

Certified Nurse Aide

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1. What type of programs are State Approved?

Programs are offered by Nursing Homes, Acute Facilities, Home Care Agencies, Hospice, Hospitals, High Schools, Technical Schools, Colleges and Private Post Secondary Schools. A list of programs in your geographical area can be obtained on the Georgia Web portal, www.mmis.georgia.gov, under the Nurse Aide Tab or by calling the Nurse Aide Program.

2. What is meant by "successfully completing" a program?

Each program has requirements for passing the classroom and clinical portions. Once you successfully pass the program course, you will then need to **pass** the Written/Oral and Skills State Competency Examination with state test vendor within one year (3 attempts) of completing the program that certifies you as a nurse aide in the state. At that time, your name will be listed on the Georgia Nurse Aide Registry within 10 business days.

3. How long will my name remain on the Nurse Aide Registry?

Your name will remain on the Nurse Aide Registry for 2 years. At that time you will need to fill out a renewal form which will ask you to provide information and documentation that you have worked as a CNA, for pay, for a minimum of 8 hours within the past 2 years under the supervision of nurse. This is your requirement for renewal of your certification. You will need to go through this process every 2 years.

4. What if I have not worked a minimum of 8 hours in the past 24 months?

If you have not worked a minimum of 8 hours in the past 24 consecutive months since your last recertification date, you will have to **re-take the Written/Oral and Skills Certification Competency Examinations**. You need to contact the Nurse Aide Program via the telephone Interactive Voice Response System to obtain a testing application and a list of State Approved Regional Test Sites (RTS). These RTS are located throughout the state. The cost for testing is printed on the testing application. Once you successfully pass the written/oral and skills examinations, your name will again be placed on the Nurse Aide Registry. You must renew your certification every two years thereafter.

5. What tasks or skill am I allowed to perform while working as a Certified Nurse Aide?

As a student nurse aide you can only perform those tasks for which you have been trained and found proficient by the instructor. When you become certified you may perform those tasks that are identified in the State guidelines and Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1987 (OBRA) legislation Nurse Aide Training Curriculum such as:

At least a total of 16 hours of training in the following six areas prior to any direct contact with a resident:

- Communication and interpersonal skills (to include stress management)
- Infection control
- Safety/emergency/FBAO/Body Mechanics
- Promoting residents' independence
- Respecting residents' rights
- Legal/ethical behavior and scope of practice

Basic Nursing Skills as follows:

- Taking/recording vital signs and vital signs parameters
- Measuring and recording height and weight
- Caring for the residents' environment
- Recognizing abnormal changes in body function and the importance of reporting such changes to a supervisor. Some examples of abnormal changes are:
 - Shortness of breath
 - Rapid respiration
 - Fever
 - Coughs
 - Chills
 - Pains in chest
 - Blue color to lips
 - Pain in abdomen
 - Nausea

- Vomiting
- Drowsiness
- Excessive thirst
- Sweating
- Pus
- Blood or sediment in urine
- Difficulty urinating
- Frequent urination in small amounts
- Pain or burning on urination
- Urine has dark color or strong odor
- Behavioral change
- Talks or communicates less
- Physical appearance/mental health changes
- Participated less in activities or refused to attend
- Eating less
- Drinking less
- Weight change
- Appears tired, weak, confused or drowsy
- Change in skin color or condition
- Requires more assistance with dressing, toileting, transfers
- Recognizing and reporting pain to supervisor and
- Caring for a resident when death is imminent and post mortem care

Personal Care Skills, including but not limited to, the following:

- Bathing (to include observation for pressure ulcers)
- Grooming, including mouth care
- Dressing
- Toileting
- Assisting with eating and hydration
- Proper feeding techniques
- Skin-care including observation for pressure ulcers and skin tears
- Transfers, positioning and turning (to include observation for pressure ulcers)

Mental Health and Social Service Needs as follows:

- Modifying aide's behavior in response to resident's behavior including depression
- Awareness of development tasks associated with the aging process
- How to respond to resident behavior including depression
- Allowing residents to make personal choices, providing and reinforcing other behavior consistent with the resident's dignity
- Utilizing resident's family as a source of emotional support
- Emotional and mental health needs of the residents
- Spiritual and cultural needs of the residents

Care of Cognitively Impaired Residents as follows:

- Techniques for addressing the unique needs and behaviors of individuals with dementia (Alzheimer's and others)
- Communicating with cognitively impaired residents
- Understanding the behavior of cognitively impaired residents
- Appropriate responses to the behavior of cognitively impaired residents
- Methods of reducing the effects of cognitive impairments
- Spiritual and cultural health

Basic Restorative Services – The nurse aide should be able to demonstrate skills which incorporate principles of restorative nursing, including but not limited to:

- Training the resident in self-care according to the resident's abilities
- Ambulation with/without a gait belt
- The use of assistive devices in transferring, ambulation, eating and dressing
- Maintenance of range of motion
- Proper turning and positioning in bed and chair
- Bowel and bladder training
- Care and use of prosthetic/orthotic devices and eyeglasses

Residents Rights – The nurse aide should be able to demonstrate behavior which maintains residents' right, including but not limited to:

- Providing privacy and maintenance of confidentiality
- Promoting the residents' right to make personal choices to accommodate their needs
- Giving assistance in resolving grievances and disputes (to include the role of the ombudsman)
- Providing needed assistance in getting to and participating in resident and family groups and other activities
- Maintaining care and security of resident's personal possessions
- Providing care which maintains the resident free from abuse, mistreatment and neglect and reporting any instances of such treatment to appropriate facility staff
- Avoiding the need for restraints in accordance with current professional standard

Reference: Federal Register/Vol.56, No. 187, Subpart D, Sec. 483.152, (b), (1-7).

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6. What should I do if I lose my certification card?

You can request a replacement certification card by printing a Certification Card Request Form to mail to the registry via the Georgia Web portal (www.mmis.georgia.gov), click on the Nurse Aide Tab or calling the telephone Interactive Voice Response System at (678) 527-3010 (local) or (800) 414-1044.

7. Does Georgia recognize the certification as an aide that I obtained from another state (reciprocity)?

Yes. If you are currently listed as active and in good standing on another state's Nurse Aide Registry in accordance with the federal requirements and you wish to be certified in Georgia, you may obtain a Reciprocity Application via the Georgia Web portal at www.mmis.georgia.gov, click on Nurse Aide/Medication Aide tab, and retrieve the reciprocity form under Forms Section.

8. Do Certified Nurse Aides have to receive in-service education?

Certified Nurse Aides working in a licensed Medicaid/Medicare facility must attend at least 12 hours of in-service education offered by the facility. Each facility is required to submit in-service information to the Nurse Aide Program, including names of CNA employees attending those in-services.

9. Can a LPN or RN become a certified nurse aide without taking the nurse aide training course?

Yes, a LPN or RN who has applied to take their licensing examination may become certified by completing the first 16 hours of training required before "hands-on" patient care and then successfully completing the Written/Oral and Skills Competency Exam.

10. Is a background check required for employment as a Certified Nurse Aide?

All licensed facilities are required to conduct background checks as a condition of employment. A certified nurse aide may work for an employer that is not required by law to obtain a criminal background check, such as a self-employed nurse aide that does private duty. Please review private duty requirements on the nurse aide renewal form.

11. What happens when a certified nurse aide is accused of abusing, neglecting or misappropriating residents' property?

The facility notifies the Long Term Care Section of the HealthCare Facility Regulation Division. The Long Term Care Section reviews the information gathered by the facility and may conduct an on site investigation if it determines that it is necessary. If the Section believes that the aide did abuse, neglect or misappropriate resident's property, then the Section sends the aide a letter advising him or her of the findings and giving the aide an opportunity to send in a written statement explaining what happened. The aide also has the right to request an administrative hearing. In the hearing, the judge would decide whether the aide abused, neglected or misappropriated a resident's property. If the judge finds the accusation to be true, then the finding against the aide would be entered in the Georgia Nurse Aide Registry.

12. Can I perform the duties of a nurse aide before I am certified?

All nursing homes have four (4) months from the date of hire to get an individual trained and tested through a State approved program. During the four-month grace period students cannot perform any duty that they have not been trained and checked off as proficient by the instructor. Aides employed by a nursing home must show competency by successful completion of a state-approved competency test prior to any unsupervised client contact.

13. My certification has expired. Can I renew it?

Certified nursing aides must renew their certification every two years. You can renew during this period by submitting a completed renewal application which verifies that you provide eight (8) hours of nursing related services for pay under the supervision of a nurse during the two-year span in which your certification was active.

If lapsed under three years without work verification, then you must retake and pass the State written/oral and skills competency examination to update your certification. If lapsed over three years from last recertification date, then you must complete another State approved nurse aide training program and pass the State written/oral and skills competency examination.

14. Is there a renewal fee?

No. The state does not charge a renewal fee to remain a Certified Nurse Aide on the Registry.

15. I haven't received my renewal application in the mail? What do I need to do?

Certification renewal forms are mailed out approximately sixty (60) days before your certification expires. If you have changed your address in the last 2 years and forgot to notify the Registry, you may not get your renewal application. Please contact the Registry with your new address at (678) 527-3010 or (800) 414-4358.

16. How much does it cost to become a Certified Nurse Aide?

The cost varies depending on type of program. Contact state approved program for fee information.

Nursing Homes Only: No nurse aide who is employed by, or who has received an offer of employment from a nursing home on the date on which the aide begins a nurse aide training and competency evaluation program may be charged for any portion of the program (including any fees for textbooks or other required course materials).

If an individual who is not employed, or does not have an offer to be employed, as a nurse aide becomes employed by, or receives an offer of employment from, a facility not later than 12 months after completing a nurse aide training and competency evaluation program, the state must provide for the reimbursement of costs incurred in completing the program on a pro rata basis during the period in which the individual is employed as a nurse aide. **Only Nursing Home Facilities are eligible for reimbursement. Private programs, high schools, technical colleges and individual students are not eligible for this reimbursement.**

17. Where do I call to report allegations of fraud and abuse or misappropriation of funds?

If you wish to speak with staff and register a complaint against a nursing home, personal care home or hospital, please contact the Department of Community Health, HealthCare Facility Regulation at (404) 657-5726 or (404) 657-5728 or toll free at (800) 878-6442.

If you wish to register a complaint against a home health agency please contact the Department of Community Health, HealthCare Facility Regulation at (404) 657-5727 or toll free at (800) 326-0291.

18. Does the registry maintain criminal background checks?

The Registry does not perform or maintain records of criminal background checks.

19. Do you need a High School Diploma to take a Certified Nurse Aide Course?

The registry doesn't require a high school diploma, but some state approved training programs and employers requires a high school diploma.

20. Can a candidate challenge the State Competency Examination?

No. All candidates must complete a state approved nurse aide training program and then successfully pass the Written/oral and Skills State Competency Examination within one year (3 attempts) of completing the program.

21. Who can take the Train-the-Trainer Workshop to teach certified Nurse Aide and where is the registration form/schedule?

Only a Licensed Practical Nurse and Registered Nurse can teach Certified Nurse Aides. The registration form and schedule is located at www.mmis.georgia.gov, click on the Nurse Aide/Medication Aide tab, and then click on Train-the-Trainer Application under the Nurse Aide Training Section.

22. Where may I obtain further information related to certification, eligibility, training, train-the-trainer, or other questions?

To obtain further information go to www.mmis.georgia.gov or please call (678) 527-3010 (local) or (800) 414-4358.