

Washington State Department of Health
Washington State Board of Nursing

Notice of Adoption – Policy Statement

Title: Delayed Enforcement of the Nursing Assistant specialty curricula of the common curriculum in WAC 246-841A-440 | POL-01-25

Issuing Entity: Washington State Board of Nursing

Subject Matter: Establishes delayed enforcement of the Nursing Assistant specialty curricula in the common curriculum listed in WAC 246-841A-440

Effective Date: January 10, 2025

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Policy Statement

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Policy Statement Number:	POL-01-25
References:	Chapter 18.130 RCW and WAC 246-841A-440
Contact:	Catherine Woodard, Director of Discipline and WHPS Washington State Board of Nursing
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Email:	Catherine.Woodard@doh.wa.gov
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Approved By:	Washington State Board of Nursing

In order to provide Washington state nursing assistant training programs time to implement the requirements in the recently adopted nursing assistant training program core curriculum rule at WAC 246-841A-440(1)(c), the Washington State Board of Nursing (board) will delay enforcement of this rule through September 1, 2026. Nursing assistant training programs must continue to implement the remainder of the common curriculum requirements in rule under WAC 246-841A-440.

In 2023, the board adopted changes to WAC 246-841A-440, requiring that approved nursing assistant training programs implement a common curriculum as developed by the board. The requirement in WAC 246-841A-440(1)(c) to implement specialty curricula in mental health, developmental disabilities, and dementia was delayed by rule until September 1, 2025.

The board has since learned that implementation of the specialty curricula by this date will result in unanticipated impacts to nursing assistant training programs, including:

- There is a backlog of trainers waiting to obtain the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) certification to provide training in specialty curricula to nursing

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assistant trainees. It is unclear if sufficient certified trainers will be available to nursing assistant programs training in 2025.

- Nursing assistant programs will need to increase program costs to include the specialty curricula hours, costs which will at least partially pass on to trainees.
- Of the nursing assistant trainees currently in programs, approximately 38% will be entering acute care hospitals where the specialty curricula is not required.

Enforcing the addition of specialty curricula at this time would create an unnecessary barrier to licensing for nursing assistants, already in short supply in this state.

The board has initiated the rulemaking process to review WAC 246-841A-440(1)(c) and determine the best way to integrate this training into the profession. The board will delay enforcement of WAC 246-841A-440(1)(c) until September 1, 2026 during that process.