

September 16, 2024

The Virginia Board of Long-Term Care Administrators convened for an Assisted Living Facility Administrator-in-Training Resources and Support Workgroup on Monday, September 16, 2024, at the Department of Health Professions, Perimeter Center, 9960 Mayland Drive, 2nd Floor, Board Room #1, Henrico, Virginia.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jenny Inker, PhD, ALFA, Chair
Kimberly Brathwaite, ALFA

WORKGROUP MEMBERS PRESENT:

Judy Hackler, Executive Director, Virginia Assisted Living Association
Dana Parsons, Vice President and Legislative Counsel, LeadingAge Virginia
Jennifer Yanez Pryor, ALFA, Virginia Commonwealth University
Tara Ragland, Division Director, Licensing Division, Virginia Department of Social Services

DHP STAFF PRESENT FOR ALL OR PART OF THE MEETING:

Erin Barrett, JD, Director of Legislative and Regulatory Affairs
Sarah Georgen, Licensing and Operations Supervisor
Annette Kelley, MS, CSAC, Deputy Executive Director
Matt Novak, Policy and Economic Analyst
Corie E. Tillman Wolf, JD, Executive Director
Heather Wright, Senior Licensing Program Coordinator

OTHER GUESTS PRESENT

Kris Drew, Department of Social Services, Division of Licensing Programs
Julia Cook, LeadingAge Virginia

CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Inker called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. and asked the meeting participants to introduce themselves.

Ms. Tillman Wolf then read the emergency egress instructions.

REVIEW OF AGENDA

Ms. Tillman Wolf requested an addendum to the agenda to include additional discussion of recent concerns related to preceptors and the examination under the section titled "Opportunities for Continuing Stakeholder Collaboration."

REVIEW OF MINUTES

The Workgroup reviewed the minutes for the Assisted Living Administrator-in-Training Resources and Support Workgroup meeting held on December 14, 2023.

OVERVIEW OF WORKGROUP GOALS

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. Conversations surrounding resources and supports for AITs were rekindled with workgroup meetings in September 2023 and December 2023. Dr. Inker noted that the discussion surrounding the challenges faced by AITs in the long term care setting continues with this workgroup, and that one issue in particular had been referred by the full Board to this workgroup for further discussion and recommendation: the size of training facilities for ALF AIT programs.

DISCUSSION

Recapitulation of December 14, 2023, Workgroup Minutes

Dr. Inker asked Ms. Tillman Wolf to provide a recap of the December 2023 Workgroup meeting discussion. Ms. Tillman Wolf summarized the discussion surrounding the National Residential Care/Assisted Living (RCAL) Examination, the development/implementation of an AIT initial training course, development of supplemental webinars for AITs and Preceptors, updates to the Board's Guidance Documents and Frequently Asked Questions, and administrator data collected by the DHP Healthcare Workforce Data Center.

Ms. Brathwaite arrived at 10:11 a.m.

GROUP DISCUSSION

Size of Training Facilities for ALF AIT Programs

Workgroup members reviewed data supplied by the Department of Social Services (DSS) related to the size distribution of 567 assisted living facilities in Virginia.

Workgroup members discussed the size of training facilities for Assisted Living Facility (ALF) Administrator-in-Training (AIT) programs and concerns related to the training and preparation of administrator applicants, including prior RAP meeting discussions related to facility size, which prompted regulation changes that became effective in December 2022.

Ms. Hackler noted the inability for facilities to train their own staff due to the high turnover rate of administrators in the profession and the current facility size limitation. She noted that some employers are required to pay their competitors to train their AITs, causing issues with fairness to smaller facilities.

Workgroup members discussed possible alternatives to the use of a minimum size or bed capacity at the training facility that may balance concerns related to comprehensive training and burden on smaller

facilities, including the completion of a percentage of training hours at a larger facility or comprehensive care facility by the AIT. Workgroup members further discussed whether a similar allowance might be considered for facilities with provisional licensure.

Workgroup members discussed concerns related to the education and training of administrators and the national exam, as well as whether data from DSS or DHP could provide further insights on possible correlations between training and education of administrators and violations noted by inspections at the facility level and in disciplinary licensing cases before the Board.

Workgroup members discussed the role of the national exam in establishing a minimum level of entry-level competency for administrator practice versus demonstrating knowledge of Virginia laws and regulations. The national examination passage rates were discussed with the Workgroup members citing recent fluctuations in the passage rates for the examination. Workgroup members further discussed that passage rates have trended downward for a number of professional licensing exams coming out of the pandemic.

Workgroup members discussed concerns surrounding the national exam, including questions that potentially conflict with state regulations or that are more relevant to the nursing home setting, as well as alternatives to a national exam which is not used by all states for assisted living administration. Workgroup members further discussed that there would be a significant financial cost related to the development of a valid, psychometrically sound state exam, which would be born by the applicants.

Status of Training and Resource Development

Dr. Inker inquired about the existing or conceptual education and training offered by the professional organizations and asked how the Board could support them in these resources.

Ms. Pryor provided information related to the Virginia Commonwealth University's Residential Care/Assisted Living Exam Preparation Course which provides development of test-taking strategies, an overview of the required domains of practice, and exam preparation related to practice applications. Ms. Pryor provided input on her experience with the preparation course noting that feedback indicates difficulty with understanding financial management and human resources policies on a national level. She indicated increased success for retakers following the completion of the course.

Ms. Parsons suggested additional organized opportunities for statewide events for AITs and Preceptors focusing on subject areas of the examination that AITs are struggling with on the examination. Ms. Tillman Wolf inquired about possible grant funding for workforce support and training to bridge the issues.

Workgroup members discussed administrator burnout, employment turnover, and the time dedication of training AITs in conjunction with their facility responsibilities.

Workgroup members discussed suggestions for AITs to seek out external training and career support opportunities, including possible administrator shadowing in another facility, becoming familiar with disciplinary cases involving assisted living facilities or administrators, leadership training, or additional education.

Ms. Tillman Wolf suggested a change to the current process that requires NHAs to register as both NHA Preceptors and ALF Preceptors in order to provide training for AITs at both facility types. Allowing NHAs to register only as NHA Preceptors, but allow NHA Preceptors to precept at both nursing home and assisted living facilities, could streamline the application and renewal requirements for the licensee. Further, such a change could also be made in conjunction with increasing of the maximum number of AITs under the supervision of a preceptor to three AITs, whether a NHA Preceptor or an ALF Preceptor. She noted a benefit to licensees and AITs of easing the search for a preceptor while also continuing quality oversight of the training program.

Ms. Tillman Wolf also noted the recognized need to clarify the role of traveling preceptors in the facility. She noted possible confusion in the community related to the requirement for an agreement between the facility and an off-site Preceptor, which appears in the registration renewal requirements. She stated that additional Board guidance could be provided to clarify the Board's interpretation in this area.

Opportunities for Continuing Stakeholder Collaboration

Workgroup members further discussed the national examination and the additional data collection necessary to inform on the potential impacts of additional legislation or regulatory changes related to the national examination. The Workgroup members discussed the utility of a summary of the examination layout and the frequency of updates, as well as a national comparison of which exam(s) are utilized by the states.

Given the discussion of items that impact the Board's regulations, Ms. Tillman Wolf stated that an appropriate course would be to recommend to the full Board that another RAP be convened with stakeholders to discuss regulatory amendments related to preceptors and training sites and to review the national examination.

Dr. Inker asked the professional organizations for their continued collaboration with each other, with Board support, on any additional resources or trainings that could be created or made available to AITs.

WRAP UP/NEXT STEPS

Dr. Inker summarized the Workgroup's main challenges and asked Ms. Tillman Wolf to develop a recap of meeting points and participant responsibilities for future discussions. Dr. Inker stated that the Board will review available dates for a RAP meeting.

Dr. Inker thanked the participants for their time and collaboration.

ADJOURNMENT

With all business concluded, the meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

Corie Tillman Wolf, J.D., Executive Director

Date