**Direct Care Worker**
*Frequently Asked Questions*

**Q.  What does CNA stand for?**

**A.** CNA is an acronym for Certified Nursing Assistant, which in Federal law, is referred to as a "Nurse Aide".

**Q. What is our course of action, if a CNA walks off the job?**

**A.**  If a Certified Nurse Aide (CAN) walking off the job caused residents to be neglected or subjected to harm, the entity should contact the DIA Complaint Unit (toll free 1-877-0027) and report this as an incident.

If no neglect or harm occurred, send a letter to the Direct Care Worker Registry indicating the name and social security number of the nurse aide who walked off the job and any circumstances.  We will make a notation of this in their record and send the documentation to the program coordinator responsible for you facility. Note, per law the Direct Care Worker Registry can't place a Nurse Aide on the Abuse Registry without an investigation and due process.

**Q. How come my name is not listed as an abuser on the Iowa Direct Care Worker Registry, but I'm not allowed to work because of a hit on my criminal background check or Dependent Adult Abuse Registry/Child Abuse Registry?**

**A**. Having a criminal background or having your name on the Child or Dependent Adult Abuse Registry does not automatically place your name on the Direct Care Worker (DCW) Registry as an abuser.  To be listed on the DCW Registry as an abuser, you must have a founded abuse of a resident in your care or misappropriating a resident's money or property.  The DCW Registry Abuser status only pertains to abuse by Certified Nurse Aides while working in certified Skilled Nursing Facilities or certified Nursing Facilities.

**Q. Why isn't my name on your Registry?**

**A**. There are several possible reasons why your name isn't on the Registry.  If no employment is reported for you in over 24 months, your name automatically goes inactive.  After 30 months of no reported employment you name is deleted from our records.  Also, it is possible your name was never placed on our registry by your employing entities.

**Q. How important is it for entities to report monthly/quarterly CNA employment updates?**

**A.** Submitting quarterly employment reports via paper is no longer necessary for entities that do CNA updates via logging into the DIA/HFD Website. Although the requirements have not changed for reporting quarterly employment, if you are making updates via the

website (at least quarterly), there is no need to submit a paper copy of the quarterly employment report to the Registry. However, you must be either making online CNA updates or submitting the quarterly employment report.

If entities do not submit updates of their CNA new hires, terminations or update employment history of staff, the Registry information becomes invalid. Names are dropped from the Registry, if employment is not reported in 24 months. In addition, individuals can remain active on the Registry even though they have not worked in 24 months. Note, entities that are *required* to report employment could face deficiencies and/or fines for not reporting employment in a timely fashion. *(Exception: Reciprocity processing will not change. A copy of the Registry Application form will still need to be completed and returned to the Registry for processing, along with a copy of the other state's Registry card, if available.)*

**Q. What should I do if a nurse aide developed a criminal background after they were hired? Do I need to report this to the Direct Care Worker Registry? Should this individual be terminated?**

A. The Direct Care Worker Registry does not become involved in criminal background activities unless the activity occurred within a certified Nursing or Skilled Nursing facility and is against a resident or a resident's property. Termination, of an aide, is only required when there is founded abuse and all appeals rights have been exhausted. A copy of the letter indicating the aide has been placed permanently on the abuse portion of the Registry goes to the aide and copies are sent to all entities where the aide is currently employed.

If you become aware a nurse aide has developed a criminal background you should run another Criminal Background Check, but you will need to allow enough time for the records to pass through the court system and get to the Department of Criminal Investigations. Then you can request the Department of Human Services review their record for continued employment.

**Q. I am a Nurse Aide who has not worked in several years. How can I get my status reactivated?**

**A.** Contact you local community college and set up testing dates for both the written and the skills portion of the Nurse Aide competency tests. Once you pass both portions of the test, you will again be eligible to seek employment.

**Q. Why does the Registry indicate I am not eligible to work as a Nurse Aide because you need my test scores?**

> **A.** Possibly, your last or current employer failed to report your employment. Therefore, you became inactive. Please contact the employer and tell them the problem. A phone call to the Registry or an online update by the employer will be necessary to remedy this situation.

**Q. How are you placed on the abuser list?**

> **A.** While employed by a certified Nursing Facility or Skilled Nursing Facility you must have a founded abuse allegation by the Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals or the Criminal Judicial System. All individuals with founded abuse investigated by Inspections & Appeals have the opportunity to appeal. When all appeals rights are exhausted, the individual's name is placed on the Dependent Adult Abuse Registry and the Iowa Nurse Aide Registry as an abuser. The name remains on the Iowa Nurse Aide Registry forever (per federal law). If the individual was found guilty in a court of law, that is your only avenue of appeal. When the court document arrives in our office, you will be placed on the Direct Care Worker Registry as an abuser.

**Q. Is it easy to transfer your Nurse Aide status to another state?**

> **A**. Each State has some requirement that must be fulfilled to transfer. The most important factor is to be sure you have completed a 75-hour course. This is course is required by every state as a minimum requirement. If you only challenged the tests, they will mandate you to take the 75-hour course before transferring. Most state Registries use the "Interstate Reciprocity Form" that must be completed by both the Aide and by the Iowa Registry to transfer certification. You can contact the Registry of the state you are moving to in order to receive a copy of this form. Each state has its own version of the form.

**Q. Where do I go to get a copy of my Nurse Aide Course Certificate?**

> **A**. The Iowa Direct Care Worker Registry does not keep any records except on the computer and does not receive or have copies of CNA course certificates. To receive a copy of your Nurse Aide Course Certificate, you must contact the institution (community college) where you took the course. There may be a cost involved in receiving a copy.

**Q. What information do I need to provide my employer(s)?**

> **A.** Allow them to make copies of your course certificate, your Nurse Aide Registry Card, and copies of the letters with test scores.

**Q. Who is responsible for updating the aides' employment?**

**A.** Each entity, participating in the Direct Care Worker Registry (pools, approved assisted living, certified and/or licensed skilled nursing facilities/nursing facilities), is required to report CNA hires and terminations on a quarterly basis (at least). The Registry expects updates from each facility on 15 April, July, October, and January of each year, if they are not updating this information via our website (see related question above).

**Q. How do I contact the Nurse Aide Registry in another state?**

**A.** On our DCW page click on the Documents link. On the page that opens scroll down to DCW Documents and click on "view" for the "Directory of Nurse Aide Registries." This is a listing of all Nurse Aide Registries in the United States (including the District of Columbia). The list includes the address and phone number of each Registry.

**Q. What is my status on the Registry**?

**A.** You can tell the answer to this question by looking at the "Certification Status" on the web site (not the "Demographic Status"), or by calling the Voice Response System number (866-876-1997 or 281-6964). You are eligible to work in Iowa if your status is "Active". If there is any other status listed, you will need to contact the Registry at 515-281-4077 for further information.

**Q. I did not receive, or cannot find my User ID/Password. How can I find out what it is?**

**A.** Passwords cannot be released over the telephone because of privacy and security issues. Visit the documents section of the Health Facilities Division's web site and download the Direct Care Worker Website Instructions. Pages 3 and 4 of that document explain how to determine your user name and password.

**Q. How I can obtain my test score.**

**A.** We are not provided with the test score but are told if you passed or failed each test. By logging into our website you can see if you passed or failed on both the skills and written tests. Note, it often takes three weeks or more for us to receive the information.. Only the testing institution knows your actual test score.

**Q. I cannot be logged in to the database. Why not?**

**A.** This could be a result of several things. You may have incorrectly keyed in your user id or password. Make sure you key in these items exactly as directed. The fields ARE case sensitive, so make sure you key in the user id and password exactly. After three failed attempts, your account will be locked. If you have logged in to the website before and set up your security (baseline) questions, you need to key in the answers to those

questions to reset and unlock your account. For assistance or if you have additional problems accessing the system, contact the ITE Help Desk  at 800-532-1174 or 515-281-5703.

**Q. The website has a status of "No Employment", but the system also shows the CNA is working. Why is that, as it is contradicting itself?**

**A.** In the old database there was no way to verify employment with entities, but we can in the new system.  When information was migrated from the old to the new system, anything the system saw with active employment (no separation dates) and a hire date more than 24-months ago was set to "No Employment" status. When the employing entity logs into the website, they get an alert screen asking them to verify if these CNAs are still employed with them or not. This helps to keep CNA records accurate.

**Q. There is a "hit" on my record. Why?**

**A.** When an entity is considering hiring a CNA, they are required by law to check 5 different Registries with 3 different state agencies. DIA houses the Iowa Direct Care Worker (formerly Nurse Aide) Registry, DHS maintains the Child Abuse registry and Dependent Adult Abuse Registry, the Sex Offender Registry and Criminal Background Check are through the Department Of Public Safety/Division of Criminal Investigation. The terminology "hit", generally refers to the criminal background portion of the record check. To verify what is on your Criminal Background record, you may contact the Iowa Department of Public Safety.

**Q. Will a prior criminal history or a found child or dependent adult keep me form working in a certified Nursing or Skilled Nursing Facility?**

**A.** Your potential employer can request an evaluation to determine if you might be allowed to work for them.   They can contact Gerry Prine in Department of Human Services (DHS) at 515-281-8355 to request an evaluation. Anything related to child support, custody issues, or anything non-medical abuse related would need to be verified with your Department of Human Services (DHS) caseworker if you have one, or to DHS in general.

Q**. How many course hours did I take?**

**A.** We are not notified of course hours but are notified when the written (knowledge) and the clinical skills (competency) exams are taken.  Taking the course does not put you on the Registry. Refer to your course completion certificate, as it will have the number of hours for the course. If you do not have course completion certificate, you must contact the school where the course was taken to get that information.

**Q. I need a new CNA card. How would I get one?**

**A.** We no longer print and mail cards, since they can be printed online. A DCW can do this by logging in to our website www.dia-hfd.state.ia.us with their user id and password. The format for these is provided to the DCW when they complete competency testing. DCWs who do not have access to the Internet (either via their own computer, the local library or any other entity that offers public internet access), can ask their employer (if presently employed as a CNA), to print them a card.

**Q. I am moving, and I want to transfer my certificate to/from Iowa to/from another state. How do I do that?**

**A.** This process is referred to as "reciprocity". ***Transferring INTO Iowa:*** An Iowa Direct Care Worker Registry Application form needs to be obtained from either a facility or our website (by clicking on the documents link from the home page). Under extreme situations, we can mail one, but this adds extra time to the process. The CNA only needs to complete section one. If they are employed, or are going to be employed, the hiring entity completes section two. If the CNA has a Registry card/certificate from the other state, make a copy of it and return it with the form. If not, make sure it is noted on the form what state the CNA is now certified. The form can by returned by either mail or fax (both our address and fax number are at the top of the application form). The information on the form will be verified with the other state once received in the office. Reciprocity is generally processed within one or two working days of receipt..

***Transferring OUT OF Iowa:*** The CNA must contact the Registry of the state they are moving to (Click on the "Documents" link on the home page. Then on the page that opens, scroll down to DCW Documents and click on the "view" link for the 'Directory of Nurse Aide Registries'. This is a listing of all Nurse Aide Registries in the United States, including the District of Columbia. The list includes the address and phone number of each Registry). Staff will send you an 'Interstate Reciprocity Form' to complete. Once the CNA completes their section, they send it to us to complete the current registry section of the form. When completed, we send it directly to the other state for processing. This process can take two weeks depending on the mail. We can forward the application via fax, but most states do not accept faxes. Unless specifically requested by another state, all correspondence will be via ground mail.

**Q. Does my employing entity have to report updates to the Registry?**

**A.** At this time, the only entity types ***mandated*** to notify us of employment status are Skilled Nursing Facilities, Nursing Facilities, and Long-Term Care Units in Hospitals. All other facility types are not mandated, but are strongly urged to do so. This reporting keeps CNAs in active status on the Registry. Once new job classifications are added to the Registry, reporting requirements will most likely change.

**Q. How long does it take to receive competency test results**?

**A.** Although students are notified of their skills scores immediately before they leave the testing facility, it takes 7-10 days for us to receive the results. Written exams, unlike the Skills, are not scored by the testing facilities. All Iowa written exams are sent to the Certification Center at the University of Iowa to be scored. Because of the volume of tests they receive, this adds time to the process. We do not receive the written test results until 2-4 weeks after you take the exam. There is no person/place you can contact to get your score any quicker.

**Q. I can't get on your website. It says "Page Not Found", or I get a system error… Why?**

**A.** First, are you trying to access the site by using a 'bookmark', or 'Favorite Place'? These bookmarks are more than likely trying to access the old website that was taken off line March 22, 2005. These bookmarks need to be deleted and the website URL manually keyed in. When arriving at our homepage, it can be saved as a favorite, and used to access the site in the future. Do not use the trailer "/nurseaides" in your URL. This will direct you to the old website, and give you a "Page Not Found" error. The address should end with ".us". Also, if it has been quite a while after login since you navigated or made a saved entry on the site, you may have "timed-out" of the system. As a security measure, if the site doesn't detect activity within a 10-15 minute time, it will log you out.  You will just need to log in with your user id and password again.

**Q. Can I work while waiting for exams results?**

**A.** If a CNA recently completed the course, they may work for up to 4-months from their hire date. If we do not receive passing test scores within this 4-month time period, termination from employment must occur until we receive passing scores.  If the CNA is challenging the exams due to expiration or other similar circumstance, they would not be eligible for this 4-month window of time.  You only get that time when you have just completed the course.

**Q. I am now an LPN or an RN. What does that do to my CNA license, and status on the Registry?**

**A.** You can't have a CNA certificate _and_ an RN or LPN license.  Once you receive one of these designations, it cancels your CNA status.  If you are working as a CNA at a facility at this time, although you are still working at the facility, you would be removed from the Registry effective the last day you worked as a CNA.  If you do go back to working as a CNA, although you no longer have a CNA License, you _DO_ have to be listed on the Registry.

**Q. I can't print off my card from the website. Why**?

>   **A**. It could be that your Internet browser settings on that computer are set so it can't print from Web sites. This would be true mostly at Libraries or other places where the Internet is available to the public. Because of the threat of viruses, the settings maybe set as such, that many websites may not be accessible or have the ability to navigate or print as intended. If the browser security setting is "Low" and you still can't print. It also could be a result of heavy traffic on the website. The more users who are on the system at one time, the slower the response time will be. Try accessing it at different times during the day. If you continue to have problems, contact Terry Ventling at (515) 281-6968.

**Q. My status is Abuser on the website. Why?**

>   **A.** Because there was a founded abuse allegation investigated by Inspections and Appeals Surveyors, and all appeals were exhausted.

**Q. An entity calls and says they have an Aide who has been working as a Home Health Aide, but is showing as inactive on the Registry. Why?**

>   **A.** Entities, especially Home Health Agencies, use the term "Home Health Aide" interchangeably with "Certified Nurse Aide". To the Registry, Home Health Aides are **_not_** the same as a CNA, and it is **_not_** a certified position. The first thing to determine is if the individual is working as a CNA or not. If the facility is certified and licensed through the Department of Inspections and Appeals, and the position required a CNA certificate to be eligible for hire, then we would be able to use the employment to keep a CNA active. If not, then we couldn't.

**Q. I have a CMA (Certified Medication Aide) certificate. How can I tell if it is active or not?**

>   **A**. At this time, there is no Registry for CMAs, and no state agency "tracks" this status. When the CMA receives their course completion certificate that ends the process. CMA will probably be one of the first job classifications added to this new Registry. At this point the CMA status will reflect what the status of the CNA is (you must be CNA in order to be a CMA in Iowa. The only exception to this is in ICF/MR facilities.) If the CNA certificate is expired, so will the CMA…if the CNA certificate is active, so will the CMA.