

Regarding Senate Bill 703

Testimony in Opposition

My name is Lyn Chase, RN, BS. I am the owner, Program Director, Primary Instructor and Clinical Instructor for Clackamas Nursing Assistant Training in Happy Valley, Oregon. I opened my business in October, 2007 and I have been the only instructor. I have shepherded hundreds of students through the Nursing Assistant level one program over the last fifteen years. Further, I've served on numerous committees for the Oregon State Board of Nursing. Most recently, I served on a 13-member task force for the Nursing Assistant level one curriculum revision. The board approved all recommendations of the task force earlier this month.

SB 703 would require that the state of Oregon utilize ONLY the test offered by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing. This National Nurse Aide Assessment Program (NNAAP) test is currently administered by a company called Credentia. Oregon has a long history of Nursing Assistant instructors and Program Directors collaborating to assure that the board examination meets the needs of Oregonians. Should SB 703 pass, our voices will be silenced. All decisions regarding testing of Nursing Assistants in Oregon will be made by people who may never have set foot in our beautiful state.

The thrust of this bill is to pave the way for the board examination to be offered in Spanish as well as English. Would this open the door for some to demand that the test be offered in French? German? Vietnamese? Why should those whose native tongue is not English or Spanish be subject to discrimination? But more importantly, shouldn't CNA's caring for vulnerable people speak English? I once worked as the facility nurse in an assisted living environment in which the night staff spoke only Spanish. A resident informed me one morning that she called the night staff to report that she was experiencing chest pain. The caregiver simply smiled, said, "Okay! Bye bye!" and did not return. Although the resident did not suffer lasting effects of this communication failure, it could have put her life in jeopardy.

In reviewing the written testimony submitted as of 04-25-23, I observed that those in favor of SB 703 do not appear to be Nursing Assistant instructors. Testimony by one individual states that candidates must have 80 hours of classroom training. While this is true today, on August 1, 2023, this will decrease to 65 hours. This testimony also states that students participate in a 4-week clinical training. Actually, the clinical experience training requirement is currently 75 hours and will decrease on August 1, 2023 to 40 hours. It states that "all of this education takes place in English", but that is not a requirement of the Oregon State Board of Nursing. Presumably, if the test is offered in Spanish, the course could be taught only in Spanish if an instructor chose to do so.

The aforementioned testimony states that "the current exam is a timed-based, high stakes test." Actually, a candidate may take the test as many times as they wish in a one-year period. The testimony also indicates that the exam has not been reviewed by experts in cultural

competency. While this is true, program directors recently participated in a review of every single test question, with an eye toward English language learners. Rather than simply offering the exam in other languages, this strategy of revision not only ensures that the exam continues to provide an accurate assessment of the Nursing Assistant's ability to provide care in an English-language setting, but also serves to make testing more accessible and inclusive for candidates with other language and learning deficiencies.

The passage of SB 703 will disrupt testing throughout the state of Oregon. Currently NA training programs may offer testing in their own classrooms when approved by the current testing service, D&S Diversified, doing business as Headmaster. The requirements of Credentia, the ONLY testing service that would be allowed under SB 703, are extreme. Significant additional equipment and supplies would have to be purchased. We would be required to obtain a FAX machine with a dedicated phone line that would be accessible to the testing rooms. (Who even uses a FAX machine in today's world???) The test rooms must provide enough space for candidates to be at least three feet apart and facing forward. The beds in the skills lab must be six feet apart. Here is the list of requirements from the Credentia website:

Prior to Exam Day:

- Ensure that all materials and equipment are available and in working order before the day of the exam. Refer to the "Equipment List: NNAAP Skills Evaluation Audit" form available in the skills room for specific details.
 - PLEASE NOTE: NAE's are not responsible for purchasing supplies or equipment, and if either are missing or not in working condition - this includes lack of hot/cold water in sinks – the testing event will be cancelled and the facility will be required to undergo a full audit before additional testing will resume.
- Ensure working fax machine with paper and toner with clearly posted fax instruction with fax phone number.
- Ensure that carpets/floors/walls are clean.
- Ensure that bathrooms are clean and functioning.
- Written room with seating/desks/tables for the appropriate number of candidates (each candidate 3 feet apart, facing the front of the room). A desk/table and chair at the front of the room for the NAE. Room clock. Chalk or whiteboard with writing implements.
- Skills room will have clearly labeled cabinets, closets and shelving indicating where supplies are stored. Beds 6 feet apart, made with clean linens. Waste Baskets and Linen Baskets with clean liners.
- Windows or glass partitions in exam rooms are covered and if present, all recording devices are turned off and covered.

Day of the Exam:

- Open the facility 45-60 minutes before testing to allow the NAE to enter and set up testing and lock the doors when the testing event is complete.
- Ensure that facility entrances and walkways are free of snow and ice or any other debris before the evaluator and candidates arrive and signage is clear.
- Provide a comfortable environment for testing with appropriate heat/cooling.
- Remove all trash and used linens from the skills room when testing is complete.
- Ensure a distraction free testing area is available for the evaluator and candidates and that no faculty administrators or instructors enter the area on testing day.

We do not currently have such strict rules/requirements and, if a testing service wanted to impose such requirements, we would have the freedom to negotiate these matters. SB 703 takes that option away.

Between the stringent and costly testing requirements which would be imposed on us, the one-size-fits-all approach to solving the problem of the language barrier in the Nursing Assistant field, and the lack of consideration for the will and expertise of those of us working in Nursing Assistant education, it is clear that SB 703 would work to the detriment of not only Nursing Assistant educators, but also prospective Nursing Assistants, short-staffed facilities, and those on the receiving end of care.

Please vote no on this ill-conceived bill.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Lyn Chase, RN, BS
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Happy Valley, Oregon