What Does a Certified Nursing Assistant Do?

A Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) is an important member of the nursing team providing direct care to patients or clients under the supervision of a Registered Nurse or Licensed Vocational Nurse. CNAs are primarily employed at Long Term Care (Skilled Nursing) Facilities. They may also be employed at the following:

- Acute Care Hospital
- Intermediate Care Facility (ICF) – ICF/Developmentally Disabled Habilitative (ICF/DDH) – ICF/Developmentally Disabled Nursing (ICF/DDN)
- Hospice
- Assisted Living/Residential Care/Board & Care Facilities
- Psychiatric Facilities
- Clinics
- Prison System Facilities
- Alzheimer’s units

For the resident or patient, the Certified Nurse Assistant provides a safe environment, observes and reports changes in mental or physical status. The CNA acts as an advocate for the patient, meeting physical, psychosocial, emotional, spiritual and cultural needs, while protecting the patient’s rights. The CNA provides the most hands-on care to the resident. CNAs check and record patients’ temperature, pulse, respiration, blood pressure, and weight. They encourage independence with eating, bathing and dressing and provides assistance when necessary.

CNAs may also escort the resident to treatments, examinations, activities, and social programs. Other duties may include directing visitors, answering the phone or cleaning equipment.

Personal Characteristics & Working Conditions

- Ability to competently provide care for a diverse array of individuals, including those of different age groups, ethnic backgrounds and limited English proficiency.
- Ability to tolerate blood, body fluids and unpleasant odors.
- Aptitude for working with computers and high tech equipment.
- Desire to work with ill patients who require hands on care and psychological support.
- Tolerance for standing and walking at least eight hours per day; moving heavy equipment and large patients.

Facts about Certified Nursing Assistants & Job Opportunities

According to a document entitled “Key Findings, 2014, Health Occupations in California,” prepared by the Centers for Excellence, the need for Certified Nursing Assistants in the ambulatory healthcare and nursing and residential care settings was expected to see a projected growth rate of 17%, with a total of 44,611 job openings over the subsequent 12-month period. According to the California Employment Development Department, the need for Nursing Assistants in the health care industry is expected to increase by 23.6 % from the years 2012-2022 with 4,180 average annual job openings in California.

To become a CNA, you must be at least 16 years old and meet the prescreening requirements. A Nurse Assistant training course approved by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) must be completed. The course content must comply with Title 22, the minimum standards of patient care, and the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (OBRA). The course must include a minimum of 50 hours of mandated theory. 10 hours of Alzheimer’s Disease and Elder Abuse coursework are recommended. In addition to theory, a minimum of 100 hours of clinical training in a skilled nursing facility is required. After completion of the above requirements, the student must successfully complete the state competency written and skills test.

Regional Testing Sites:
Northern- missioncollege.org/depts/HWI/regional_testing.html
Southern- regionaltestingcenter.org

Sources for Further Information About Certified Nursing Assistants:

- California Community Colleges’ Health Program Directory
  www.ca-hwi.org
- California Department of Health Care Services
  www.dhcs.ca.gov
- Certified Nursing Assistant Certifying Agency: California Department of Public Health
  http://www.cdph.ca.gov
- For information on salaries go to:
  www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov
  http://salarysurfer.cccco.edu
Certified Nursing Assistant (C.N.A.) Programs are Available at the Following Community Colleges:

Certified Nursing Assistant Program

Modesto Junior College

The Modesto Junior College Certified Nursing Assistant Program is accredited by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH).

Certified Nursing Assistant Program offered Fall and Spring.

Home Health Aid Program available.

Columbia College

Classes will be offered starting Fall 2018.

Please visit our website for detailed program information

www.mjc.edu/alliedhealth

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