

VIRGINIA BOARD OF NURSING
VIRTUAL Meeting of the Medication Aide Curriculum Committee
June 9, 2021

TIME AND PLACE: The virtual Webex meeting of the Virginia Board of Nursing was called to order at 9:05 A.M. on June 8, 2021. Due to COVID-19 declared state of emergency and consistent with Amendment 28 to HB29 (Budget Bill for 2018-2020) and the applicable provision of §2.2-3708.2 in the Freedom of Information Act, the Board convened a virtual meeting to consider such regulatory and business matters as was presented on the agenda for the Board to discharge its lawful purposes, duties, and responsibilities.

MEMBERS VIRTUALLY PARTICIPATED: Felisa Smith, RN, MSA, MSN/ED, CNE, Chair
Margaret Friedenberg, Citizen Member
Dixe McElfresh, LPN

STAFF VIRTUALLY PARTICIPATED: Jacquelyn Wilmoth, MSN, RN, Deputy Executive Director
Christine Smith, Nurse Aide/RMA Education Program Manager
Beth Yates, Nursing and Nurse Aide Education Coordinator

OTHERS PARTICIPATED: VIRTUALLY April Payne, VHAC, Virginia Center for Assisted Living
Dana Parsons, Leading Age of Virginia
Vonnie Adams, Administrator, Williamsburg Landing
Rhonda Whitmer, Virginia Department of Social Services, Licensing Inspector
Karen Mittura – Germanna Community College, Medication Aide Education Program
Krystal Lotts, Wellness Concepts
Teresa Mason, Fresh Start, Medication Aide Education Program
Jennifer Perez, A & J Total care Enterprises, Medication Aide Education Program
Dawn Ellis, OmniCare/CVS

PUBLIC COMMENT: There was no one present for public comment.

DISCUSSION OF CURRICULUM REVISIONS:

Ms. Felisa Smith explained that the committee has been charged with the review and revision of the Medication Aide Curriculum. She stated that in an attempt to increase efficiency, the board intends to maintain the committee to no more than 10 content experts; in selecting the committee members, the board ensured there was representation from each program type along with stakeholders who have expertise in this area. She explained the goal of the committee is to determine what the revised curriculum should look like with the intent that the curriculum is to provide a framework that will allow programs to modify the content to fit student needs and their unique teaching modality.

A discussion ensued regarding the use of medication aides in nursing home settings. Ms. April Payne explained that this was in practice in North Carolina, Maryland and Ohio.

Ms. Wilmoth explained that this would require a regulatory change and is not in the scope of this committee's charge. Ms. Wilmoth asked the committee to discuss changes that can be made to the curriculum with regard to current regulations. She requested that committee members give their opinion regarding possible causes for low pass rates in Virginia, which are between 58% and 62%, while highlighting the current requirement of an 80% pass rate.

Ms. Teresa Mason, Fresh Start, stated that one of the problems she has encountered is students are sent by their facility employers to participate in the training but the students are not truly engaged in the program.

Ms. Dawn Ellis stated that language barriers also present difficulties with comprehension and testing.

Ms. Karen Mittura stated it is difficult to follow up with the students once they have graduated from the program. She also stated that delays in testing seem to be related to the application process.

Ms. Felisa Smith asked the committee for suggestions to change the curriculum to make it more applicable to the medication aide course.

Christine Smith asked the programs to explain what they may have added to the curriculum to make it uniquely their own.

Ms. Rhonda Whitmer said she had added videos so the students had both written and visual instruction in the required skills.

Ms. Felisa Smith reminded the committee that at this meeting they are discussing general ideas of where graduates fall short relative to changes that may be made in the curriculum with a goal to increase the pass rates.

The committee was unanimous in its opinion that more required skills hours and medications cited in the curriculum are in need of updating.

Ms. Wilmoth inquired if the worksheets are necessary in the current curriculum or if they are too restrictive.

The consensus was that the worksheets were helpful in the teaching of the curriculum content.

Ms. Christine Smith said she believed the worksheets could be too prescriptive but may be retained as an appendix to the curriculum to allow programs autonomy in delivery of content.

Ms. Felisa Smith said that the curriculum is providing the framework and content to ensure that the program remains able to graduate medication aides who can practice safely. The method of delivery should be determined by the program.

Ms. April Payne said that RMAs are requiring on-the-job-training once they have been hired. She would like to see more skills hours required. She further said she will like to see the Medication Aide curriculum designed to be similar in appearance to the Nurse Aide curriculum.

There was a discussion regarding admissions criteria and the use of a comprehensive test at the end of the program.

Ms. Felisa Smith said admission criteria and the use of a test will be determined by the programs.

Ms. Jennifer Perez shared her experience that direct care aides have a lower pass rates than CNA's and suggested a regulatory change requiring NA or CNA prerequisite.

Ms. Teresa Mason said this would make it difficult for assisted living facilities and nursing homes to find and keep staff.

Ms. Jacquelyn Wilmoth asked the members to provide a list of what changes are needed to the current curriculum. Ms. Felissa Smith asked the committee to also provide evidence-based reasons for the suggestions and email the information to Ms. Jacquelyn Wilmoth or Ms. Christine Smith no later than June 28, 2021.

The next meeting of the committee shall be July 8, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. in person at the board office.

Meeting adjourned at 10:17a.m.

Jacquelyn Wilmoth, MSN, RN
Deputy Executive Director