

WSR 24-20-087
PREPROPOSAL STATEMENT OF INQUIRY
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
(Board of Nursing)
[Filed September 27, 2024, 3:36 p.m.]

Subject of Possible Rule Making: Nursing assistant (NA) skills testing, chapter 246-841A WAC. The Washington state board of nursing (board) is considering amendments and technical changes to existing rule sections and the establishment of new rule sections to implement skills testing by training programs.

Statutes Authorizing the Agency to Adopt Rules on this Subject: RCW 18.88A.030, 18.88A.060, and 18.88A.087.

Reasons Why Rules on this Subject may be Needed and What They Might Accomplish: NA certification requires both a knowledge and skills examination. In 2023, the board faced challenges with mass testing for NA certification, including limited testing availability and the need for students to travel further to access testing sites. To address these challenges, the board decided to transition to administering testing through nursing assistant training programs.

In October 2023, the board launched a voluntary training program testing initiative, allowing NA students to be tested through local training programs instead of centralized testing sites. NA skills testing, conducted by training programs, serves as a vital mechanism for offering convenient and localized testing opportunities to students and increased access to skills testing across the state. Presently, 88 out of 180 programs are administering skills tests to their own students. Since the transition, there has been an increase in testing capacity, with higher testing volumes and improved student confidence in familiar testing environments. Pass rates have also slightly increased, indicating the effectiveness of the new testing approach.

Additionally, the board will consider piloting a change where skills testing will occur as a component of NA training programs and students will participate in skills testing just prior to completion of their program. This change is expected to increase efficiency in the NA certification process. Establishing rules to formalize these changes to the skills testing process will clarify expectations of NA training programs around skills testing. Rules will help to ensure registered nurse (RN) evaluator training and competency, collection of pass rate and other testing data, compliance with federal testing requirements, and skills testing of nontraditional applicants at regional testing sites.

Other Federal and State Agencies that Regulate this Subject and the Process Coordinating the Rule with These Agencies: None.

Process for Developing New Rule: Collaborative rule making.

Interested parties can participate in the decision to adopt the new rule and formulation of the proposed rule before publication by contacting Jessilyn Dagum, P.O. Box 47864, Olympia, WA 98504-7864, phone 360-236-3538, fax 360-236-4738, TTY 711, email WABONRules@doh.wa.gov, website www.nursing.wa.gov.

Additional comments: The board will notify interested parties of rule making by posting information on the department of health website, the board website, and by use of GovDelivery. Interested parties may sign up to receive board rule-making notices at <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/WADOH/subscriber/new>. The board will hold virtual meetings at varying times to encourage participation.

September 25, 2024
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Board of Nursing