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Nursing Council

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SUPPORT AB-76 / SB-103 – THE CNA TRAINING BILL

Wisconsin's long-term care providers request your support for legislation aligning the state's Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) hourly training requirements with the federal standard of 75 hours

WHAT:

Last session, a bipartisan coalition of legislators introduced a bill to align Wisconsin's CNA hourly training requirements with the federal standard of 75 hours. The bill passed the Assembly with bipartisan support but did not pass the Senate before session adjourned.

WHY:

Workforce Crisis: Long-term care providers continue to struggle with an ongoing long-term care workforce crisis in Wisconsin. A recent provider survey found that 1 in 5 caregiving positions remains unfilled – a number that has gotten worse since two years ago, when a study found 1 in 7 caregiving positions unfilled.

In Wisconsin, facilities need individuals to come into the CNA profession. This proposal to align Wisconsin's CNA training requirements with the federal standard would be a significant step to addressing the long-term care workforce crisis through eliminating a barrier in the path to becoming a CNA.

Regional Fairness: Federal law has a minimum requirement of 75 hours of instructional training to be certified as a CNA. However, Wisconsin requires 120 hours of training. Wisconsin facilities are at a significant disadvantage; Michigan, Minnesota, and Iowa all mirror the federally-authorized standard of 75 hours.

Long-term care providers urge you to support legislation which would help alleviate the long-term care workforce crisis with no cost to the state.

BACKGROUND ON THE CNA TRAINING BILL

Federal law has a minimum requirement of 75 hours of instructional training to be certified as a CNA. However, Wisconsin requires 120 hours of instructional training. Wisconsin facilities are at a significant disadvantage with neighboring states; Michigan, Minnesota, and Iowa all mirror the federal standard of 75 hours.

Changing the CNA training requirement is an important step toward helping providers **address our state's long-term care workforce crisis**. The CNA Training Bill earned support from state border legislators on both sides of the aisle who have heard directly from providers that Wisconsin's current training requirements often serve as a barrier to employment, as employers across the border can offer a less burdensome training program for CNA prospects.

Aligning the Wisconsin CNA training standard with the federal requirement creates a clear standard for Wisconsin regulators and providers, as the bill's language aligns Wisconsin's standards with federal standards. If federal hourly requirement standards change, Wisconsin's hourly requirements must also change.

By helping address Wisconsin's long-term care workforce crisis, this proposal will help ensure quality advancement within provider facilities. Without an adequate workforce, it is very difficult for facilities to focus on advancing quality. This policy will help Wisconsin facilities have the staff to maintain quality care. Establishing a 75-hour training standard will address current personal time and resource barriers for prospective CNAs, resulting in more individuals becoming interested in pursuing a CNA opportunity. There clearly is a correlation between adequate staffing and the quality of care provided.

Consider neighboring Minnesota, which uses the 75-hour requirement: in certain quality measures, Minnesota long-term care providers outperform Wisconsin providers; in other measures, Wisconsin providers outpace their Minnesota counterparts.¹ The fact is, no single prevailing factor serves as a single solution for care quality, and each state has unique needs and demands that require different approaches.

Every CNA has to go through eight subject areas as a part of training and a certification test, and that will not change as a result of this proposal. Many facilities care for specific patient populations that require specialized care, and allowing CNAs to get on the floor sooner will help them receive the exact training they need while on the job and through continuing education training requirements.

Further, nothing about this proposal will force CNA training programs across the state to change their curricula. Programs that wish to provide additional training hours will still be allowed to do so; the bill simply prevents the Department of Health Services from *requiring* more than the federal standard.

Providers agree that aligning Wisconsin's CNA hourly training requirements with the federal standard will help address the workforce crisis, which will benefit residents by providing more CNAs to provide the care they need and deserve.

¹ WI Department of Health Services Division of Quality Assurance – Bureau of Nursing Home Resident Care 2017 Data. View at <https://www.whcawical.org/files/2019/02/2018-NH-Survey-Statistics.pdf>.