

Nursing Assistant Certification

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All nursing assistants must be certified in order to work. If there are any nursing assistants working in your facility who are not certified, they must **immediately apply for certification.**

The CNA certification is the basic level of certification. Any other certifications are in addition to the CNA certification. The CNA certification must be completed first or in conjunction with any additional certification.

The following are **additional certifications** that are specific to Federal law or State regulation. The additional certification will appear on the CNA certification card.

- **Geriatric Nursing Assistant (GNA)** – has passed the Geriatric Nursing Assistant examination and meets Federal requirements – **required** for all nursing assistants working in licensed comprehensive care facilities.
- **Home Health Aide (HHA)** – meets training requirements of Federal law – **required** to work in licensed home health agencies. Home health agencies provide verification that the individual meets the federal requirements.
- **Certified Medicine Aide (CMA)** – meets state requirements – **required** to administer medications in a licensed comprehensive care facility. Only a GNA with one year of experience and who has completed an approved 60-hour medicine aide course taught in a community college are eligible to become a CMA.
- Home Health Aides and Geriatric Nursing Assistants are **not** interchangeable.
- **Dialysis Technician** – Meets training requirements of the state – **required** to work in dialyses units in Maryland. [Click here for more information on becoming a Dialysis Technician.](#)

GNA Registry

Federal law requires that a state maintain a GNA registry listing the status of GNA certification and [those who have had disciplinary action taken against them.](#)

The Board has a combined CNA certification database with the GNA registry. Information regarding GNA certification will be found on the [Board's license verification](#) either via the web or the verification phone line (410-585-1994). There is no cost for the registry. Renewals of certification are now handled by the Board.

GNA Testing Issues

Examinations are offered through the Susquehanna Red Cross (The Maryland Geriatric Nursing Assistant Testing Service (MDGNATS)). The Susquehanna Red Cross will tell the Board who passes the examination. Those passing the examination will be given GNA certification. A new certificate will not be issued with the GNA initials until the next regular renewal. The GNA certification will appear on the online verification at the Board's web site or the verification phone line.

1. MDGNATS offered by the Susquehanna Red Cross may be contacted directly to:
 - Obtain the Maryland Geriatric Nursing Assistant Candidate Handbook which explains the written and clinical testing process, including the 21 skills tested in Maryland;
 - Register for the examination. The candidate who registers before the 15th of the month shall be scheduled for the first available date prior to the end of the following month. For example, if the candidate submits an application by 9/13/10, the candidate would be scheduled by the first available date in October 2010. For the candidate who submits the application on 9/22/10, the candidate would be scheduled for the first available date in November 2010.
 - Cancel a scheduled test session.
 - Arranged special accommodations; and
 - Change the candidate's current address or name prior to testing.

MDGNATS may be reached by contacting 866-257-6470 or faxing (866) 257-6506.

2. CNA training programs **must** be approved by the Board of Nursing **prior to** accepting students. Students will not be permitted CNA certification if they complete a program that has not been approved by the Board and will not be eligible to take the GNA examination. A list of Board approved Nursing Assistant training programs is available on the

Board's web page. Click here for information on how to become an approved CNA and or dialysis technician training program.

Training programs, which have not been approved by the Board of Nursing, **must immediately cease and desist** training candidates. The training program must submit all materials specified in the Regulations Governing Nursing Assistant Training Programs, COMAR 10.39.02. Interested parties may contact the Board at (410) 585-1913.

Renewal of CNA Certification

CNA certification is generally for a 2-year period following the date of the first renewal. The CNA certificate expires on the 28th day of the individual's birth month in an odd or even year. If the individual is born in an odd year the certificate will expire in an odd year. If the individual is born in an even year the individual will expire in an even year. Costs for renewal is \$40 for the 2-year period.

The expiration date of certification for GNAs, Medicine Aides, and Home Health Aides matches the CNA expiration date. There is no charge for the GNA, Medicine Aide or Home Health Aide certification.

GNA Certification

The Board of Nursing is responsible for processing GNA certification and renewals, not the testing service. GNA certification will be indicated on the CNA certification. There is no cost for GNA certification or renewal if the individual meets the requirements for GNA certification. GNA certification will expire at the same time as CNA certification