



Health and Wellness

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**Policy:** Educational Requirements for Entry to Practice of Non-Licensed Care Staff

**Originating Branch:** Continuing Care

**Original Approval Date:** February 24, 2006

**Approved and Dated By:**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "T. Marrie".

Sept 23, 2019

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Thomas J. Marrie, MD  
Interim Deputy Minister  
Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness

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**VERSION # 3**

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**1.0 POLICY STATEMENTS**

- 1.1 To promote quality care, the Continuing Care Division, Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness, has established requirements for educational qualifications to be used by nursing homes and home support agencies. These requirements will be followed by employers when hiring individuals to work as CCAs providing direct care and support services to clients in designated service venues that are licensed or approved by the Department of Health and Wellness.
- 1.2 Individual employers may determine and apply employment criteria which exceed the minimum requirements established in this policy.
- 1.3 The Department of Health and Wellness will fund employers at an equal rate for employees who are certified as Continuing Care Assistants (CCA), Personal Care Workers (PCW), Home Support Workers (HSW), Home Health Providers (HHP) or Home Health Aides (HHA) and who are working in the same role.

**2.0 DEFINITIONS**

- 2.1 **Clients** are individuals who are approved by the Nova Scotia Health Authority for support services. This may include long term care in a nursing home, or support provided at home via a home support agency.
- 2.2 **Conditional Hire** is an individual who meets the minimum requirements as noted in 5.2.4
- 2.3 **CCA Counterparts** include Nova Scotia Certified Personal Care Workers (PCW), HSNSA Home Support Workers (HSW), NSCC Home Health Providers/Home Health Aides (HHP/HHA), and all persons working with on-the-job training or a conditional hire under the Department of Health and Wellness' Educational Requirements for Entry to Practice of Non Licensed Care Staff Policy.
- 2.4 **Designated Service Venues** are nursing homes and home support agencies that are licensed or approved by the Department of Health and Wellness.
- 2.5 **Equivalent** means comparable.
- 2.6 **Employers** are contracted service providers who own and/or operate nursing homes and home support agencies.
- 2.7 **Home Health Aide/Home Health Provider (HHA/HHP)** holds a certificate issued by Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC), dated prior to 2000.
- 2.8 **Home Support Agencies** are contracted service providers, approved by the Department of Health and Wellness, who assist clients with personal care, respite, meal preparation and housekeeping in their own homes.
- 2.9 **Home Support Worker (HSW)** holds a certificate of completion from Home Support Nova Scotia (HSNSA), dated prior to 2000. The Home Support Worker graduating before 1998 must also show proof that the additional Client Specific Tasks, added to the HSW course in 1998, have been completed.

- 2.10 **Nursing Homes** are long term care facilities, including Homes for the Aged, that are licensed by the Department of Health and Wellness, for medically stable individuals who have difficulty performing everyday tasks, such as dressing or bathing, and have nursing needs beyond that which can be provided through home care.
- 2.11 **Personal Care Worker (PCW)** designation holds a certificate from the Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness or the Department of Community Services, dated between 1980 and 2000.

### 3.0 POLICY OBJECTIVES

This policy ensures that individuals hired to provide direct care and support services (in the role of a CCA) to Continuing Care clients in designated service venues, meet the educational requirements.

### 4.0 APPLICATION

- 4.1 This policy applies to licensed nursing homes and approved home support agencies that employ individuals to provide direct care and support services to Continuing Care clients in designated service venues.
- 4.2 This policy does not apply to the hiring or employment of individuals whose employment duties require that they be health professionals, registered with licensing colleges or bodies.

### 5.0 POLICY DIRECTIVES

#### 5.1. CURRENT EMPLOYEES

Individuals employed by a nursing home or home support agency **in Nova Scotia**, prior to April 1, 2006 to provide direct care and support services to Continuing Care clients in designated service venues continue to be eligible for employment in this capacity.

#### 5.2 EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS - NEW EMPLOYEES

Employers in designated service venues hiring individuals as new employees, who will be providing direct care and support services to Continuing Care clients, are governed by the following requirements.

### 5.2.1 General

In accordance with the provisions of this policy, individuals hired as new employees in the designated service venues are required to hold one of the following Nova Scotia provincial certifications:

- Continuing Care Assistant (CCA) or equivalent
- Personal Care Worker (PCW)
- Home Health Provider (HHP)
- Home Health Aide (HHA)
- Home Support Worker (HSW)

Employers will ensure that all individuals hired to work as CCAs are appropriately educated, have the required competencies for the role, receive adequate orientation, and are properly supervised.

### 5.2.2 Nursing Home

An individual who does not hold one of the identified Nova Scotia provincial certificates, listed in section 5.2.1, is eligible for hire as a new employee to work in a nursing home if both of the following criteria are met:

- They were hired prior to April 1, 2006 in Nova Scotia in the role of a Personal Care Worker (PCW) in a nursing home, licensed by the Department of Health and Wellness; and
- Prior to applying for employment with a new employer, they completed the following practice hours in a designated service venue. Time off related to parental leave, workers compensation or long-term disability is not included:
  - 330 hours in the past five years from the date of hire and/or in alignment with the CCA registry annual membership period (November 1 to October 31).
  - or**
  - 100 hours in the last year from the date of hire and/or in alignment with the CCA registry annual membership period (November 1 to October 31).

### 5.2.3 Home Support Agencies

An individual who does not hold one of the identified Nova Scotia provincial certificates, listed in section 5.2.1, is eligible for hire as a new employee to work in a Home Support Agency if both of the following criteria are met:

- They were hired prior to April 1, 2006 **in Nova Scotia** in the role of a home support worker in a home support agency, approved by the Department of Health and Wellness; and
- Prior to applying for employment with a new employer, they completed the following practice hours in a designated service venue. Time off related to parental leave, workers compensation or long-term disability is not included.
  - 330 hours in the past five years from the date of hire and/or in alignment with the CCA registry annual membership period (November 1 to October 31).
  - or**
  - 100 hours in the last year from the date of hire and/or in alignment with the CCA registry annual membership period (November 1 to October 31).

### 5.2.4 Unavailability of CCA or Provincially Certified Counterpart as per section 5.2.1

In circumstances where there is no available candidate who meets the applicable provisions of sections 5.2.1 to 5.2.3 of this policy, the employer may hire an individual on a conditional basis provided that, at a minimum, all the following requirements are met:

- (a) The individual has successfully completed orientation covering the following topic areas, prior to commencing work:
  - Safe Patient Handling and Mobility Program; and
  - Personal Care;
  - or**
  - The individual has equivalent prior clinical experience.
- (b) The individual is orientated to the employing organization, the health care sector in Nova Scotia, minimum Occupational Health & Safety and risk management practices and the role of the CCA prior to commencing work;

- (c) The individual holds current Standard First Aid and CPR (level C) certification prior to commencing work;
- (d) An educational plan to achieve CCA certification within two (2) years of employment is identified collectively by the employee and the employer and is documented on the employee's file.

5.2.5 It is the responsibility of the employer to determine the need for and to implement any requirements related to extra supervision or restrictions in duties for employees hired under the provisions of section 5.2.4 of this policy.

5.2.6 Employers hiring individuals under the provisions of sections 5.2.4 are required to develop and monitor an education plan. Employers may be requested to report to the Department of Health and Wellness, on an annual basis, the number of employees who have been hired on a conditional basis (see Appendix A). Upon request, employers are required to provide copies of the educational plans to the Department of Health and Wellness.

5.2.7 Employers are responsible to ensure that new employees, hired under the provisions of section 5.2.4, obtain CCA certification within two (2) years of the date of hire in order to continue employment involving the provision of direct care and support services, in the role of a CCA, to Continuing Care clients.

### 5.3 EMPLOYMENT OF STUDENTS FOR REPLACEMENT COVERAGE

Notwithstanding the requirements outlined in section 5.2 of this policy, health care students may be hired on a term basis to provide replacement coverage for employees who provide direct care and support services, in the role of a CCA, to clients in designated service venues provided all of the following educational and operational criteria are met:

5.3.1 The individual is actively enrolled in a relevant health discipline such as: nursing (RN or LPN), medicine, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, pharmacy, dietetics, respiratory therapy, speech language pathology or social work;

5.3.2 The individual has successfully completed orientation covering the following topic areas:

- Safe Patient Handling and Mobility Program; and
- Personal Care;

- 5.3.5 The individual is orientated to the employing organization, the health care sector in Nova Scotia, minimum Occupational Health & Safety and risk management practices and the role of the CCA prior to commencing work;
- 5.3.3 The individual holds current Standard First Aid and CPR (level C) certification prior to commencing work;
- 5.3.4 Where the setting permits, the individual must be assigned to work in conjunction with another staff member in a team environment;
- 5.3.6 The employer determines the need for and implements any requirements related to extra supervision or restrictions in duties for students hired under the provisions of section 5.3 of this policy.

#### 5.4 Employment of Internationally Educated Nurses

- 5.4.1 Internationally educated nurses may be granted equivalency and hired as a CCA where the National Nursing Assessment Service (NNAS) advisory report indicates the individual is comparable or somewhat comparable to the Canadian RN or LPN. The IEN is responsible to provide the Advisory Report to the employer as a condition of hire.
- 5.4.2 The individual holds current Standard First Aid and CPR (level C) certification prior to commencing work;
- 5.4.3 If the NNAS advisory report indicates the individual is not comparable to the Canadian RN or LPN, the individual must participate in the PLAR process for CCAs as a condition of hire.

#### 5.5 Employment of nurses without an Active Practicing License

- 5.5.1 Retired nurses or other nurses who do not wish to maintain an active license in Nova Scotia may be granted equivalency and hired as a CCA if all the following criteria are met:
  - Verification of previous good standing with their respective nursing college for the years in which they held an active license (e.g. were not subject to any disciplinary measure by the regulatory body).
  - Prior to applying for employment with a new employer, they completed



the following practical hours. Time off related to parental leave, workers compensation or long-term disability is not included:

- 330 hours in the past five years from the date of application and/or in alignment with the CCA registry annual membership period (November 1 to October 31).

**or**

- 100 hours in the last year from the date of application and/or in alignment with the CCA registry annual membership period (November 1 to October 31).

- The individual holds current Standard First Aid and CPR (level C) certification prior to commencing work;

5.5.2 If the nurse has not completed the practice hours outlined in 5.5.1, employers are responsible to ensure the individual has successfully completed orientation covering the following topic areas, prior to commencing work:

- Safe Patient Handling and Mobility Program
- Personal Care

5.5.3 Employers are responsible to ensure that new employees hired under the provision 5.5 understand their role and scope of practice as a CCA and the risks associated with acting outside of this role.

## **6.0 POLICY GUIDELINES**

There are no guidelines associated with this policy.

## **7.0 ACCOUNTABILITY**

The Senior Executive Director, Continuing Care Branch, or designate, is responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy.

## **8.0 MONITORING / OUTCOME MEASUREMENT**

The implementation, performance and effectiveness of this policy will be monitored by the Senior Executive Director, Continuing Care Branch, or designate.

## **9.0 REPORTS**



Any reports required in accordance with this policy will be provided by the contracted service providers to the Department of Health and Wellness.

Any additional reports for monitoring compliance with this policy will be provided by the contracted service providers and/or the Nova Scotia Health Authority to the Department of Health and Wellness in the frequency and format requested by the department.

#### **10.0 REFERENCES**

There are no references associated with this policy.

#### **11.0 APPENDICES**

Appendix A - Annual Conditional Hiring Report

#### **12.0 INQUIRIES**

Inquiries regarding this policy may be directed to:

Director, Liaison and Service Support  
Department of Health and Wellness  
PO Box 488  
Halifax, NS B3J 2R8  
Phone: (902) 424-6985; Fax: (902) 424-0558

#### **13.0 VERSION CONTROL**

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<b>VERSION #3:</b>	This policy replaces all previous versions of the Educational Requirements for Entry to Practice Policy, including the version dated September 1, 2007.
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