

PERFORMANCE AUDIT

Work in progress: Audit description

I-1163: Testing and Certification Barriers for Home Care Aides

Initiative 1163 requires many long-term care workers to become certified to provide in-home care to the elderly and people with disabilities. The ultimate goal of training and certification is to improve the quality of care these vulnerable populations receive and allow people who need care the option to continue living at home. The Department of Health (DOH) issues this certification after caregivers complete 75 hours of training, submit an application for certification, and successfully pass both knowledge and skills tests.

DOH oversees certification of long-term care workers, and contracts with a private testing company to organize and administer the test at sites available across the state. Care workers must become certified within specific time frames. However, in March 2020, the state suspended training and testing deadlines by emergency order due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Long-term care workers have described many challenges with the testing process:

- Problems scheduling the tests, which take place at a different time and location than their training
- Requirements to take the test in person, as the skills portion cannot be completed remotely
- Getting to the test site (in some parts of the state)

Other challenges around the certification process have included long delays becoming certified even after passing the tests and uncertainty about whom to contact with questions. A 2016 performance audit found that more than half of survey respondents who dropped out due to a barrier said they experienced a problem with the exam. Inefficiencies in this process have the potential to worsen the current workforce shortage in the state.

Preliminary scope and objectives

Initiative 1163 requires regular performance audits of the state's long-term in-home care program. This audit, our seventh of the program, will examine DOH's process to test and certify home care aides to find out where candidates encounter barriers and experience delays. The audit seeks to answer the following question:

- How can DOH reduce testing and certification barriers for home care aides?



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