

Alaska State Legislature

Senator Cathy Giessel
Senate Majority Leader
Senate District E
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Sponsor Statement

Senate Bill 235

CNA Training:

"An Act relating to certified nurse aide training; and providing for an effective date."

Alaska's rate of dementia is growing rapidly, and with that comes an increasing need for skilled caregivers who can provide compassionate and effective care for those living with cognitive decline.

Alaska has made some improvements by mandating some foundational dementia education in programs for Certified Nurse Assistants (CNAs) since August 2023. However, to bolster CNA workforce readiness, and to enhance the quality of care provided, the curriculum must be further refined to include comprehensive training on dementia signs and symptoms, along with person-centered care principles.

Senate Bill 235 does not extend the duration of training programs but instead focuses on specifying essential content standards. With quality training standards, CNAs can not only fulfill essential care duties but are also able to observe and identify early signs of dementia progression, ensuring timely interventions and personalized care plans. By integrating principles of person-centered care, such as understanding the individual's abilities and needs, promoting optimal functioning and quality of life, and respecting the individual's choices and dignity, we can ensure that Alaska's certified nurse aides are equipped with the necessary skills to meet the unique challenges of dementia care.

By prioritizing dementia education and person-centered care principles in nurse aide training through SB 235, Alaska affirms its commitment to enhancing the quality of health care for Alaskans. This bill represents a crucial step towards achieving that goal and ensuring that our caregivers are prepared to meet the increasing number of patients with dementia.