

NAB's Professional Practice Analysis Aligns Leadership Core Competencies Across Expanding Continuum of Care

Long term care supports and services and the stakeholders involved in that ecosystem are at a turning point. By 2030, approximately 72.1 million people 65 and older will live in the U.S., more than twice the number in 2000. As Americans live longer and in greater numbers, consumers are looking for more options and more reliable information about the variety of long term care supports and services. Although seniors represent the majority of the population served, it is important to recognize that long term care services are not exclusive to seniors but include all individuals receiving these services. !!!

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The Professional Practice Analysis is the most recent example of the NAB's responsiveness to stakeholder needs, contributing to consumer confidence about the consistency and quality of long term care services.

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In response to this trend, providers of long term care supports and services are working to create more living and lifecare choices along an expanding continuum of care. Also fueling the development of new options and services: legislative changes at the federal level that call for state Medicaid programs to fund home and community-based services, an emerging area within this expanding continuum of care. And the new healthcare law, The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, requires lines of services to coordinate care and offers provider incentives to keep consumers out of hospitals, prompting a potential increase in the use of home care or adult day care settings.

Add to this rapidly changing environment the 51 different practice standards established by each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia, which discourage long term care administrators from relocating to another job in a different state.

Finally, colleges and universities that educate long term care professionals seek uniform, quality degree programs, which have been difficult to develop because of the inconsistency of state and federal licensing requirements. Meaningful curricula to respond to and anticipate this broader scope of home and community-based long term care services options are required.

As these factors converge, they present two primary opportunities that will benefit all stakeholders:

- 1 aligning professional development of long term care administrators to position the profession and its future leaders to adapt to further growth and
- 2 developing a better career advancement path that will recruit and retain a high caliber of dedicated talent in the long term care field.

The National Association of Long Term Care Administrator Boards (NAB), the recognized authority for leadership core competencies in long term care, conducted a Professional Practice Analysis (PPA) study to capitalize on these opportunities to ensure the ongoing recruitment and retention of high performing long term care administrators.

National Association of Long Term Care Administrator Boards: A History of Leadership

When the federal government mandated the licensure of nursing home administrators more than 40 years ago, there was no accompanying national mandate for establishing practice standards for education, training and continuing education. As a result, each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia has a different practice standard, which complicates an already complex system and makes it difficult to attract and prepare leaders in long term care administration. NAB established and periodically updates core competencies for nursing home administrators and a national examination program, which each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia adopted. More than 20 years later, NAB again assumed a leadership role when it introduced core competencies for assisted living administrators, established an accreditation program for degree programs in long term care administration and created standards and an approval process for continuing education programs. We now have an opportunity to create a new vision to transform the mandates on Nursing Home Administrators (NHA) to a direction of leadership strength for Residential Care/Assisted Living (RC/AL) and other lines of support and services through NAB's enhanced and improved credentialing process.

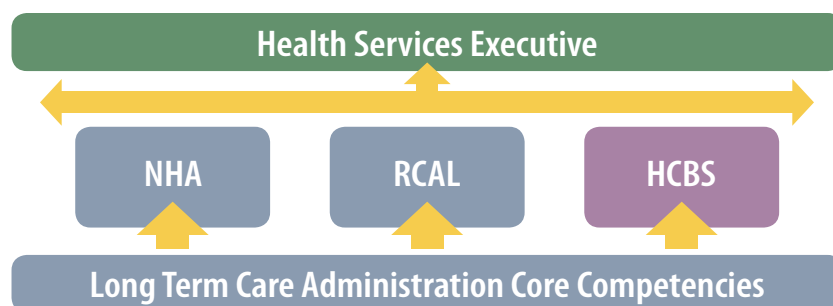
Fast forward to the needs of today's consumers, providers, educators and NAB members, and it becomes clear why NAB is leading the effort to conduct a PPA to create new and updated credentials for executives responsible for multiple lines of service within the long term care continuum. Additionally, NAB seeks to standardize the long term care administrator license, enabling administrators to work in any state with recognition and acceptance of a broad-based license meeting state-specific licensure requirements.

Today, at this pivotal point in the evolution of long term care, NAB is exploring a new vision for the competencies required of executives in the field. Based on recommendations developed in partnership with sponsors and participants of the National Emerging Leadership Summit, NAB's PPA will articulate both broad and specific knowledge related to home and community-based services, assisted living, hospice, home care, adult day care, independent living and skilled nursing care. The PPA analyzes the knowledge tasks and skills an administrator must possess both to enter the profession and to demonstrate competency to advance throughout his career. Outcome data will be the basis for new curricula in college and university degree programs, training programs, competency measures and continuing competencies.

In addition, to streamline licensure and recognize students who achieve a high level of education and training, NAB seeks to develop a nationally recognized and voluntary Health Services Executive License (HSEL) to recognize administrators and provide the mobility for long term care professionals to work in different states. Taking the process one step further, NAB will work with member state boards and agencies to accept this HSEL as meeting state licensing and/or certification requirements.

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EXPLORING A NEW VISION FOR THE PROFESSION



Clearly the trend is for more training and not less as appears to be the case in SLA supervision

A steering committee and task force comprised of health services executives from across the long term care line of services provided oversight of NAB's two-phase, 16-month study.

Clearly, one of the key components of this evolving long term care ecosystem is the class of professionals tasked with managing multiple lines of services (including nursing home, assisted living, home and community-based services). What skills and education will these administrators require? What is the best way to train, recruit and develop a career path for a new generation of managers and executives in the long term care field? And what lessons be learned from the development of earlier long term care models?

The PPA identifies the domains of practice, tasks performed, and knowledge and skills required of individuals responsible for leadership in organizations that provide long term care supports and services. It validates the job descriptions of current administrators (and the emerging role of the home and community-based services administrator) and explores the expanding role of the health services executive. Finally, outcomes will provide a foundation for the development of leadership models to share with similar organizations and partners in the international arena.

A practice analysis is a structured description of a profession's practice. This best practices approach is an initial step in a broader process of identifying the need for and form(s) of a particular credential. The results lead to a description of practice that serves as a basis for exam content consistent with practical applications. A steering committee and task force comprised of health services executives from across the long term care line of services provided oversight of NAB's two-phase, 16-month study.

Phase One involved subject matter experts (SMEs) who developed and revised the practice description across multiple lines of service. These SMEs were a representative group of practitioners, employers/supervisors, educators, regulators and members of professional associations. Focus groups and independent reviews of the practice descriptions rounded out Phase One activities.

In Phase Two, both a pilot survey and large-scale survey of practitioners validated the practice description. Throughout the process, extensive quantitative and qualitative analyses were conducted along with outlining examination specifications for current and potential credentials. Profiles of practice, examination specifications and test content were identified, and these facets will benefit a wide range of stakeholder groups (associations, academics, regulators, foundations, as well as thought leaders and select international constituencies).

Five primary domains were identified:

- 1 Customer Care, Supports, and Services
- 2 Human Resources
- 3 Finance
- 4 Environment
- 5 Management and Leadership

Within each domain is a detailed list of knowledge, tasks and skills. This list is the foundation for academic programs, administrator-in-training programs, examinations and continuing education programs.

Professional Practice Analysis: Goals & Stakeholder Benefits

Since its founding, NAB has helped guide and lead the profession of long term care administration. The PPA creates a basis for competency-based credentials that will keep pace with the dynamic long term care environment. Addressing the needs of existing programs like the NHA and the RC/AL exam, the PPA provides a framework for new credentials that focus on the particular needs and/or issues that help drive the success (and the key areas of interest) of the primary stakeholder groups involved:

GROUP	AREAS OF INTEREST
PRACTITIONERS:	Career progression, professional image, jurisdictional mobility
REGULATORS:	Efficient model for professions of today (and tomorrow); enhanced public protection
EMPLOYERS:	Identifying, developing and retaining executive leadership
EDUCATORS:	Articulating a basis for practice standards against which curricula will be evaluated and proved
NAB:	Catalyzing change and charting a path to enhance the image of the long term care profession on the national and international stage

Conclusion

To be successful and serve the needs of all stakeholders, this evolving long term care ecosystem demands the right educational curricula, training and credentialing programs to recruit, retain and develop high-caliber career professionals in the long term care field. The PPA is the latest example of how NAB continues to anticipate and respond to stakeholder needs and more specifically, contribute to consumer confidence regarding the consistency and quality of long term care services.

