
Health Care & Wellness Committee

HB 1877

Brief Description: Addressing expired certifications for certain health professions.

Sponsors: Representatives Chambers, Gilday, Jacobsen, Simmons, Corry, Graham, Dolan, Riccelli, Eslick, Lekanoff and Wicks.

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Codifies and modifies requirements for the reissuance of expired certificates for home care aides and nursing assistants.

Hearing Date: 1/17/22

Staff: Emily Poole (786-7106).

Background:

Home Care Aide Certification.

A long-term care worker is any person who provides paid, hands-on personal care services for older persons or persons with disabilities. The term includes individual providers of home care services, direct care workers employed by home care agencies, providers of home care services to people with developmental disabilities, direct care workers in assisted living facilities and adult family homes, and respite care providers. The term excludes employees of several types of health care and residential care facilities, as well as care providers not paid by the state or a private agency or facility licensed by the state.

Long-term care workers must become certified as home care aides by the Department of Health (DOH) unless an exemption applies. To become certified, a long-term care worker must complete training, pass a certification examination, and pass state and federal background checks. Certified home care aides must complete 12 hours of annual continuing education.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Nursing Assistant Certification.

A nursing assistant is a person who assists in the delivery of nursing and nursing-related activities to patients in a health care facility. Nursing assistants work under the direction and supervision of registered nurses or licensed practical nurses. To become certified as a nursing assistant, an individual must complete training and a competency evaluation. There are no continuing education requirements for nursing assistants.

Reissuance of Expired Certificates.

The DOH has uniform rules for the initial issuance, renewal, and reissuance of credentials for all health professions, including certificates for home care aides and nursing assistants. Home care aide and nursing assistant certificates must be renewed once a year in order to maintain active status. If a certificate expires, a person must take certain steps to return to active status.

- If the certificate has been expired for one year or less, a person must pay required fees, provide any required documentation, and, for home care aide certificates, show compliance with continuing education requirements for the current year.
- If the certificate has been expired for more than one year, but less than three years, in addition to the requirements above, a person must also complete an abbreviated application form and provide written declarations regarding any disqualifying or disciplinary actions taken against the person. Individuals seeking to reinstate an expired home care aide certificate must also show compliance with continuing education requirements for the two most recent years.
- If the certificate has been expired for three years or more, in addition to the requirements for certificates expired for less than three years, a person seeking to reinstate a nursing assistant certificate must demonstrate competence to the standards established by the Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission, and a person seeking to reinstate a home care aide certificate must repeat the training and examination required for initial certification.

Summary of Bill:

A home care aide or nursing assistant certificate that has been expired for five years or less may be reinstated if the person holding the expired certificate completes an abbreviated application form, pays any necessary fees, and provides written declarations regarding any disqualifying or disciplinary actions taken against the person. There are no continuing education or other competency requirements for certificates expired for five years or less.

In addition to the above requirements, a certificate that has been expired for more than five years may be reinstated if the person holding the expired certificate demonstrates competence to the standards established by the Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission or Department of Health (DOH), as applicable, and meets other requirements established by the DOH.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on January 10, 2022.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.