

ISSUE BRIEF

CNA Workforce Development: Aging Trends & Increased Staffing Requirements Leading to a Long-Term Care Workforce Crisis

February 13, 2018

BACKGROUND: Every state across the country is experiencing a significant shortage of, and a growing demand for, qualified workers who are capable of managing, supervising and providing high-quality services and supports for older adults. By 2020, California is not only projected to be one of the fastest growing states in the nation in total population, but also have one of the fastest growing elderly populations across the country. From 1990 through 2020, California will have seen its elderly population increase by 112 percent.ⁱ

For years, California's healthcare industry has faced significant challenges in meeting the demand for services, and the aging of our state will only magnify this problem. California's healthcare industry employed approximately 1.4 million people in 2015, with only 20% of those individuals currently working in long-term care.ⁱⁱ The certified nursing assistant (CNA) workforce is particularly undermanned in the healthcare workforce, with several contributing factors leading to the current shortage of front-line staff in long-term care facilities. Community college capacity to meet CNA demand, shortages of clinical training sites and other regulatory barriers are just a few of the reasons that have made it very difficult for skilled nursing facilities to recruit and retain a robust and qualified workforceⁱⁱⁱ.

On July 12, 2017, Governor Jerry Brown signed SB 97 (Chapter 52, Statutes of 2017), a budget trailer bill that mandated the number of direct care services hours in skilled nursing facilities from 3.2 to 3.5 nursing hours per patient day. It also specified that certified nursing assistants must provide a minimum of 2.4 hours per patient day. SB 97 required the California Department of Public Health to develop emergency regulations to implement this new staffing standard, so that it could go into effect by July 1, 2018.

ISSUE: Skilled nursing facilities will face a significant challenge in meeting the new staffing requirements set forth in SB 97 as there is currently not enough qualified certified nursing assistants to meet the need set forth in this bill.

RECOMMENDATION: Support the current budget proposal to include (at a minimum) \$4.5 million for the expansion of training slots for existing certified nursing assistant workforce training and development programs.

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ⁱ California Department of Aging, 2017

ⁱⁱ California Health Care Foundation, "California's Health Care Workforce, August 2017

ⁱⁱⁱ UCSF Center for Health Professionals, "Certified Nursing Assistant Programs in California: A Survey of Community Colleges, December 2014