

SB4004 Certified Nursing Assistant Intern

Background: The concept of this bill stems from a program that was introduced during the pandemic titled, the Temporary Nursing Assistant (TNA) program. This program was designed to meet the critical staff shortages occurring as a result of COVID-19. In the height of the pandemic when facilities were seeing staffing shortages and communities were experiencing unemployment, this program allowed long term care (LTC) facilities to hire those out of work to help support current staff provide the needed care to residents within the facility. On the national level, this program remains available until the end of the Public Health Emergency.

Illinois adopted this program in April 2020 and saw **1,760 new jobs** created in the long-term care sector. Unfortunately, the Department of Public Health prohibited new hires into the program in September 2020 and the entire program ended in January 2021. Although those working as TNAs could continue to work either as a Resident Attendant or sign up for a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program within 240 days, this halted the LTC workforce enhancement that the programs created. Since then, providers are still grasping for staff and having to deal with the effects the pandemic left on the profession.

Other States: Pennsylvania implemented this program and saw **4,000** TNAs and 80% were able to become CNAs. Georgia utilized the program and saw **4,897** TNAs enter the workforce and are continuing to use the program. Both are working to keep the TNA program as a career ladder opportunity after the Public Health Emergency.

This bill helps secure the workforce within long term care and create a career ladder into becoming a Certified Nursing Assistant in a time that long term care is in desperate need for direct care staff. The position is renamed to Certified Nursing Assistant Intern (CNAI).

What the bill does:

- Creates a certification to become a Certified Nursing Assistant Intern (CNAI).
- Allows those who have completed TNA training during the Public Health Emergency under the supervision of a licensed or registered nurse shall be considered a CNAI.
- Establishes competency standards.
- Places CNAIs on the State nurse aide registry as “active”.
- Requires those who become a CNAI to enroll in an approved certified nursing assistant training program within 6 months (intent to amend to 2 years) of completion of the CNAI program.
- Allows 40 hours of training in the CNAI program to be counted towards their CNA certification.
- Allows those CNAIs who enrolled in a CNA program to continue to practice the skills they learned as a CNAI and new competencies they learn in their CNA program.
- Adds CNAIs to the required reporting of direct care staff within a skilled nursing facility.

Vote YES to support the long term care workforce. Vote YES to SB4004