

WORKFORCE HIGHLIGHT



**Peer-to-peer sharing of innovation
& lessons learned**

CNA Medication Aides

*Denali Center, Fairbanks
Alaska Pioneer Homes, Statewide*

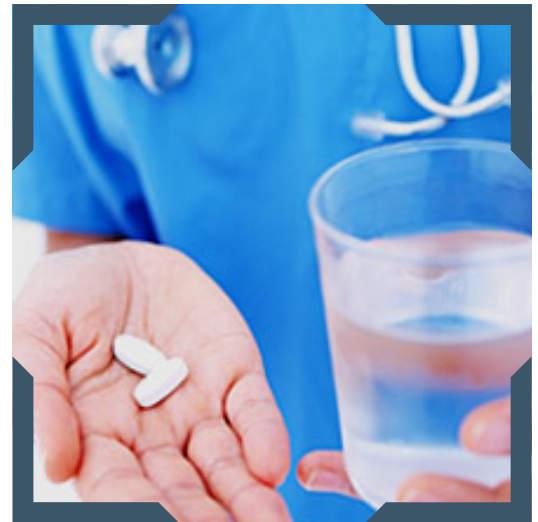
Program Overview

The Denali Center in Fairbanks and the Alaska Pioneer Homes provide Board of Nursing (BON) approved training in medication administration for their CNAs, which is of great benefit to both nursing staff and residents in these long-term care facilities.

With the use of medication aides, RNs can perform higher-level nursing duties, and there has been less need to employ traveling nurses. Residents are better served by receiving medications on an individualized schedule. The practice is also a benefit to the CNAs themselves, as it is a next step on their career ladder and has proven helpful for staff retention.

Medication Aides only work with stable patients receiving routine medications.

AHHA thanks Tina Rein, Administrator of the Denali Center, and Heidi Hamilton, Director of the Alaska Pioneer Homes, for sharing the following information about training and using medication aides and for their willingness to be contacted by others with questions or concerns about doing the same at their sites.



"I feel this is a very exciting time for CNAs' potential for professional growth and for improvement in person centered care for residents."

Heidi Hamilton
Division Director, Alaska Pioneer Homes

Links:

[Alaska Pioneer Homes](#)
[Denali Center](#)
[Alaska Board of Nursing](#)

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About CNA Medication Aides

Training Medication Aides

Each site structures their development of medication aides differently, but both use the same training course which was originally developed by the Alaska Pioneer Homes. The material is posted on the [BON website under Increasing Scope of Practice/Duties](#), along with course requirements and other helpful information.

At the Pioneer Homes, all CNAs as well as Assisted Living Aides are trained in medication administration after their initial orientation. Trainees review a PowerPoint independently, then attend a class with an RN to go over the material, practice with medical packaging and documentation, and have their questions answered.

Following the class, trainees spend time shadowing nurses while medications are being administered and after some time they begin passing meds under the supervision of a nurse who does a check-off of the trainee's skills. When the nurse determines that the trainee is ready, the aide is able to administer medications to residents in their care. As required by the BON, the skills check-off is repeated every quarter.

At the Denali Center, CNAs are offered medication aide training after 6 months of employment. The facility's Nurse Educator spends between 8 to 16 hours in class with trainees which is followed by at minimum 80 hours of clinical time before CNAs are signed off to administer medication.

Medication Course and BON Regulations

The medication administration course posted on the BON website (link provided above) can be modified or adjusted to meet a facility's needs but then would need to be reviewed by the BON for approval before administering.

It is of utmost importance to become familiar with [Alaska Administrative Code 12 AAC 44.950 – 12 AAC 44.970](#) regarding standards for delegation of nursing duties, delegation of the administration of medication, and nursing duties that may not be delegated when planning to train and make use of medication aides, paying particular attention to 12 AAC 44.965.

Program Outcomes

The Alaska Pioneer Homes have been using medication aides in their assisted living homes for many years, and Heidi Hamilton, Director of Alaska Pioneer Homes, is convinced that having them is the best thing for residents, CNAs, and nurses.

The Denali Center has been using them since 2020, and Tina Rein, Administrator at the Denali Center, says that medication aides have allowed the facility to address the 30% vacancy rate in their licensed staff and continue to admit and serve the community.

Formerly each of the Center's "neighborhoods" of 24 beds were staffed with 2 licensed RNs, 3 CNAs and 1 bath aide. Now, with CNAs trained to administer medications, they have 1 licensed nurse, 1 medication aide, 3 CNAs and a bath aide. The RN's focus is on assessments, care planning, and treatment. Nursing staff report that they have "more time to be a nurse" and that they like this new model of care.