

Comparison of CNA, HHA and PCA Health Professions in California

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Definitions by State of California and/or common usage:

"Home Health Aide" means an aide who has successfully completed a state-approved training program, is employed by a home health agency or hospice program, and provides personal care services in the patient's home working independently but under the supervision of an RN through hospice or home health agency.

"Certified nurse assistant" means any person who holds himself or herself out as a certified nurse assistant and who, for compensation, performs basic patient care services directed at the safety, comfort, personal hygiene, and protection of patients, and is certified as having completed the requirements outlined by the State of California. These services shall not include any services which may only be performed by a licensed person and otherwise shall be performed under the supervision of a registered nurse, or a licensed vocational nurse.

Personal Care Aide – (variously known as caregiver, personal care attendant, patient care assistant, personal support worker and home care aide) is a paid, employed person who helps persons who are disabled or chronically ill with their activities of daily living (ADLs) whether within the home, outside the home, or both. While there is no single definition or professional title for PCAs, in general they may be distinguished as persons who carry out their work as an employee in contrast to relatives, friends and others who are unpaid for their caregiving activities. Personal Care Aides most often help with daily activities, such as helping the individual bathe, eat, prepare meals and maintain their home. Personal Care Aides may also provide medication reminders, assist with transportation to appointments and assist with shopping.

	Certified Nursing Assistant	Home Health Aide	Personal Care Aide (aka Personal Care Assistant, Direct Care Worker)
Duties	Observe and chart patient conditions; measure vital statistics and weight and height; Assist patients with transport to exams and programs within the facility; Assist with ADLs (eating, bathing,	Help administer medication; With training can change dressings and operate home medical equipment; Maintain patient records; Perform clinical duties including taking	Direct patient in ways to live independently; Assist with eating including purchase, preparation and serving of meals; Home maintenance including cleaning patient's quarters, doing laundry and

	grooming, and moving around).	vital signs, charting weight and height; Provide rehabilitative care (physical therapy routines) and lifestyle counseling; Direct patients in exercises and ways to live independently; Assist with eating including purchase, preparation and serving of meals; home maintenance including cleaning patient's quarters, doing laundry and buying supplies needed; Assist with bathing and grooming; assist with ambulation – moving around.	buying supplies needed; Assist with bathing and grooming; assist with ambulation – moving around; Provide medication reminders; Assist with errands and appointments.
Licensing/Certification Requirements	Must complete 150 hours of training; Pass state competency exam administered in English; Criminal background check; CE required for recertification.	Must have prior certification as CNA or must complete 120 hour course. No separate state competency exam but must pass the course that has been approved for the institution. Criminal background check; CE required for recertification.	No licensing requirements. If want to be approved by state to be paid from IHSS funds, must undergo criminal background check.
Occupational Setting	Nursing Home or Skilled care facility	Home Settings, private households;	Home settings – private households

		residential care facility	and assisted living facilities
Required Supervision	Direct supervision of RN	Visits client independently under supervision of RN/case manager; part of team	Employed by Non-medical Healthcare agency or works directly for consumer
Training Requirements	Minimum of 150 hours of training; Training must be a combination of clinical and theory and trainer must be approved by State of California.	<p>If already certified as CNA, need additional 40 hour training that includes half classroom and half clinical.</p> <p>If take the 120 hour course, clinical hours required include 45 hours of personal service, 11 hours of nutrition, 5 hours of cleaning and care tasks in home)</p>	No required state or federal required training program. Recommended 100 hour PCA program
Required Continuing Education	<p>Certified for 2 years: must have 48 hours of in-service training/CEUs in the two years. 24 hours may be online, the rest hands-on*</p> <p>(Note: 26 hours of HHA training counts as CNA CEU)</p>	Must obtain 24 hours of CE in two year certification period with at least 12 hours completed in each year.	No official training required so no CE required