



NONCERTIFIED INDIVIDUALS IN DELIVERY OF NON-HANDS-ON SERVICES

Department of Health Services / Division of Quality Assurance / Office of Caregiver Quality

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PURPOSE

Health care providers across the state continue to report a shortage of certified nurse aides. Nursing homes are finding it increasingly difficult to recruit and retain sufficient numbers of qualified nursing staff, especially certified nurse aides who perform the majority of resident care tasks. Other employers often pay higher wages for less physically and emotionally demanding jobs, making it harder for nursing homes to employ enough nursing staff to perform routine nursing care. In response, the Department recognizes the need for the use of noncertified individuals to provide assistance to the certified nurse aides. This publication provides guidance to long-term care facilities wishing to utilize individuals who are not certified nurse aides to provide assistance to their nurse aide staff.

BACKGROUND

In 1991, the Health Care Financing Administration, predecessor of The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), issued regulations implementing nurse aide training and competency requirements. The 1991 regulations defined a “nurse aide” as “any individual providing nursing or nursing-related services to residents in a facility who is not a licensed health professional, a registered dietician, or someone who volunteers to provide such services without pay.” These regulations did not specifically address whether a nursing home could employ “helpers,” but the implication was that any individual directly involved in patient care would be required to meet the nurse aide training and competency requirements.

On September 26, 2003, CMS published a final rule change that allowed long-term care facilities to use paid feeding assistants under certain conditions. The intent of this rule was to provide more residents with help in eating and drinking to reduce the incidence of unplanned weight loss and dehydration. This rule change was necessitated by changing trends in, and the realities of, long-term care. Concerns included a growing shortage of nurse aides, the time-consuming nature of feeding assistance, increasing demands on nurse aides, and an increasing aged population. CMS believed the benefits of the rule change to nursing home residents outweighed the risks and a policy change could be accommodated under existing federal law. Paid feeding assistants continue to be the only single task that is permitted under rule.

QUESTIONS

- Contact the Nurse Aide Training Consultant at dhscaregiverintake@wisconsin.gov or 608-261-8328.
- Visit the DHS “Nursing Homes” website at <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/regulations/nh/introduction.htm>.
- Visit the Wisconsin Nurse Aide Training and Registry website at <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/caregiver/nurse-aide/natd-registry.htm>.

GUIDANCE

In 2000, the Department approved the following list of tasks that an individual can perform without being listed on the Wisconsin Nurse Aide Registry as a nurse aide. The list is being redistributed to assist long-term care facilities with the implementation of “helpers” or “hospitality aides” and to ensure that the facility remains in compliance with nurse aide training requirements. An individual performing the following non-direct tasks would not need to be a certified nurse aide.

Resident Rooms

- Make unoccupied beds.
- Perform non-direct care tasks – *no physical contact with the resident is allowed.*
- Pass clean linen.
- Stock supplies to resident rooms or nurse servers.
- Put away resident laundry.
- Assist in straightening room, bedside stand, closet, and/or drawers.
- Assist caregivers in obtaining necessary supplies.
- Pass water to residents capable of having water at bedside.
- Deliver mail to residents and assist in opening, as appropriate.

Dining Areas

- Distribute linens and set tables prior to meals.
- Set up trays for independent residents; open milk, tableware, place clothing protectors, napkins.
- Pass warm washcloths to residents for freshening of hands and face before and after meals – *no assistance with washing the resident’s face or hands is allowed.*
- Serve food items to tables or feeding personnel.
- Pick up trays and food items from dining areas and return to carts – *may not calculate or document percentage of intake.*
- Provide general clean-up of spills during mealtime
- Fill water pitchers.

Activity Areas

- Assemble activity equipment.
- Assist with activity set up and take down.
- Assist activity staff with activity, but not cares.
- Tune radios and televisions to resident preferred programs.
- Clean and/or straighten areas before and after activity.
- Assist individual residents in accomplishing an activity.
- Write cards or letter with residents.
- Read to residents.

Common Unit Areas

- Answer phones.
- Greet and direct visitors.
- Maintain nursing unit and patient areas in neat manner.
- Visit with residents.

Transporter

In 2000, CMS clarified that a person functioning as a “transporter” does not need to be listed on the Wisconsin Nurse Aide Registry in order to push residents from point A to point B via a wheelchair or cart. However, they may not transfer the resident from the bed to the wheelchair or the wheelchair to the bed.