

RCW 18.88A.010 Legislative declaration. (1) The legislature takes special note of the contributions made by nursing assistants in health care facilities whose tasks are arduous and whose working conditions may be contributing to the high and often critical turnover among the principal cadre of health care workers who provide for the basic needs of patients. The legislature also recognizes the growing shortage of nurses as the proportion of the elderly population grows and as the acuity of patients in hospitals and nursing homes becomes generally more severe.

(2) The legislature finds and declares that:

(a) Occupational nursing assistants should have a formal system of educational and experiential qualifications leading to career mobility and advancement. The establishment of such a system should bring about a more stabilized workforce in health care facilities, as well as provide a valuable resource for recruitment into licensed nursing practice.

(b) The quality of patient care in health care facilities is dependent upon the competence of the personnel who staff their facilities. To assure the availability of trained personnel in health care facilities the legislature recognizes the need for training programs for nursing assistants.

(c) Certified home care aides and medical assistants are a valuable potential source of nursing assistants who will be needed to meet the care needs of the state's growing aging population. To assure continued opportunity for recruitment into licensed nursing practice and career advancement for certified home care aides and medical assistants, nursing assistant training programs should recognize the relevant training and experience obtained by these credentialed professionals. By taking advantage of the authority granted under the federal social security act to certify nursing assistants through a state-approved competency evaluation program as a federally recognized alternative to the state-approved training and competency evaluation program, the legislature intends to increase the potential for recruitment into licensed nursing practice while maintaining a single standard for competency evaluation of certified nursing assistants.

(d) The registration of nursing assistants and providing for voluntary certification of those who wish to seek higher levels of qualification is in the interest of the public health, safety, and welfare. [2010 c 169 s 1; 1991 c 16 s 1; 1989 c 300 s 3; 1988 c 267 s 1. Formerly RCW 18.52B.010.]

Conflict with federal requirements—2010 c 169: "If any part of this act is found by a federal agency to be in conflict with federal requirements, including requirements related to the medicare and medicaid programs under the federal social security act, that are a prescribed condition to the allocation of federal funds to the state, the conflicting part of this act is inoperative solely to the extent of the conflict and with respect to the agencies directly affected, and this finding does not affect the operation of the remainder of this act in its application to the agencies concerned. Rules adopted under this act must meet federal requirements, including requirements related to the medicare and medicaid programs under the federal social security act, that are a necessary condition to the receipt of federal funds by the state." [2010 c 169 s 13.]