

**September 29, 2023**

The Virginia Board of Long-Term Care Administrators convened for an Assisted Living Administrator-in-Training Resources and Support Workgroup on Friday, September 29, 2023, at the Department of Health Professions, Perimeter Center, 9960 Mayland Drive, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Board Room #1, Henrico, Virginia.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Jenny Inker, PhD, ALFA, Chair  
Kimberly Brathwaite, ALFA  
Ann Williams, EdD, Citizen Member

**WORKGROUP MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Judy Hackler, Executive Director, Virginia Assisted Living Association  
Dana Parsons, Vice President, and Legislative Counsel, LeadingAge Virginia  
April Payne, Chief Quality & Regulatory Affairs Officer, Executive Director, Virginia Health Care Association/Virginia Center for Assisted Living  
Jennifer Pryor, Joint Program Director, Assisted Living Administration Specialty Area, Virginia Commonwealth University

**DHP STAFF PRESENT FOR ALL OR PART OF THE MEETING:**

Sarah Georgen, Licensing and Operations Supervisor  
Matt Novak, Policy Analyst  
Melanie Pagano, JD, Deputy Executive Director  
Corie E. Tillman Wolf, JD, Executive Director  
Heather Wright, Senior Licensing Program Coordinator

**OTHER GUESTS PRESENT**

Joani Latimer, State Long-Term Care Ombudsman, Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services

**CALL TO ORDER**

Dr. Inker called the meeting to order at 1:39 p.m. and asked the meeting participants to introduce themselves.

Ms. Tillman Wolf read the emergency egress instructions.

**REVIEW OF AGENDA**

There were no proposed changes to the agenda.

**OVERVIEW OF WORKGROUP GOALS – Jenny Inker, Board Chair**

Dr. Inker provided an overview of the Workgroup goals. She stated that the Board convened a Regulatory Advisory Panel in 2019 to discuss ways to improve Administrator-in-Training (AIT) training and preparation. That process brought together different agencies and organizations and resulted in a collaborative conversation about preparing prospective administrators for licensure. She stated that the earlier conversations focused on aspects of the hands-on training itself, as well as how to encourage the engagement of Preceptors, how to bridge information gaps about applying as an AIT, and the benefits of Long-Term Care Administrators as a profession.

Dr. Inker stated that, considering the challenges faced in long-term care over recent years, it was time to rekindle the conversation of AIT resources and support. She stated that the workgroup would focus on the non-regulatory recommendations that were made at the time and the issues that Assisted Living AITs and Preceptors continue to encounter.

Dr. Inker stated that the Workgroup meeting would be an opportunity for open information sharing and discussion. She acknowledged that not all agencies in the long-term care profession were included in the Workgroup but part of the discussion would include who should participate at future discussions.

## **DISCUSSION**

### ***Review of Past Efforts – Corie Tillman Wolf, Executive Director***

Ms. Tillman Wolf stated that the Board of Long-Term Care Administrators had convened two Regulatory Advisory Panel meetings in 2019 to discuss how to better prepare and train Nursing Home Administrators-in-Training and Assisted Living Facility Administrators-in-Training. From those meetings, recommendations were forwarded to the Board which included regulatory and non-regulatory actions. She stated that the Board promulgated regulations related to those recommendations which became effective in December 2022. She stated that promoting Long-Term Care Administration as a profession and examination preparation were important components of those conversations.

Ms. Tillman Wolf presented information to the Workgroup of the total license count of Assisted Living Facility Administrators (ALFAs) and Nursing Home Administrators (NHAs). She provided a current, active comparison of licensure data based on in-state or out-of-state licensure, application types received, new experience pathway application statuses, trends of licensure since 2018, and National and Virginia overall pass/fail rates from July 2017-September 2018 and from CY 2022.

Ms. Tillman Wolf noted that a number of professions have experienced lower overall examination pass rates, likely due to impacts from the pandemic.

### ***Group Discussion***

Dr. Inker called on workgroup participants to share the resources they currently provide for AITs and Preceptors.

*Virginia Health Care Association/Virginia Center on Assisted Living (VHCA/VCAL) – April Payne, Chief Quality & Regulatory Affairs Officer, Executive Director of VCAL*

Ms. Payne touched on concerns related to how to get AITs and Preceptors the tools and resources they need, when there is often insufficient time, resources, and capacity to precept AITs. She noted that there is a

discrepancy that exists between NHAs and ALFAs. VHCA/VCAL offers opportunities for AITs to attend conferences.

*LeadingAge Virginia – Dana Parsons, Vice President, and Legislative Counsel*

Ms. Parsons stated that LeadingAge Virginia offers online resources for prospective AITs to include licensure roadmaps and videos to help them understand the necessary qualifications needed for licensure based on their education and professional experience.

Ms. Parsons also reported that LeadingAge Virginia also has an internal Preceptor Directory of administrators available to those attempting to connect with a possible Preceptor which also indicates if it is a paid position.

Ms. Parsons stated that AITs are encouraged to participate in LeadingAge Virginia conferences at a reduced rate.

*Virginia Assisted Living Association (VALA) – Judy Hackler, Executive Director*

Ms. Hackler stated that VALA directs their members to the Board or NAB websites for resources. She noted that there are many resources available but are scattered across many different websites making it difficult for potential AITs to find the information they need.

Ms. Hackler reported that she participated in the Virginia Health Workforce Development Authority (VHWDA) study to examine workforce issues across the Commonwealth. She said that VALA has reviewed mentorship opportunities to high school students to encourage long-term care as a future profession.

Ms. Hackler also reported that VALA has an internal Preceptor Directory of administrators available to those attempting to connect with a possible Preceptor.

*VCU Department of Gerontology – Jennifer Pryor, Joint Program Director, Assisted Living Administration Specialty Area*

Ms. Pryor shared that VCU offers a NAB accredited Assisted Living specialty area degree program and has observed an increase in students that pursue Assisted Living Facility Administrator licensure. She stated that the VCU program is tailored to the NAB Domains of Practice and offers a Residential Care/Assisted Living examination preparation course which is available to both VCU students and the public.

Ms. Pryor said that of those that attend the examination preparation course who have previously failed the exam, many have reported passing the examination once they have received study tips, taken practice examinations, and had open discussions of the AIT experience. She also stated that VCU is in the process of developing an online course which would incorporate smaller, more focused training on specific domains that AITs may struggle with.

Further, Ms. Pryor stated that she attends NAB meetings and serves on the Education Committee which provides deeper insight into the AIT and exam processes.

*Board of Long-Term Care Administrators – Corie Tillman Wolf, Executive Director*

Ms. Tillman Wolf shared that the Board has updated frequently asked questions on the Board's website and has revised and updated the volunteer Preceptor Directory which now lists the contact information for 81 preceptors. The Board refers applicants to the NAB website for the Administrator-in-Training manual, Preceptor Modules, Career Development Toolkit, and examination materials including the candidate handbook, list of recommended exam references, test score interpretation guide, study guide, and practice exams.

### ***Group Discussion***

Dr. Inker called on workgroup members to discuss the current challenges faced by the profession and by AITs entering the workforce.

The Workgroup identified specific challenges facing AITs which included:

- Time dedication of Preceptors;
- Lack of information sharing through schools including middle school, high school, technical schools and colleges;
- Administrators leaving the industry due to burnout - therefore the profession is losing both industry knowledge and available Preceptors;
- Facilities lacking the basic staffing for their residents which impacts overall facility operations and ability to create a pipeline for all professions in long-term care, not just a pipeline for administrators;
- Recovery efforts from the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Lack of support from executive and corporate leadership;
- Difficulties for applicants in passing the national examination and obtaining licensure.

The Workgroup discussed a number of challenge areas in further detail, including the struggle for AITs to find Preceptors willing to train them. Administrators often lack the capacity and time to dedicate to serving as a Preceptor for an AIT program. While it is an important role of an administrator to teach those wishing to enter the profession, it can be a burden to commit to the role as a Preceptor because administrators are already overextended in their role.

In addition, for AIT applicants, it is not always clear to determine how many hours are required for completion of an AIT program. It is also difficult for AITs to secure paid positions.

The Workgroup discussed the impact of there being a more negative perception of the profession based on societal views of those with health conditions, impairments, or disabilities. Participants agreed that this is also a barrier to a career path in long-term care. Participants further discussed whether and how colleges and education programs distribute information to students about the field.

Participants discussed concerns surrounding the examination, including concerns related to the potential impact of the NAB reorganization of the Domains of Practice in July 2022 on the examinations, including the Core and line of service exams.

Ms. Tillman Wolf stated that the five Domains of Practice were reorganized under four Domains of Practice. She expressed her understanding that the reorganization of the Domains did not alter the underlying content of the examination in terms of examination questions. Ms. Tillman Wolf stated that she would validate this information with NAB and share the concerns of the organizations regarding the examination changes.

Further, the Workgroup considered more immediate changes that could occur, including the addition to the Board's Preceptor Directory specifying if a Preceptor is able to train outside of their facility. Additionally, it was discussed that applicants have reported difficulty finding a testing location with available appointments. NAB limits the number of exam attempts within a 12-month period from the date of the initial exam, which becomes a barrier to licensure. Ms. Tillman Wolf stated that she would investigate this concern further.

Finally, the Workgroup discussed other possible participants that should be included in future discussions. It was suggested that representatives from NAB, PSI Services, LLC, the testing vendor of the NAB examination, and representation from the Office of the Secretary of Health and Human Services should be involved in the workgroup.

### ***WRAP UP AND NEXT STEPS***

Dr. Inker summarized the Workgroup's main challenges and asked Ms. Tillman Wolf to develop a recapitulation of meeting points and participant responsibilities for future discussions. Dr. Inker stated that the Board will review available dates for a series of future meetings concerning AIT resources and support.

Dr. Inker and Ms. Tillman Wolf thanked the participants for their time and collaboration.

### ***MEETING ADJOURNMENT***

With all business concluded, the meeting adjourned at 3:29 p.m.



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Corie Tillman Wolf, J.D., Executive Director

March 15, 2024

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Date