



# Dane County Area Agency on Aging

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**DATE:** 11 September 2017  
**TO:** Dane County Legislative Delegation  
**FROM:** Dane County Area Agency on Aging Board of Directors  
**SUBJECT:** SB 341 & AB 432

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### Overview

**SB 341** and **AB 432** drastically *reduce* minimum basic skills required to be a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA). Current training to meet minimum requirements to be a CNA are 120 hours, of which 32 are for supervised clinical training.

SB 341 and AB 432 *decrease required training by one third* to 75 hours, of which 16 are for supervised clinical training.

CNAs perform hands-on, direct care and have extensive personal contact with seniors in many settings. They are the most intimate of caregivers in an increasingly depersonalized health-care environment.

Current training and certification requirements are established to meet *minimum* safety and clinical standards. Reduction of training requirements by 45 hours means skills and competencies now deemed essential to safe patient care will be drastically cut, and not to Wisconsin's benefit.

### Introduction

CNAs provide patient care under supervision of a Registered Nurse. Being certified assures being professionally accountable. They are often trained in community technical schools and colleges. Many community hospitals and other health care providers also have approved training programs.

CNAs are part of a broad-based health-care network. In Wisconsin, they work in veterans homes, developmental disabilities centers, acute-service hospitals, and community clinics. CNAs also provide in-home patient care and are employed in rehabilitation centers. Many work in large and small long-term care facilities.

Training to be certified is vital to assure minimum competence for CNAs. Current Wisconsin training requirements assure patient safety and a professional foundation for all basic skills.

### Recruitment and Retention

Today, CNA training is available and accessible to any qualified Wisconsin applicant. It is relatively inexpensive, of short duration, and offered at an educational level commensurate with duties and skills required for best service provision. Thus, very few students are turned away, and those who fail current

minimum requirements are probably not the best candidates because of their aptitude or attitude. Reduction of standards will mean that future CNAs will be certified despite an absence of the essential elements of aptitude and appropriate attitude.

Because CNAs are employed in many different settings, employers often provide specialized work-site training. Lack of a defined career ladder results in many CNAs transferring from one setting to another. Solid training under current minimum requirements can assure them the opportunity to pursue career options.

#### Employer/Personnel Issues

Recruitment and retention is a wage, benefits, career track, and working conditions matter.

Drastic reduction in minimum training standards for certification will create new personnel problems for employers whose workforce includes CNAs certified under different training standards.

#### Assault on Health Care

Massive reduction of professional training standards for CNAs devalues their work, their employers' mission, and ultimately the patient. Over time, a less-skilled CNA workforce could become increasingly irrelevant. Their work will be shifted to people with minimal skills, if any.

#### Conclusion

Older people in Wisconsin are living longer than in earlier years. As they age, they become increasingly frail and vulnerable. Many seniors will still live in their homes or apartments. Some will need long-term care in another setting. Front-line caregivers (CNAs) must have the training needed to deal with complex issues. The proposed reductions in training requirements will have disastrous consequences as to the quality of service provision. SB 341 and AB 432 must be vigorously opposed to protect Wisconsin residents' right to have optimal health care.

Thank you.

cc: The Honorable Scott Walker, Governor, State of Wisconsin  
Members, Dane County Board of Supervisors  
The Honorable Joe Parisi, Dane County Executive  
Ms. Lynn Green, Director, Dane County Department of Human Services