



Long-Term Care Issues in Brief

2025 Legislative Session

IMPROVING HOME CARE AIDE CREDENTIALING

Background

Home Care Aides (HCAs) help residents in home and community-based care settings with daily necessities like eating, dressing, and toileting.

These professionals are critical to seniors' health and dignity – yet the state has failed to address severe and longstanding HCA credentialing delays.

These delays are documented in 2016¹, 2022², and December 2024³ reports from the State Auditor's Office and Department of Health (DOH). Despite timely completion of required 75-hour training, many HCAs lose their jobs because they can't get credentialed within the statutory 200-day-from-hire window.

Testing challenges drive delays; HCAs must pass both a written test and a skills test administered by a third party. Test site unavailability, frequent cancellations and delays, and unaccommodating testing conditions inhibit accessibility and performance. Even before COVID-19 disruptions, only one-third of applicants received timely testing.²

Similar challenges for Nurse Aides (NAs) are being addressed by integrating NA testing into training programs. In their December 2024 report³, DOH recommends doing the same for HCA testing and demonstrates popularity across stakeholder groups. **A 2024 pilot program improved passage rates from 70% to 88% and received highly positive participant feedback.**

BENEFITS

Investment in a High-Demand Workforce

The National Center for Health Workforce Analysis shows the nationwide demand for HCAs is projected to increase by 38% between 2020 and 2036.

Securing Access to Care

Without caregivers, there's no care for our aging population. We must reduce workforce barriers before it's too late.

Ensuring Equitable Access to Career Development

HCAs are highly diverse and economically vulnerable. Reducing barriers helps them develop stable, high-potential healthcare careers.

Eliminating Credentialing Backlogs

Backlogs harm entry-level workers, threaten seniors' access to quality long-term care, and consume valuable state employee time.

SOLUTION: YES on HB 1926 to Integrate HCA Testing into Training

Support Rep. Joe Timmons' HB 1926, legislation that directs the Department of Health (DoH) to work with the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to integrate HCA testing into training. This legislation will eliminate major barriers and delays, ensuring the home care aide workforce can grow to meet current and future demand. It also addresses barriers related to inflexible credentialing timelines, poor language accessibility and flaws in application and test materials.

¹ Office of the Washington State Auditor (2016), "[I-1163: Long-term Care Worker Certification Requirements 2016](#)".

² Office of the Washington State Auditor (2022), "[I-1163: Addressing Testing Barriers for Home Care Aides](#)".

³ Washington State Department of Health (2024), "[Home Care Aides Final Report](#)".

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