

Bill Summary

Certified Nursing Assistants

Licensing Requirements & Administrative Updates

SB 999/HB 1125 was signed into law in 2024 and was slated to go into effect Oct. 1, 2025. However, during the 2025 legislative session, MHA requested an amendment to delay the implementation of the law to allow more time to reconcile concerns from the field. The law will now go into effect April 1, 2026. The law consolidates the Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) and Geriatric Nursing Assistant (GNA) certifications to allow individuals to work across health care settings with one certification. By March 31, 2026, the Maryland Board of Nursing (BON) will issue only CNA certifications.

Key Takeaways

The bill outlines a phased approach to minimize disruption to the workforce. The Board will create temporary designations—CNA I and CNA II—to differentiate who passed the national exam and can work in long-term care.

- CNA I: certified as a GNA by March 31, 2026 and meets requirements set by the Board and under federal law to practice in any setting
- CNA II: certified as a CNA by March 31, 2026 and is not authorized to practice in a long-term care facility. These individuals will continue to not be eligible to practice in a long-term care facility.

Removes the requirement that nursing students must have a CNA certification to perform nursing assistant tasks. The Maryland Board of Nursing will promulgate regulations to determine what education and skills are required to allow a nursing student to qualify to work in this capacity.

MHA is working with the Board of Nursing and MHA's Acute Care CNA work group to develop a plan for ensuring acute care CNA training programs' instructors do not need long-term care experience, and graduates from the programs are eligible to sit for the national exam.

What's Next?

The BON will promulgate regulations and begin preparing for the consolidation:

- Jan. 1, 2026: Deadline for the BON to notify individuals with CNA and GNA certifications of the new requirements and issue updated regulations
- March 31, 2026: Deadline to grandfather current CNAs and GNAs
 - CNA I = Equivalent to GNA, CMA, or CNA who passed the national exam
 - CNA II = CNA who has not passed the national exam
- April 1, 2026: BON will begin issuing one CNA certification

What You Can Do

Inform nursing and human resource leaders, review job descriptions and qualifications. Provide information to CNA program instructors and/or partners. Connect with local nursing schools to encourage students to consider working as a nursing assistant to gain experience.