

Snohomish County Case Management Program Feedback for The Long-Term Care Workers Training Workgroup

Feedback Overview

In preparation for the 10/4/07 LTC Work Group Stakeholder Forum, the Snohomish County Case Management Program conducted a brainstorming session on 10/2/07 to gather staff feedback on potential changes to training requirements for Home Care Workers.

45 Snohomish County Case Management Division staff members were present, including a Home Care Contract Management Specialist, 30 Case Managers, 2 RN Case Managers, 3 Case Aides, 4 Support Staff, 5 Case Management Division Supervisors and the Case Management Division Manager.

For purposes of the brainstorming session the following questions were posed to the group:

1. What is the appropriate number of mandatory basic training hours for Home Care Workers?
2. What should the training curriculum contain?
3. Should there be a Home Care Worker Certification program and what should be the criteria for that program?

Questions for the LTC Workers Training Workgroup

Prior to addressing the questions posed by the Long Term Care Workers Training Workgroup, those present at the brainstorming meeting had the following questions for the Workgroup:

Why are there proposed changes to the current Home Care Worker training requirements?

Is there evidence that the currently required training for Home Care Workers is insufficient?

What is the value added for the client if additional hours of mandatory training for Home Care Workers is required and how would that be measured?

Have clients reported a change in the quality of their in-home care following their caregivers completion of the currently required Continuing Education training?

How much would the proposed additional training requirements cost and where would those funds come from?

One of the goals of maintaining clients in their own home is to prevent premature facility placements. If training requirements, and related costs, significantly increase, the monetary benefits of maintaining clients in their own homes decrease.

If mandatory training requirements for Home Care Workers are significantly increased, who would provide in-home care to clients while their Home Care Worker is attending training for significant periods of time? What about non-English speaking clients? Would the 'covering' Home Care Worker speak the client's language?

Brainstorming Feedback

Question 1: What is the appropriate number of mandatory basic training hours for Home Care Workers?

The current number of required training hours seem to be appropriate; no change in curriculum or number of hours is needed. If it isn't broken, don't fix it. Make additional training optional not mandatory.

There is a significant number of Home Care Workers who don't complete the 10 hours of Continuing Education currently required by the end of the year, and only complete the training when they are faced with termination if they do not complete CE. Training agencies have to add classes at the end of the year to accommodate these Home Care Workers.

For family caregivers who have been providing care for a long time before becoming paid IP's an increase in training requirements could be a barrier to their continuing to provide care.

Many Home Care Workers want to provide care to a specific person – mother, father, friend, etc. – but after that caregiving relationship is over, they go back to their former profession/work. For many Home Care Workers caregiving is not necessarily a career path.

Family caregivers who are paid providers may need different support from the LTC system. Perhaps, not increased training requirements but pertinent reading material, phone support or other avenues to prevent burn-out would be helpful not necessarily additional training requirements.

There is currently a shortage of agency home care workers; an increase in mandatory training requirements might deter potentially good workers from joining the workforce.

The Home Care Worker workforce is a very transient workforce, many Home Care Workers come and go during the year, is the thinking that an increase in the number of training hours help to decrease that aspect of the workforce?

Question 2: What should the training curriculum contain?

The topic areas identified in HBESS2284 seem to reflect topics already part of the Revised Fundamentals of Caregiving and Continuing Education classes. Keeping those topics seems appropriate.

Client specific training would be great. For example, if a client is dealing with COPD, train the Home Care Worker about that disease process rather than having them spend a lot of class time on Mental Illness.

Client's often report their Home Care Worker needs cooking classes! Could that be incorporated into the training?

Having more training related to assisting a client with a bath would be helpful.

Perhaps offer 'advanced' training for caregivers who care for clients who are heavy care or have optional training for Home Care Workers based upon their client's CARE classification.

Question 3: Should there be a Home Care Worker Certification program and what should be the criteria for that program?

What would a LTC Worker Certification mean? Who would issue the certificate? Would it be honored anywhere but in Washington State? Is it different from a Certified Nursing Assistant?

Why would the Long Term Care system in Washington pay for a Home Care Worker to achieve this certification? Do other systems pay for folks to get their CNA for example? While higher education is admirable, why couldn't the LTC Certification be optional training for the Home Care Worker at his or her own expense?

A Home Care Worker Certification program should be optional, and perhaps Continuing Education classes could accumulate over time towards a certification. Please survey the Home Care Worker workforce prior to adding additional training requirements!

This feedback represents an initial reaction to proposed changes to Home Care Worker training. Snohomish County Case Management is continuing to gather feedback from Independent Providers and case management professionals. If you have any questions regarding this feedback, please feel free to contact Denise Brand, at 425-388-7237.