

GENERAL INFORMATION ON ADVANCED UNLICENSED ASSISTANTS IN ACUTE HEALTH-CARE SETTINGS

In 1996, legislation was passed for the Oklahoma Board of Nursing to regulate Advanced Unlicensed Assistants (AUAs) in acute health care settings in Oklahoma.

An Advanced Unlicensed Assistant (AUA):

- Performs in an assistive role to licensed nurses in acute care settings.
- Has completed a 200-hour training program that is approved by the Oklahoma Board of Nursing, or equivalent training.
- Is certified by the Board, after successful completion of a written and a skills examination.
- Can perform clinical skills included on an *Approved Skills List for Performance by Board-certified AUAs*, if the skill is included in the employee's job description; and a licensed nurse has made an assessment and determined that it is safe to delegate the task to the AUA.
- Must renew his/her certification every two years, just as RNs and LPNs renew their professional licenses.
- May have different titles in different facilities. Titles used may include Patient Care Technician, Patient Care Associate, or Care Team Associate. Whatever the title, the AUA should also wear an insignia or badge identifying the AUA certification issued by the Board.
 - If an unlicensed assistant in the acute care facility is performing skills included on the Approved Skills List <http://nursing.ok.gov/aua5.pdf> designated for Advanced Unlicensed Assistants only, that individual must be certified as an Advanced Unlicensed Assistant.

The training program for AUAs is designed to build on basic skills traditionally performed by nursing assistants. Selected advanced skills, legal and ethical aspects of health care and appropriate personal behaviors are presented in a format combining classroom lecture/discussion, demonstration/practice lab and clinical application. Graduates of an AUA training program are prepared to safely perform technical skills that are included on an approved skills list.

Once the individual has completed the training, he/she applies for certification. The Board ensures that all application requirements have been met, approves the application, and notifies the applicant. The applicant then schedules an appointment to take the written examination and skills examination at an approved test site. A testing service grades the examination and notifies the Board of the results. If the candidate is successful, the Board will then issue the certification.

There is confusion among nurses about the difference between a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) and an Advanced Unlicensed Assistant (AUA). In Oklahoma, certification as a nursing assistant is required for those who work in long-term care facilities. The training, certification, and regulation of CNAs is through the Oklahoma State Department of Health. Their training includes basic nursing assistant skills involving hygiene, mobility, and nutrition, among others. For questions about the role of CNAs, please call the Nurse Aide Registry at the Oklahoma State Department of Health, (405) 271-4085. In Oklahoma, certification as a CNA is not required for nursing assistants who work in acute care facilities.

If you have questions about the role of the AUA, please feel free to call the Board office at (405) 962-1800. The Associate Director for Nursing Practice is available to answer practice questions about the utilization of AUAs in acute-care facilities. The Licensing Manager can answer questions regarding educational training of the AUA and the certification process.