified as a HCA or NAC to later than:
08/17/2019 – 09/30/2020	1/31/2023	05/31/2023
10/01/2020 – 04/30/2021	4/30/2023	08/28/2023
05/01/2021 – 03/31/2022	07/31/2023	11/27/2023
04/01/2022 – 09/30/2022	10/31/2023	02/27/2024
10/01/2022 – 06/30/2023	11/30/2023	03/28/2024
Beginning 07/01/2023	120 days from the date of hire	200 days from the date of hire

Specialty Training

Caregivers must also complete specialty training within a specific timeframe. The type and number of specialty training courses needed are based on the types of residents served by the assisted living facility and may include dementia, mental health, and/or developmental disabilities training. Many home care aide training programs, as well as nursing assistant training programs, have the necessary specialty training infused into the core curriculum. Effective September 2024, all three specialty training courses must be included in every nursing assistant training program taught in Washington state.

Nurses and administrators (or their designees) must also complete specialty training.

The pandemic made it difficult for many staff members to complete specialty training. Because of that, DSHS worked to align the specialty training timelines with the dates of hire. See the training timeline below:

Worker hired or rehired during the timeframe of:	Must complete specialty training no later than:
08/17/2019 – 09/30/2020	1/31/2023
10/01/2020 – 04/30/2021	4/30/2023
05/01/2021 – 03/31/2022	07/31/2023
04/01/2022 – 09/30/2022	10/31/2023
10/01/2022 – 06/30/2023	11/30/2023
Beginning 07/01/2023	120 days from the date of hire

Continuing Education

Many caregivers found it difficult to access continuing education classes during the pandemic. During the first year of the pandemic, DSHS allowed for on the job training that focused on infection control and prevention efforts (donning/doffing PPE, environmental cleaning efforts,

etc.) to count towards CE without the need for approved certificates. That WAC can be found [here](#).

In late June, DSHS once again [updated the WAC](#) to further extend additional CE due dates. All CEs that came due while training waivers were in place are now due on or before August 31, 2023.

If caregiving staff needs CE to comply with the August 31st deadline, DSHS has a free continuing education library available to caregivers working in assisted living facilities at www.carelearnwa.com.

For questions regarding training and certification, or any other questions related to assisted living, contact Vicki McNealley via [email](#) or call 1-800-562-6170 extension 107.