

**NEW YORK STATE  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
GUIDE TO THE OPERATION OF A  
PERSONAL CARE AIDE TRAINING  
PROGRAM**

## **Introduction**

The purpose of this Guide is to provide the requirements to operate a Personal Care Aide Training Program (PCATP) for certified home health agencies (CHHAs), licensed home care services agencies (LHCSAs), and hospices, hereafter referred to as home care agencies. This Guide is intended for currently operational PCATPs and for entities who are interested in applying to become a PCATP.

This Guide also outlines the process and procedures for Department of Health (DOH) initial approval and re-approval of the PCATP.

Guidelines for the Personal Care Aide Training Program are derived from 18 NYCRR Section 505.14 Personal care services; 10 NYCRR Part 403 Home Care Worker Registry, and 10 NYCRR Section 700.2 Definitions.

Training programs are required to comply with all requirements specified in this Guide. Training is a quality of care standard. Use of untrained aides or improperly trained personal care aides places the consumer's health and safety at risk. Home care agencies must conduct quality monitoring of their PCATP.

Per 10 NYCRR Section 700.2 (b)(14) Personal care aide shall mean a person who, under professional supervision, provides patients assistance with nutritional and environmental support and personal hygiene, feeding and dressing and/or, as an extension of self-directed patients, select health-related tasks.

Per 10 NYCRR Section 700.2 (c)(17) Personal care services shall mean assistance to the patient with personal hygiene, dressing, feeding and household tasks essential to his/her health.

In order to provide personal care services in New York State, a person must successfully complete an approved PCATP basic training course or an Alternate Competency Demonstration (ACD) program, be issued a certificate of completion and be listed on the Home Care Registry (HCR).

The application and all related materials for the PCA Training Program are located on the Health Commerce System in the Training folder under the document group titled Long Term Care. They may also be found on the Home Care and Hospice pages of the New York State Department of Health website.

## **Personal Care Aide Training Program Approval Requirements**

PCATPs must be approved by either NYS Department of Health (DOH) or NYS Education Department (SED). Training programs cannot be dually approved by the DOH and SED.

### **SED Contact Information:**

#### **For eligible training entities under NYSED's Bureau of Proprietary School Supervisions:**

Bureau of Proprietary School Supervision  
Education Building  
Room EBA 560  
89 Washington Avenue  
Albany, NY 12234  
Phone: 518-474-3969  
E-Mail: [bpss@nysed.gov](mailto:bpss@nysed.gov)

#### **For eligible training entities under NYSED's BOCES, high schools, and adult programs:**

Career and Technical Education  
Education Building, Room 315  
89 Washington Avenue  
Albany, NY 12234  
Phone: 518-486-1547  
E-Mail: [emscte@nysed.gov](mailto:emscte@nysed.gov)

#### **For eligible training entities under NYSED's colleges, universities and Educational Opportunity Centers:**

Office of the Professions  
Professional Education Program Review  
Education Building, 2nd Floor West Wing  
89 Washington Avenue  
Albany, NY 12234  
Phone: 518-474-3817 ext. 360  
E-Mail: [OPPROGS@nysed.gov](mailto:OPPROGS@nysed.gov)

### **DOH Contact Information:**

Home care agencies licensed or certified under Article 36 and Hospice providers under Article 40 of the Public Health Law may be approved to operate a personal care aide training program through the DOH. Applicants must submit the completed application and all related materials in PDF format to: [pcatp@health.ny.gov](mailto:pcatp@health.ny.gov).

Questions related to the personal care aide training program, the requirements or the application should be directed to the NYS Department of Health, Division of Home and Community Based Services at 518-408-1638 or via email to [pcatp@health.ny.gov](mailto:pcatp@health.ny.gov).

### **Training Requirements**

Personal Care Aide training includes basic training, which is comprised of classroom didactic training and demonstration of PCA skills. Training must also include evaluation of the trainee

and an orientation to the roles and responsibilities of the personal care aide. The trainee must receive a minimum of 40 hours of training. Required testing and breaks are not included in the 40 hours of training.

Classroom didactic training, skills training and competency evaluation must be completed within 90 calendar days of each trainee's entry into the training program.

### **Screening Training Applicants**

PCATPs are expected to develop procedures for screening the appropriateness of training applicants. A minimum age of 18 is recommended but not required. The minimum criteria must include the qualifications of individuals accepted for basic training as defined in 18 NYCRR 505.14(d)(4):

- Maturity, emotional and mental stability; and experience in personal care or homemaking;
- Ability to read and write, understand and carry out directions and instructions, record messages, and keep simple records;
- Sympathetic attitude toward providing services to patients at home who have medical conditions; and
- Good health as required for all home care workers specified in 10 NYCRR Part 766.11.

If a PCATP chooses to have additional criteria for admission into their training program, their policy must explicitly demarcate between regulatory requirements for admission to training and agency requirements for admission to training.

### **Fees**

Personal Care Aide training programs approved by DOH may not charge any fees or tuition to trainees for the cost of training including the costs for textbooks, materials and supplies.

### **Standardized Curricular Content**

PCATPs must use the Home Care Curriculum (April 2006; January 2007) for training. The Home Care Curriculum (HCC) is a 40-hour minimum basic training course, exclusive of testing, containing 12 discrete content areas or modules. The HCC identifies the minimum hour requirements for each of the 12 modules. The HCC meets PCATP standards for content and length. In order to assure that all PCATPs are teaching comparable content, the PCATPs are required to base their training, including lesson plans, on the content of the HCC.

The training program's teaching staff may exercise discretion in determining the amount of time required to adequately teach each of the subject areas. However, the minimum training time required must be met for each subject area and the training hours must total a minimum of 40 hours.

It is recommended that the curriculum be taught at a reading level between sixth-grade and eighth-grade.

Other resources may be used at the discretion of the Director/Coordinator of the PCATP.

Written test questions are obtained from publishers of the approved textbooks for the purpose of training personal care and home health aides. Test questions must be obtained from a “bank” of test questions. The following textbooks are approved by the Department and consistent with the Home Care Curriculum:

1. Mosby’s Textbook for the Home Care Aide and Mosby’s Textbook for the Home Care Aide Workbook. Authors of the book are Joan Birchenall and Eileen Streight.
2. Hartman- Providing Home Care A Textbook for Home Health Aides.

Please contact the Department at [pcatp@health.ny.gov](mailto:pcatp@health.ny.gov) for a listing of approved editions of the above textbooks.

### **Personnel/Faculty**

Nurse Instructor and Director/Coordinator credentials must meet regulatory requirements and must be submitted to the Department at the time of application. Credentials include, but are not limited to, resume, nursing license, and/or other professional license(s). Changes to these personnel require prior approval by the Department. Personnel must be approved and entered into the HCR by the Department prior to commencement of class.

### **Director/Coordinator of Training:**

This individual must be a currently licensed (in New York) registered professional nurse, or a social worker, or home economist who has, at a minimum, a bachelor’s degree in an area related to the delivery of human services or education. Human services may include health and social services.

Registered nurses may be exempt from the requirement of a bachelor’s degree if they have two years of nursing experience, at least one year of which must be in the provision of home health services.

The Director/Coordinator of training is responsible for coordinating and overseeing all aspects of training conducted by the program including the basic training and the Alternate Competency Demonstration (ACD) program.

### **Nurse Instructor:**

The PCATP must be provided by or under the direction of a registered professional nurse who, at a minimum, has two years of nursing experience including at least one year of nursing experience in the provision of home health care services in an Article 36 or Article 40 agency or the out-of-state equivalent.

Nurse Instructor (NI) responsibilities include:

- Conducting basic course instruction;
- Conducting the skills training in personal care techniques;
- Conducting the ACD program; and
- Performing all competency evaluations.

All Nurse Instructors must be approved by the Department prior to inclusion in the Home Care Registry (HCR) instructor database. The Nurse Instructor Application form(s), resume(s) and nursing license(s) must be submitted to the DOH at the time of application.

To add additional Nurse Instructors, it is preferred that the Nurse Instructor Application form(s), resume(s) and nursing license(s) be submitted at least 30 days prior to the Nurse Instructor teaching any classes. Nurse Instructor application(s) will be reviewed by the Department and entered into the HCR upon approval.

In the event that 30 days' notice cannot be given to add a Nurse Instructor, please contact [pcatp@health.ny.gov](mailto:pcatp@health.ny.gov) for additional assistance.

The training program must notify the Department of any change in the status of approved Nurse Instructors such as resignations or extended leave within 10 business days of change. Failure to notify the Department of a change in status of an approved Nurse Instructor or the addition of new Nurse Instructors may result in immediate disapproval of the program.

### **Adjunct Faculty:**

Under the supervision of the Director/Coordinator of the PCATP, other individuals may provide course instruction, such as physical therapists, social workers, registered dietitian/nutritionists, public health nurses; however, the skills training in personal care techniques must be taught by an approved Nurse Instructor.

At a minimum, any training program who utilizes Adjunct Faculty needs to maintain documentation of the following information: adjunct faculty resume and copy of license(s)/certification(s) as well as class information including dates, topics, methods of instruction.

### **Space Requirements**

The training program must ensure that the classroom and skills lab are properly equipped to provide PCA training (see PCATP Suggested Equipment List). The space should be adequate to accommodate both the number of trainees and the equipment. At a minimum, the training site should include a classroom area for didactic presentation of curricular content and a laboratory area with equipment and supplies that enable trainers and trainees to adequately demonstrate clinical skills.

Each trainee should have approximately 12-20 square feet of space in the classroom setting and 30 square feet of space in the clinical laboratory setting. Training space can be flexible in nature, meaning that it can be used for formal classroom instruction and rearranged for clinical laboratory instruction.

The training site must have the following: tables/desks and chairs, running water, kitchen facilities or a mock kitchen, audiovisual equipment storage space, electrical outlets and lighting.

### **Evaluation of the Trainee**

The PCATP is responsible for ensuring that each personal care aide trainee is knowledgeable and competent in the skills and content taught in the training program.

Evaluation of the trainee must include:

- Written and/or oral examinations that demonstrate the trainee’s knowledge of the information presented in the classroom training; and
- Observation and demonstration by the trainee of his/her competency in performing the required skills.

All training programs are required to use an approved published textbook consistent with the content of the Home Care Curriculum. The published textbook must be approved by the Department. Written test questions must be obtained from a “bank” of test questions obtained from the publisher of the approved textbook. Questions must comprehensively test the trainee in all areas of the curriculum and questions must be rotated. A minimum score of 80% is required to ensure mastery of subject material.

The training program must have a remediation policy and procedure for trainees that do not meet the minimum 80% requirement. If a trainee is retaking a test after an unsuccessful attempt, this test must be a different version from the previous test taken.

To evaluate each trainee’s competence in performing the required procedures/personal care skills, the approved Nurse Instructor must utilize the “Checklists for Procedures” found in the Appendix of the Home Care Curriculum. Competency evaluation may be integrated throughout the training program or may be conducted subsequent to classroom and skills laboratory training. **Competency must be evaluated by an approved Nurse Instructor.**

### **Documentation of Competency**

For each personal care aide who has completed classroom and skills training, all competencies must be documented on the Personal Care Aide Trainee Evaluation Form. The Trainee Evaluation Form must include documentation of each skill that was demonstrated proficiently, and the approved Nurse Instructor’s initials and date completed. The form must be completed with all information including: the trainee’s contact information; the PCATP Name and Address; the Nurse Instructor(s) name, license number, signature and date.

### **Alternate Competency Demonstration**

In lieu of the standardized classroom and skills training, the PCATP must offer the Alternate Competency Demonstration (ACD) to qualified individuals. The ACD is a method of training in which an individual with related training or experience in performing hands-on skills may be exempt from completing the PCA basic training program but will be tested to ensure they have the required skills and knowledge. Training programs must utilize the Alternative Competency Demonstration for the Personal Care Aide Guide developed by the DOH.

In addition to the minimum qualifications for personal care aides as specified in 18 NYCRR 505.14 (d), individuals who are assessed with the ACD must also have related experience or training. Those minimum standards are outlined in the guidance document: Alternative Competency Demonstration for the Personal Care Aide, located on the Health Commerce System.

### **Documentation of the individual’s qualifying related training or experience:**

The training program is responsible for obtaining documentation to support related experience or training **prior to** an individual’s participation in competency testing/ACD. If documentation cannot be obtained, the individual must successfully complete the basic training PCATP. The

related experience or training documentation must be maintained in the individual trainee's record.

Related experience may be documented by written references or letters from a former or current employer or from a person, such as a physician, who can reasonably evaluate the individual's performance. Character references only, are unacceptable. Telephone references may be obtained by the training program but must be documented in writing and include an evaluation of the individual's performance from the person or persons contacted.

Related training may be documented by a certificate, a letter notifying the individual of successful completion of the training, a license or an outline of the training program attended with written reference from the instructor.

The ACD encompasses the evaluation of the trainee's attitude, knowledge base, and specific skills performance. Each of these areas is assessed and evaluated and must be completed to successfully complete the ACD program and be issued a certificate. The certificate will indicate ACD as method of instruction. Candidates who fail to successfully complete the ACD must successfully complete the basic training PCATP.

### **Documentation of Successful Completion of the Training Program**

PCATP certificates must be issued by the training program through the Home Care Registry (HCR). PCATPs must comply with the regulatory requirements found in 10 NYCRR Part 403 and the Department directives related to the HCR regarding documentation of training, completion of training, and the issuance of certificates. The original certificate must be issued to the trainee who has successfully completed the program within the timeframe required by the Department. The personal care aide must also be provided with a copy of their completed Personal Care Aide Trainee Evaluation Form (Appendix 5). The training program must maintain copies of each aide's training certificate and trainee evaluation forms for at least six years.

An individual who successfully completes an approved PCATP receives a PCA certificate. Electronic signatures are not permissible on PCA certificates. PCATPs are required to print and sign two original certificates. One must be presented to the newly certified PCA and the other must be maintained in the training files. ***PCA certificates do not lapse, and they do not have an expiration date.***

### **Confidentiality and Maintaining Training Records**

The PCATP is required to have procedures for maintaining confidentiality of all PCATP tests and examinations. All testing materials must be kept strictly confidential.

The PCATP must maintain records for all training and trainees for a minimum of 6 years.

For each trainee that has successfully completed basic training, the following records must be maintained:

- Documents used to verify the identity of the trainee;
- Attendance sign in sheets and documentation of the required 40 hours of training;
- Completed tests, quizzes, or examinations;
- Completed documentation of training requirements; and



- Certificate of training completion.

For each trainee that has successfully completed the ACD program, the following records must be maintained:

- Documents used to verify the identity of the trainee;
- Attendance sign in sheets and documentation of the required components of training;
- ACD testing including evidence of related experience or training;
- Competency evaluation forms; and
- Certificate of training completion.

In addition, the PCATP must have a procedure to retain, for a period of at least six years, the following information:

- Documentation of the trainee's receipt of the program's Trainee Rights. The Trainee Rights must be given to the trainee at or prior to the first class in a format (i.e. language, reading level) that the trainee can comprehend.
- Attendance sign-in sheet for classroom and skills lab; trainees must document their arrival and departure as well as the start and completion of their lunch break by signing their full name at the commencement of each day. They may use their initials for signing in/out for lunch and at the end of the day.

Electronic record keeping is acceptable. Training Programs must ensure that electronic records are able to be produced upon request by DOH or any other regulatory agency. Training Programs must also ensure that appropriate electronic backup of these records exist.

### **Training Sites**

Training programs are associated with a designated sponsoring home care agency or hospice provider. An approved training program can operate multiple sites/locations where training is conducted continually or episodically. Training sites must meet the space requirements as described previously.

Each site where training takes place must be entered into the HCR. Each class must be entered into the correct training site in the HCR.

### **Training in Additional Languages**

Applications must identify the languages in which the agency plans to train. All approved PCA training programs must have an English approval but may request additional languages. In addition to the Nurse Instructor requirements outlined below, the application must include:

- a. Identification of each language for which the agency is seeking approval;
- b. Policies and procedures for training in an additional language(s);
- c. PCATP Nurse Instructor Application(s) with documentation of fluency in the identified language(s);

- d. A list of all materials that have been translated and documentation/attestation of translation by a certified language translation service;
- e. Documentation of permission from the textbook publisher for the requirements and limitations of translating test questions (if applicable); and
- f. An attestation stating the training program's understanding that classes can only be conducted in one language at a time and not through an interpreter.

A PCATP application will be approved to conduct training in an additional language only if the proposed Nurse Instructor meets the specified proficiency requirements in the additional language(s). The Nurse Instructor must be bi-lingual and fluent in both English and the language in which instruction is given in order to adequately teach and evaluate the trainee.

Documentation of fluency must include two written references; one of which may be from the sponsoring organization; and one of which may be proof of graduation (such as diploma), where the targeted language is taught/spoken.

Classes can only be conducted in one language at a time and not through an interpreter. Testing must be conducted in the language that the curriculum was taught.

### **Program Monitoring**

All PCATPs must conduct quality assurance and monitoring of their program. PCATPs are required to have policies and procedures describing their quality management program and the annual evaluation of the training program.

The quality assurance program must include data collection, analysis and evaluation of the data collected, as well as strategies and actions to improve performance, when applicable. Quality management processes should focus on the overall operation of the training program, which includes monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the following:

- Monitoring for compliance with the requirements in this Guide;
- Analysis and evaluation of program's educational outcomes that address the effectiveness of the:
  - Admission standards;
  - Instructor(s);
  - Training methodology;
  - Lesson plans;
  - Curriculum content;
  - Equipment;
  - Skills lab;
  - Materials utilized to achieve learning objectives, e.g. videos, textbooks, etc.;
  - Trainee evaluation of the program, including effectiveness of communication between instructor and trainees;
  - Testing results;
  - Remediation efforts;
  - Program completion rates; and
- Development and implementation of strategies for improvement of the PCATP

***All programs are required to conduct monitoring on at least a quarterly basis and documentation of such must be included in the quality assurance minutes of the sponsoring agency.*** PCATPs are required to submit an annual evaluation report to the training entity's governing authority. These annual reports must be included with the PCATP re-approval application submitted to the Department triennially.

### **PCATP Initial Approval**

Questions related to this Guide or the application process may be directed to:

NYS Department of Health  
Division of Home and Community Based Services  
518-408-1638 or  
[pcatp@health.ny.gov](mailto:pcatp@health.ny.gov)

To apply to operate a PCATP please submit the Personal Care Aide Training Program Application with supporting documentation in PDF format to: [pcatp@health.ny.gov](mailto:pcatp@health.ny.gov)

The Department will review the information and application submitted and notify the applicant of approval, disapproval, or need for additional information. The approval of a PCATP is for a 3-year period.

If the training program makes any significant changes within the 3-year approval period, including changes in faculty, change in status of the sponsoring agency (i.e. change of address), the program **MUST** notify the DOH in writing prior to the change.

### **PCATP Re-Approval**

In order to maintain approval, a PCATP must conduct at least one 40-hour training course within the preceding 36-month approval period and issue at least one PCA certificate within the preceding 12 months of the approval period.

- If both requirements are met, then the PCATP must submit the application for reapproval and their annual evaluation report **at least 30 days prior** to the program end date to request reapproval so that the HCR end date can be updated to reflect the next 3-year re-approval period. Failure to contact the Department prior to the program's end date will result in the inability of the PCATP to train and issue certificates as required through the HCR.
- If both requirements are not met, then the PCATP must submit the full PCATP application and their annual evaluation report to request reapproval **at least 60 days** prior to the program's end date. The DOH will review the submitted application and information and notify the applicant of approval, disapproval or need for additional information.

The PCATP will not be able to train and issue certificates after the program's end date.

Completed applications should be sent in PDF format to: [pcatp@health.ny.gov](mailto:pcatp@health.ny.gov)