

WSR 23-03-010

EMERGENCY RULES

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

(Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission)

[Filed January 6, 2023, 10:20 a.m., effective January 6, 2023, 10:20 a.m.]

Effective Date of Rule: Immediately upon filing.

Purpose: WAC 246-841-420, 246-841-470, 246-841-490, 246-841-500, 246-841-510, and 246-841-555. The nursing care quality assurance commission (commission) is amending specific training requirements for nursing assistant certified (NAC) and nursing assistant registered (NAR) in response to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and the critical demand for health care professionals. Because a federal public health emergency is set to be in effect until at least January 2023, this extension will continue to reduce the burden on practitioners through the end of the federal public health emergency.

The rules in chapter 246-841 WAC provide regulatory requirements for NACs and NARs. These emergency rules allow additional pathways to complete necessary training to enter the workforce. This is the ninth emergency rule and follows the emergency rules that were filed on September 9, 2022, under WSR 22-19-007. This filing differs from the previous filing. Nonsubstantive technical changes were made to remove the web address for the department of health website from WAC 246-841-470, 246-841-510, and 246-841-555. This was done to avoid confusion as the commission has recently published its own website. Prior filings were under WSR 20-14-066 beginning in June 2020, continuing under WSR 20-22-023, 21-04-004, 21-12-011, 21-19-091, 22-03-055, and 22-11-049.

Citation of Rules Affected by this Order: Amending WAC 246-841-420, 246-841-470, 246-841-490, 246-841-500, 246-841-510, and 246-841-555.

Statutory Authority for Adoption: RCW 18.88A.060.

Under RCW 34.05.350 the agency for good cause finds that immediate adoption, amendment, or repeal of a rule is necessary for the preservation of the public health, safety, or general welfare, and that observing the time requirements of notice and opportunity to comment upon adoption of a permanent rule would be contrary to the public interest.

Reasons for this Finding: The immediate amendment of existing rules is necessary for the preservation of public health, safety, and general welfare. Continued demand for health care professionals, especially qualified nursing assistants, and barriers to nursing assistant training impacts the inflow of a needed health care workforce. COVID-19 has impacted nursing assistant training by delaying access to clinical training due to restrictions on in-person training opportunities. Amendments allow program directors to award clinical hours for NAR work, NAR volunteer experiences, and planned simulation. Awarding clinical practice hours for these pathways allows additional opportunities for NAC students to complete training and enter the workforce. Amendments to the current language allow the commission to survey online classroom settings, which is essential to ensure that appropriate training is being provided. These amendments assure [ensure] that programs have adequate resources to implement these new allowances and that they document all related activities appropriately. All these actions will result in increasing the quantity of health care professionals able to respond to current demands. Observing the time requirements of notice and opportunity to comment upon adoption of a permanent rule would be contrary to protecting immediate public interests.

The commission is engaged in permanent rule making to consider adopting a number of these emergency amendments as permanent rules. A notice of intent to begin rule making was filed on February 8, 2021, under WSR 21-05-021. The commission is currently hosting rule workshops to discuss potential rule language.

Number of Sections Adopted in Order to Comply with Federal Statute: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0; Federal Rules or Standards: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0; or Recently Enacted State Statutes: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0.

Number of Sections Adopted at the Request of a Nongovernmental Entity: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0.

Number of Sections Adopted on the Agency's own Initiative: New 0, Amended 6, Repealed 0.

Number of Sections Adopted in Order to Clarify, Streamline, or Reform Agency Procedures: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0.

Number of Sections Adopted using Negotiated Rule Making: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0; Pilot Rule Making: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0; or Other Alternative Rule Making: New 0, Amended 6, Repealed 0.

Date Adopted: January 6, 2023.

Paula R. Meyer, RN, MSN, FRE
Executive Director

OTS-2953.6

AMENDATORY SECTION (Amending WSR 08-06-100, filed 3/5/08, effective 4/5/08)

WAC 246-841-420 Requirements for approval of nursing assistant-certified training programs. To qualify as a nursing assistant-certified training program, an institution or facility must:

(1) Submit a completed application packet provided by the department of health. The packet will include forms and instructions to submit the following:

(a) Program objectives.

(b) Curriculum content outline.

(c) Qualifications of program director and additional instructional staff.

(d) Contractual agreements related to providing this training.

For any program that uses another facility to provide clinical training, this includes an affiliation agreement between the training program and the facility. The affiliation agreement must describe how the program will provide clinical experience in the facility. The agreement must specify the rights and responsibilities of both parties, students and clients or residents.

(e) Sample lesson plan for one unit.

(f) Skills checklist.

(g) Description of classroom facilities.

(h) Declaration of compliance with administrative guidelines signed by the program director.

(i) Verification that the program director has completed a course on adult instruction as required by WAC 246-841-470(3) or has one year of experience in the past three years teaching adults. Acceptable ex-

perience does not include in-service education or patient teaching. A program director working exclusively in a postsecondary educational setting is exempt from this requirement.

(j) Verification that the nursing assistant-certified training program or school is approved to operate in the state of Washington by:

- (i) The state board for community and technical colleges;
- (ii) The superintendent of public instruction; or
- (iii) The workforce training and education coordinating board.

(2) Agree to on-site survey of the training program(~~(7)~~) or on-line survey of the approved online classes as requested by the commission. This on-site will be coordinated with other on-site review requirements when possible.

(3) Participate in the renewal process every two years. Failure to renew results in automatic withdrawal of approval of the program.

(4) Comply with any changes in training standards and guidelines in order to maintain approved status.

(5) Notify the commission and any other approving agency of any changes in overall curriculum plan or major curriculum content changes prior to implementation.

(6) Notify the commission and any other approving agency of changes in program director or instructors.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 18.88A.060(1) and 18.88A.030(5). WSR 08-06-100, § 246-841-420, filed 3/5/08, effective 4/5/08. Statutory Authority: RCW 18.88A.060. WSR 91-07-049 (Order 116B), recodified as § 246-841-420, filed 3/18/91, effective 4/18/91. Statutory Authority: RCW 18.88.080. WSR 90-20-018 (Order 091), § 308-173-230, filed 9/21/90, effective 10/22/90.]

AMENDATORY SECTION (Amending WSR 08-06-100, filed 3/5/08, effective 4/5/08)

WAC 246-841-470 Program directors and instructors in approved nursing assistant-certified training programs. (1) The program director must hold a current license in good standing as a registered nurse (RN) in the state of Washington.

(2) The commission may deny or withdraw a program director's approval if there is or has been any action taken against the director's health care license or any license held by the director which allows him or her to work with vulnerable populations.

(3) The program director must complete a training course on adult instruction or have demonstrated that he or she has one year experience teaching adults.

(a) Acceptable experience does not include in-service education or patient teaching.

(b) The training course on adult instruction must provide instruction in:

- (i) Understanding the adult learner.
- (ii) Techniques for teaching adults.
- (iii) Classroom methods for teaching adults.
- (iv) Audio visual techniques for teaching adults.

(c) A program director working exclusively in a postsecondary educational setting is exempt from this requirement.

(4) The program director will have a minimum of three years of experience as an RN, of which at least one year will be in direct patient care.

(5) The program director must meet the requirements for additional staff under subsection (7)(b) of this section if the program director will also be acting as an instructor.

(6) Program director responsibilities:

(a) Develop and implement a curriculum which meets as a minimum the requirements of WAC 246-841-490. The program director is responsible for all classroom and clinical training content and instruction provided by the training program. The clinical experience may occur in a health care facility or it may occur through planned simulation in the training program's skills lab in accordance with the requirements included in WAC 246-841-490.

(b) Assure compliance with and assume responsibility for meeting the requirements of WAC 246-841-490 through 246-841-510.

(c) Assure that all student clinical experience is directly supervised. Direct supervision means that an approved program director or instructor is observing students performing tasks. As an alternative, the program director may also award clinical hours' credit for nursing assistant-registered (NAR) employment or volunteer experience completed under the supervision of a licensed nurse in a care facility with competency demonstrated and documented in accordance with the commission procedure and form "Nursing Assistant-Registered (NAR) Verification of Clinical Hours and Competency," available by request to the commission. It is the program director's responsibility to verify that each student's employment or volunteer experience meets the qualifying standards included in WAC 246-841-490.

(d) Assure that the clinical instructor has no concurrent duties during the time he or she is instructing students.

(e) Create and maintain an environment conducive to teaching and learning.

(f) Select and supervise all other instructors involved in the course, including clinical instructors and guest lecturers.

(g) Assure that students are not asked to, nor allowed to, perform any clinical skill with patients or clients or in simulation activities until first demonstrating the skill satisfactorily to an instructor in a ~~((practice setting))~~ skills lab setting. As an alternative, a program director may provide students with instruction regarding the NAR employment or volunteer pathway and how to demonstrate competency and have competency documented under the supervision of a licensed nurse in a care facility in accordance with WAC 246-841-470 (6)(c).

(h) Assure evaluation of knowledge and skills of students before verifying completion of the course.

(i) Assure that students receive a verification of completion when requirements of the course have been satisfactorily met.

(7) The program director may select instructional staff to assist in the teaching of the course.

(a) Instructional staff must teach in their area of expertise.

(b) Instructional staff must have a minimum of one year experience within the past three years in caring for the elderly or chronically ill of any age or both.

(c) All instructional staff must hold a current Washington state license to practice as a registered or licensed practical nurse. The commission may deny or withdraw an instructor's approval if there is or has been any action taken against a health care license or any li-

cense held by the applicant which allows him or her to work with vulnerable populations.

(d) Instructional staff may assist the program director in development of curricula, teaching modalities, and evaluation. The instructor will be under the supervision of the program director at all times.

(e) A guest lecturer, or individual with expertise in a specific course unit may be used in the classroom setting for teaching without commission approval, following the program director's review of the currency of content. The guest lecturer, where applicable, must hold a license, certificate or registration in good standing in their field of expertise.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 18.88A.060(1) and 18.88A.030(5). WSR 08-06-100, § 246-841-470, filed 3/5/08, effective 4/5/08. Statutory Authority: RCW 18.88A.060. WSR 91-23-077 (Order 214B), § 246-841-470, filed 11/19/91, effective 12/20/91; WSR 91-07-049 (Order 116B), redefined as § 246-841-470, filed 3/18/91, effective 4/18/91. Statutory Authority: RCW 18.88.080. WSR 90-20-018 (Order 091), § 308-173-260, filed 9/21/90, effective 10/22/90.]

AMENDATORY SECTION (Amending WSR 21-04-016, filed 1/22/21, effective 2/22/21)

WAC 246-841-490 Core curriculum in approved nursing assistant-certified training programs. (1) The curriculum must be competency based. It must be composed of learning objectives and activities that will lead to knowledge and skills required for the graduate to demonstrate mastery of the core competencies as provided in WAC 246-841-400.

(2) The program director will determine the amount of time required in the curriculum to achieve the objectives. The time designated may vary with characteristics of the learners and teaching or learning variables. There must be a minimum of eighty-five hours total, with a minimum of thirty-five hours of classroom training and a minimum of fifty hours of clinical training.

(a) Of the fifty hours of clinical training, at least forty clinical hours must be in the (~~practice setting~~) a health care facility or completed through planned simulation in the training program's skills lab.

(b) Training to orient the student to the health care facility (~~and~~), facility policies and procedures, planned simulation, and simulation policies and procedures are not to be included in the minimum hours above.

(c) Planned simulation as used in this section means a technique to replace or amplify real experiences with guided experiences evoking or replicating substantial aspects of the real world in a fully interactive manner. The requirements for training programs to offer planned simulation include:

(i) Nursing assistant training programs may use planned simulation activities as a substitute for traditional clinical experiences in health care facilities after submitting a request on a form provided by the commission and receiving approval from the commission.

(ii) For the purposes of planned simulation activities, the skills lab of the training program represents a health care facility

with students acting in a variety of roles in predeveloped scenarios that provide opportunities for students to demonstrate nursing assistant competencies as they would in a traditional clinical experience in a health care facility. Examples of roles students may play include: The nursing assistant providing care; another member of the health care team; a client or resident; a client's or resident's loved one. Simulated health care facility scenarios include, at a minimum: Policies and procedures for students to follow; a cadre of diverse clients or residents and their care plans; and opportunities to participate in shift reports, respond to and communicate status changes to the nurse, and document appropriately.

(iii) A written plan exists for each planned simulation activity and includes specific nursing assistant competencies identified as objectives. The written plan also includes a summary of the care situation or scenario and the various roles students will play in the scenario; and the time allotted for the planned simulation activity, including time for debriefing.

(iv) Debriefing is a critical component of planned simulation activities that helps students to learn from their clinical experiences. Debriefing is facilitated by the program instructor or director in a way that encourages active discussion and reflective thinking by students and provides relevant instructor and peer feedback regarding simulation events and participants' performance.

(v) Planned simulation activities reflect an array of objectives and care scenarios to support adequate evaluation of each student's competency in the nursing assistant role as reflected in WAC 246-841-400.

(vi) Documentation exists as a record of the evaluation of each student's performance in planned simulation activities.

(vii) The nursing assistant training program shall have adequate human and material resources to implement planned simulation activities, including adequate space, equipment, and supplies.

(viii) An approved program instructor or the program director must supervise and evaluate planned simulation activities. A guest lecturer may not supervise or evaluate planned simulation activities.

(ix) The nursing assistant training program obtains anonymous written student evaluations of the planned simulation activities at the end of each class and demonstrates use of student feedback for on-going quality improvement efforts as needed.

(3) Each unit of the core curriculum will have:

(a) Behavioral objectives, which are statements of specific observable actions and behaviors that the learner is to perform or exhibit.

(b) An outline of information the learner will need to know in order to meet the objectives.

(c) Learning activities such as lecture, discussion, readings, film, or clinical practice designed to enable the student to achieve the stated objectives.

(d) To meet qualifying standards to count as clinical hours' credit, the NAR employment or volunteer experience must:

(i) Be performed under an active NAR credential during enrollment in the class;

(ii) Include a background check prior to contact with clients or residents;

(iii) Occur in a care facility where a licensed nurse is present to supervise throughout the clinical experience and verify competency for tasks assigned;

(iv) Include opportunities for the NAR to successfully demonstrate the competencies of a nursing assistant as identified in WAC 246-841-400;

(v) Be supervised by a licensed nurse who is not a friend or relative;

(vi) Include care of clients or residents who are not friends or relatives; and

(vii) Be verifiable with the care facility.

(4) Clinical teaching in a competency area is closely correlated with classroom teaching to integrate knowledge with manual skills.

(a) Students must wear name tags clearly identifying them as students when interacting with patients, clients or residents, ~~((and))~~ families, and in planned simulation activities.

(b) An identified instructor(s) will supervise clinical teaching or learning at all times. At no time will the ratio of students to instructor exceed ten students to one instructor in the clinical setting whether the clinical setting is a health care facility or represented through planned simulation in the training program's skills lab. As an alternative, the program director may award clinical hours' credit for NAR employment or volunteer experience as described in WAC 246-841-470 (6) (c).

(5) The curriculum must include evaluation processes to assess mastery of competencies. Students cannot perform any clinical skill on clients or residents or in planned simulation activities until first demonstrating the skill satisfactorily to an instructor in ~~((the practice setting))~~ a skills lab setting; as an alternative, students can demonstrate skills satisfactorily to a licensed nurse who is supervising a student employed or volunteering as an NAR and assuring competency for tasks assigned in accordance with WAC 246-841-470 (6) (c).

[Statutory Authority: RCW 18.79.110, 18.88A.060 and 2020 c 76. WSR 21-04-016, § 246-841-490, filed 1/22/21, effective 2/22/21. Statutory Authority: RCW 18.88A.060(1) and 18.88A.030(5). WSR 08-06-100, § 246-841-490, filed 3/5/08, effective 4/5/08. Statutory Authority: RCW 18.88A.060. WSR 91-23-077 (Order 214B), § 246-841-490, filed 11/19/91, effective 12/20/91; WSR 91-07-049 (Order 116B), recodified as § 246-841-490, filed 3/18/91, effective 4/18/91. Statutory Authority: RCW 18.88.080. WSR 90-20-018 (Order 091), § 308-173-270, filed 9/21/90, effective 10/22/90.]

AMENDATORY SECTION (Amending WSR 08-06-100, filed 3/5/08, effective 4/5/08)

WAC 246-841-500 Physical resources required for approved nursing assistant-certified training programs. (1) Classroom facilities must provide adequate space, lighting, comfort, and privacy for effective teaching and learning.

(2) Adequate classroom resources, such as white board or other writing device, audio visual materials, and written materials must be available.

(3) Appropriate equipment must be provided for teaching and practicing clinical skills and procedures before implementing the skills with clients or residents or in planned simulation in the training program's skills lab.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 18.88A.060(1) and 18.88A.030(5). WSR 08-06-100, § 246-841-500, filed 3/5/08, effective 4/5/08. Statutory Authority: RCW 18.88A.060. WSR 91-07-049 (Order 116B), recodified as § 246-841-500, filed 3/18/91, effective 4/18/91. Statutory Authority: RCW 18.88.080. WSR 90-20-018 (Order 091), § 308-173-275, filed 9/21/90, effective 10/22/90.]

AMENDATORY SECTION (Amending WSR 08-06-100, filed 3/5/08, effective 4/5/08)

WAC 246-841-510 Administrative procedures for approved nursing assistant-certified training programs. (1) The program must establish and maintain a file for each student enrolled. The file must include:

(a) Dates attended.

(b) Test results.

(c) A skills evaluation checklist with dates of skills testing and signature of instructor. If the program grants clinical hours' credit for students employed or volunteering as nursing assistants-registered in accordance with WAC 246-841-470 (6)(c), the student file must also include a fully completed commission-approved student form to verify student clinical hours and competency "Nursing Assistant-Registered (NAR) Verification of Clinical Hours and Competency," available by request to the commission.

(d) Documentation of successful completion of the course, or documentation of the course outcome.

(2) Each student file must be maintained by the program for a period of five years, and copies of documents made available to students who request them.

(3) Verification of successful completion of the course of training will be provided to the commission on forms provided by the commission.

(4) For those programs based in a health care facility: Verification of program completion and the application for state testing will not be withheld from a student who has successfully met the requirements of the program. Successful completion will be determined by the training program director separately from other employer issues.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 18.88A.060(1) and 18.88A.030(5). WSR 08-06-100, § 246-841-510, filed 3/5/08, effective 4/5/08. Statutory Authority: RCW 18.88A.060. WSR 91-07-049 (Order 116B), recodified as § 246-841-510, filed 3/18/91, effective 4/18/91. Statutory Authority: RCW 18.88.080. WSR 90-20-018 (Order 091), § 308-173-280, filed 9/21/90, effective 10/22/90.]

AMENDATORY SECTION (Amending WSR 11-16-042, filed 7/27/11, effective 8/27/11)

WAC 246-841-555 Responsibilities of the program director in alternative programs. The program director of an alternative program is responsible for:

(1) Development and use of a curriculum which:

(a) Meets the requirements of WAC 246-841-545; or

(b) Meets the requirements of WAC 246-841-550.

(2) Ensuring compliance with the requirements of WAC 246-841-500 and 246-841-510.

(3) Verifying home care aides-certified have a valid certification before admission to the alternative program.

(4) Verifying medical assistants-certified have certification before admission to the alternative program.

(5) Direct supervision of all students during clinical experience in a health care facility or during planned simulation in the training program's skills lab. Direct supervision means an approved program director or instructor observes students performing tasks. As an alternative, the program director may also award clinical hours' credit for nursing assistant-registered (NAR) employment or volunteer experience completed under the supervision of a licensed nurse in a care facility with competency demonstrated and documented in accordance with commission procedure and form "Nursing Assistant-Registered (NAR) Verification of Clinical Hours and Competency," available by request to the commission. In addition, to meet qualifying standards to count as clinical hours' credit, the NAR employment or volunteer experience must:

(a) Be performed under an active NAR credential during enrollment in the class;

(b) Include a background check prior to contact with clients or residents;

(c) Occur in a care facility where a licensed nurse is present to supervise throughout the clinical experience and verify competency for tasks assigned;

(d) Include opportunities for the NAR to successfully demonstrate the competencies of a nursing assistant as identified in WAC 246-841-400;

(e) Be supervised by a licensed nurse who is not a friend or relative;

(f) Include care of clients or residents who are not friends or relatives; and

(g) Be verifiable with the care facility.

(6) Ensuring the clinical instructor has no concurrent duties during the time he or she is instructing students.

(7) Maintaining an environment acceptable to teaching and learning.

(8) Supervising all instructors involved in the course. This includes clinical instructors and guest lecturers.

(9) Ensuring students are not asked to, or allowed to perform any clinical skill with patients or clients or in planned simulation activities until the students have demonstrated the skill satisfactorily to an instructor in a practice setting, or as an alternative, providing students with instruction regarding the NAR employment or volunteer pathway and how to demonstrate competency and have competency documented under the supervision of a licensed nurse in a care facility in accordance with WAC 246-841-555(5).

(10) Evaluating knowledge and skills of students before verifying completion of the course.

(11) Providing students a verification of completion when requirements of the course have been satisfied.

(12) Providing adequate time for students to complete the objectives of the course. The time may vary with skills of the learners and teaching or learning variables.

(13) Establishing an evaluation process to assess mastery of competencies.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 18.88A.087 and 18.88A.060. WSR 11-16-042, § 246-841-555, filed 7/27/11, effective 8/27/11.]