



The Hospital + Healthsystem
Association of Pennsylvania

Leading for Better Health

March 21, 2024

The Honorable Dan Frankel
Chair, House Health Committee
The Pennsylvania House of Representatives
P.O. Box 202023
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2023

The Honorable Kathy L. Rapp
Minority Chair, House Health Committee
The Pennsylvania House of Representatives
P.O. Box 202065
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2065

Dear Chairman Frankel, Chairwoman Rapp, and Members of the House Health Committee:

On behalf of more than 230 members statewide, The Hospital and Healthsystem Association of Pennsylvania (HAP) writes to support Senate Bill 668, PN 1180, as passed by the Pennsylvania Senate. Sponsored by Senator Judy Ward, this bill would add a position of 'Certified Medication Aide' to the Health Care Facilities Act.

SB 668 would—in limited instances and specific settings—allow Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA) who work in skilled nursing settings to become Certified Medication Aides. The Pennsylvania Department of Health would establish medication aide training, which would include a minimum of eight hours of classroom instruction. Certification must be renewed every two years.

Pennsylvania, and the nation, is in a well-documented health care workforce crisis. The shortage is widespread and often felt most acutely in rural areas. A recent HAP report showed that the statewide average vacancy rate for nursing support staff is 19 percent. In rural Pennsylvania communities, the rate jumps to 28 percent. SB 668 is a small, yet meaningful, step to address the crisis.

Through Senate Bill 668, CNAs who complete the training could perform some medication administration duties, allowing licensed nurses to focus more on tasks that require their specific expertise. Expanding the pool of trained personnel enables health care providers to better meet patient needs. The bill would allow those CNAs to contribute more directly to patient care and can help alleviate the strain on other professionals, such as registered nurses or licensed practical nurses, who are in short supply.

HAP values initiatives that engage existing workers in education and training activities. We believe that strengthening health care career pathways, as this proposal does, empowers Pennsylvanians in their professional growth. Those who engage in career progression are more likely to remain in their fields, helping to reduce turnover and mitigate some effects of the workforce crisis.

On behalf of the hospital community, we respectfully ask that you please vote yes on Senate Bill 668. Thank you for all the ways you support your constituents' health and safety. We stand ready to assist you. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at HTyler@HAPonline.org or (717) 433-1997.

Sincerely,

Heather Tyler
Vice President, State Legislative Advocacy

c: The Honorable Judy Ward