



## NJ Student Nurse Strong Initiative

**Background:** New Jersey's long-term care facilities (LTCFs) need help responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. NJ's nursing students are primed to step in to lend critical support to care for one of our most vulnerable populations.

**Eligible participants:** Nursing students can be hired by LTCFs as temporary nurse aides per waivers recently signed by the NJ Department of Health:

- *Students who have not successfully completed a course in the fundamentals of nursing:* the [Temporary Waiver of Nurse Aide Certification Requirements](#), signed April 14, 2020, allows LTCFs to temporarily hire individuals who have completed the free American Health Care Association eight-hour online course, [Temporary Nurse Aide](#), as nurse aides. This course is approved by the NJ Department of Health. Certificate of completion must be presented, and the student must demonstrate competency, before being placed on a team or hired by a facility. The course's competency checklist is included at the end of this document.
- *Students who have successfully completed a course in the fundamentals of nursing:* the [Temporary Waiver of Requirements for Nurse Aide Certification](#), signed on April 29, 2020, allows LTCFs to temporarily hire, as nurse aides, nursing students who have successfully completed a course in the fundamentals of nursing.

### **Structure:**

The Department of Health will work with nursing schools and programs to form teams of four to six students who meet the eligibility requirements outlined above to work as temporary nurse aides. Long-term care facilities will then be able to hire the students on these teams as employees. A team-based approach will provide students with a consistent peer group and therefore hopefully reduce the likelihood of turnover, improving the experience for nursing home residents, students, and existing staff at LTCFs.

The teams will work under the supervision of the facility's Director of Nursing (DON) or other existing nursing staff. The teams will help supplement functions of Certified Nurse Aides for which there is a shortage statewide. LTCFs will be responsible for compensating any students who are hired.

Schools/academic programs may choose to allow academic credit for participation, but this will require that they determine academic requirements and provide additional supervision as necessary (e.g., having a clinical instructor on-site).

It is important to ensure that student nurses and their participating instructors feel safe and supported working in LTCFs. Several provisions will be put in place to address this:

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) will be provided by the facilities where students work. If those facilities are unable to provide adequate PPE, it will be provided instead by the Department of Health.

- Students who are concerned about exposing their families to COVID-19 will be provided the option of staying in a hotel room as an accommodation on behalf of the Department of Health.
- The Department of Health will work with nursing schools to ensure participating students have access to counseling and other forms of mental health support.

#### **For Students:**

- To join the “NJ Student Nurse Strong” Initiative, you should register via the online “NJ Student Nurse Strong” [portal](#) and contact your nursing school’s designated point of contact to be placed on a team.
  - Select one of the “Nurse” options for your “Please select your healthcare practice area.”
  - Select “I am a student and/or in training to receive my license” for “What is the status of your license?”
- Once you have confirmed your credentials (either through relevant coursework or the approved online course) and passed a mandatory criminal background check, you will be eligible to be hired by a LTCF as a temporary nurse aide.
- If hired, you will work as a temporary nurse aide in a team of four to six nursing students. The facility’s DON or other senior RN will supervise you as you work with LTCF residents. Many of these residents will be elderly and will require intensive and focused levels of care. The team structure will enable you to rely on fellow nursing students and supervisors for support.
- If you register individually and not with a school or program coordinated team, the Department of Health can place you on a team, if you’d like, and match you to a facility according to the geographic location of your nursing school.
- The team-based approach is the recommended option, but you are welcome to participate on your own if you prefer.

#### **For Nursing School Deans and Program Administrators**

- If you have students who are interested and meet the eligibility requirements (either through relevant coursework or the approved online course), please direct them to register via the online “NJ Student Nurse Strong” [portal](#).
- If you are interested and have the capacity to do so, you can also help the Department of Health by coordinating teams of 4-6 nursing students. You can enter each team member into the form.
  - If you choose to coordinate a team, the Department of Health will match it to a facility nearby the campus unless you direct otherwise.
  - If program instructors are available, they are welcome to participate as in a supervisory role for the team to alleviate some strain from the facility staff.
- Should you choose to award credit to students for their work in LTCFs, several provisions apply:
  - You must submit a waiver request to the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE) to allow for in-person instruction, if your institution has not done so already. [Click here for more information about the process to submit an OSHE waiver request.](#) Before submitting your waiver request, please consider reviewing DOH’s public health checklist for infection control plan considerations.
  - If your nursing program requires a certain level of academic supervision for students to receive credit, you must provide nursing faculty who can serve as supervisors. LTCF nursing staff cannot offer supervision for the purposes of academic credit.

## For Long-Term Care Facility Administrators

- Concurrent with Governor Murphy's Executive Orders [103](#) and [119](#), the Department of Health has adopted a [temporary waiver](#) to N.J.A.C. 8:39-43.2, which sets forth the requirements for applicants to be employed as nurse aides in long-term care facilities. This waiver allows individuals who have completed the online training course to provide nurse aide services as long as the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency remains in place.
- Concurrent with Governor Murphy's Executive Orders [103](#) and [119](#), the Department of Health has adopted a [temporary waiver](#) to N.J.A.C. 8:39-43.1, 8:39-43.2, 8:39-43.3(a), 8:39-43.4(a), 8:39-43.6(a) and (d), and 8:431-2.5, which sets forth requirements for Nurse Aide Certification. This waiver allows individuals who have successfully completed a course in the fundamentals of nursing to be temporarily employed as certified nurse aides for up to 45 days following the termination of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency.
- The Department of Health, in partnership with nursing school faculty and administrators, will ensure that students have the necessary training to provide services in your facilities. Nursing students who have not yet successfully completed a course in the fundamentals of nursing will need to complete the eight-hour online training course. Certificate of completion must be presented, and the student must demonstrate competency using the program's skills competency checklist, before being hired by a facility.
  - By the end of this online course, students will learn the essentials of long-term care, how to prevent and control infection, specific practices to improve patient care (e.g., pain management, nutrition, skin integrity, repositioning), and best practices for communicating with patients and facility administrators.
  - The course's competency checklist is included at the end of this document.
- Your facility will be responsible for paying student nurses who provide services.
- You will be responsible for providing all necessary PPE to nursing students (and their academic supervisors, as applicable) for the duration of their time at your facility. Should you not be able to provide necessary PPE, you should submit a request to the Department of Health.
- You will be responsible for reporting to the Department of Health the identities of nurse aides hired under this program, and for retaining the records of their employment and qualifications. You will also be responsible for immediately reporting any instances of abuse or neglect of residents or misappropriation of resident property by any nurse aide hired under the program.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at [srv.nj@doh.nj.gov](mailto:srv.nj@doh.nj.gov).

Thank you all for your commitment to our vulnerable residents in long-term care facilities and the entire state of New Jersey. We are honored to stand NJ Strong with you.

# **Temporary Nurse Aide Skills Competency Checklist**

To be used for new employees who complete AHCA/NCAL's Temporary Nurse Aide Training Program ([www.TempNurseAide.com](http://www.TempNurseAide.com))

## **ADAPT AS NEEDED FOR FACILITY PROCESSES**

CMS DEFINITION §483.35 "Competency" is a measurable pattern of knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviors, and other characteristics that an individual needs to perform work roles or occupational functions successfully.

Many factors must be considered when determining whether or not facility staff have the specific competencies and skill sets necessary to care for residents' needs, as identified through the facility assessment, resident-specific assessments, and described in their plan of care.

All nursing staff must also meet the specific competency requirements as part of their license and certification requirements defined under State law or regulations.

Demonstration of Competency - Competency may not be demonstrated simply by documenting that staff attended a training, listened to a lecture, or watched a video. A staff's ability to use and integrate the knowledge and skills that were the subject of the training, lecture or video must be assessed and evaluated by staff already determined to be competent in these skill areas.

Examples for evaluating competencies may include but are not limited to:

- Lecture with return demonstration for physical activities;
- A pre- and post-test for documentation issues;
- Demonstrated ability to use tools, devices, or equipment that were the subject of training and used to care for residents;
- Reviewing adverse events that occurred as an indication of gaps in competency; or
- Demonstrated ability to perform activities that is in the scope of practice an individual is licensed or certified to perform.

### **Preventing Infection While Providing Personal Care**

<b><u>Skill</u></b>	<b><u>Competency Date</u></b>	<b><u>Observed By</u></b>
Standard Precautions		
Handwashing		
Using Barriers (Gloves, Gowns, Mask, etc.)		
Isolation/Transmission Based Precautions		
Cleaning, Disinfection, Sterilization		
Personal Care Routines (bathing)		
Shampooing		
Oral Hygiene		
Denture Care		
Grooming		
Shaving		
Nail Care		

**Personal Safety and Emergency Care**

<b><u>Skill</u></b>	<b><u>Competency Date</u></b>	<b><u>Observed By</u></b>
Dressing/Undressing		
Bloodborne Pathogens		
Body Mechanics		
Choking		
Injury Prevention		

**Documentation and Core Nursing Skills**

<b><u>Skill</u></b>	<b><u>Competency Date</u></b>	<b><u>Observed By</u></b>
Documentation		
Bedmaking		
Making an Occupied Bed		
Transferring a Resident		

**Positioning, Moving, and Restorative Care**

<b><u>Skill</u></b>	<b><u>Competency Date</u></b>	<b><u>Observed By</u></b>
Positioning		
Moving Up in Bed When Resident Unable		
Moving a Resident		
Stand, Pivot, Transfer		
Assisting with Walking (ambulation)		

**Nutrition and Elimination**

<b><u>Skill</u></b>	<b><u>Competency Date</u></b>	<b><u>Observed By</u></b>
Assisting with Meals		
Assisting with Elimination (toileting)		
Assisting with Ostomy		

**Advanced and Specialty Care Environments**

<b><u>Skill</u></b>	<b><u>Competency Date</u></b>	<b><u>Observed By</u></b>
Oxygen Therapy		
Motivate Resident/Stop when Resists		
Specific Behavioral Symptoms		
Specific Techniques for ADLs		

**Comfort Care and End of Life**

<b><u>Skill</u></b>	<b><u>Competency Date</u></b>	<b><u>Observed By</u></b>
Pain Management		
Promoting Comfort and Sleep		
End of Life Care		

**Ethics and the Law in LTC**

<b><u>Skill</u></b>	<b><u>Competency Date</u></b>	<b><u>Observed By</u></b>
Physical Care of Body After Death		