



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES
Aging and Long-Term Support Administration
PO Box 45600, Olympia, WA 98504-5600

December 17, 2015

ALTSA: AFH #2015-028
**UPDATED POLICY ON HOME CARE AIDE EXEMPTIONS, CONTINUING
EDUCATION AND PENDING NURSING ASSISTENT CERTIFIED TIMELINES**

Dear Adult Family Home Provider:

As you may recall, in 2011 Initiative 1163 was passed by the state's voters. The initiative required that many caregivers hired after January 7, 2012 become certified as Home Care Aides (HCA). Some caregivers were exempt because they were working as qualified caregivers at the time of this change; please refer to [Chapter 246-980 WAC](#) for HCA exemptions and required documentation.

Previously, if an exempt caregiver stopped working as a caregiver for more than 3 years, then s/he was no longer exempt from obtaining the HCA certification when they returned to work. Stakeholders brought it to our attention that this was creating a barrier for caregivers so the following changes have been made:

- If a caregiver was exempt from the HCA certification and at some point stopped working as a caregiver, s/he could return to work as a caregiver after 3 yrs. and **still** be exempt from obtaining the HCA certification.
- If that same exempt caregiver who returned to work after 3 yrs. stopped working as a caregiver again, then if s/he does not return to work as a caregiver within 3 yrs. the HCA exemption will be lost.
- If that same exempt caregiver from the first bullet returned to work as a caregiver in 2012, left in 2013 to work in another licensed facility, then left in 2015 to work in another facility, this caregiver is still exempt from obtaining the HCA certification because not more than 3 yrs. had lapsed between working at the different facilities. The exemption can essentially only be taken once.

Another change that was made involves continuing education (CE) for caregivers who have left work for several years and then returned to work again. Previously, if a caregiver left work for more than a year, they would be required to make up any CE for all the years they were not working. For example, if they were gone for three years, they would need to show they had 36 hours of CE to return to work (12CE X 3 years = 36). The change is that now the returning caregiver only needs to make up the CE they missed for any year they actually worked. For example, if a caregiver worked in 2012, not in 2013 or 2014 but returned to work in 2015, they would be required to show they have 24 hours of CE for 2012 and 2015.

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A final change is the timeline that Nursing Assistants Certified (NAC) and HCAs have from the time of hire until they must obtain the NAC or HCA certification. NACs and HCAs have 120 days to complete the training but now they have 200 days to become certified. If they request more time due to English proficiency needs, they may have up to 260 days to complete the certification. If they are not certified within the allowed time, they must quit working and can only return after they are certified.

If you have any questions about training requirements please contact Sherise Baltazar with Residential Care Services at 360-725-3204.

I want to thank you for all the work you do in caring for our vulnerable adults.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Candace Goehring". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Candace Goehring, Director
Residential Care Services

"Transforming Lives"