

Thursday, February 12, 2004

Testimony before the House Health & Human Services Committee on HB 2716 relating to the standards established for licensure; particularly the revision of the 480-hour training program and the addition of training for preceptors.

Chairman Morrison, Vice-Chair Long-Mast, Members of the Committee:

I am Dawn Veh, Vice President of Health Services for Wesley Towers, Hutchinson. I am a facilitator for a team of administrators and organizations that have come together to look at revisions to the 480-hour practicum for administrators-in-training for adult care homes and are in the process of developing a training process for the preceptors who are actually training the AIT's. Members of this team represent a diverse assemblage of persons interested in providing a curriculum to AIT's that will help them be successful in leading their facility teams and that will provide a long-term professional relationship for them while ensuring quality care for our seniors. Members of the team represent Kansas Health Care Association, Kansas Association of Homes & Services for the Aging, Kansas Adult Care Executives, American College of Health Care Administrators, Kansas Advocates for Better Care, and colleges within the state that offer the program.

Our main goal is to create training for the long-term care administrator that will lead to a customer-focused outcome. This can only be done through a complete training process that will train the trainer and will educate the trainee in a way that will help them to be successful. This success can lead to a consistent quality of care for all Kansas seniors.

Our interest and support of these changes come from a variety of directions:

An increasing decline in the number of licensed administrators in Kansas – the number has declined by more than 50 each of the last two years; a trend that mirrors national statistics.

Advancements in the field of long-term care; especially issues such as culture change and the increasing care needs of our frail elders.

A subcommittee of the Board of Adult Care Home Administrators recommended that the AIT program be reviewed back in 2000.

Kansas Adult Care Executives, as the primary organization for licensed administrators in Kansas, had already initiated a team to develop a preceptor training and to revise the 480-hour practicum.

Progressive administrators, including Monte Coffman of Windsor Place in Coffeyville, had asked for changes in the curriculum based on their own experiences.

Comments from AIT's in a questionnaire distributed by Health Occupations Credentialing in 2001.

Several members of our team attended the BACHA meeting in September of last year and were told that the Board would review a proposal for revision as long as it was based on the Core of Knowledge per federal regulations.

The revisions we will be proposing for the 480-hour practicum will be based on the National Association of Boards of Examiners' Domains of Practice for the Long-Term Care Administrator which are updated every 5 years. (NAB develops the federal test for adult care home administrators.) The number of hours is not changed; only the content of the practicum. We have reviewed the Domains of Practice and find them to be very comprehensive and include all topics addressed in the Core of Knowledge established in 1972. The Kansas administrators have a reputation for being leading edge, and by following these Domains of Practice that are updated on a regular basis we will be able to remain in the forefront of our residents' care needs.

The preceptor training that we will be proposing to add will be an initial ten-hour course, and then an 8-hour update every 5 years. We feel that by adding this training we can add some consistency to the knowledge base of our administrators. Also, many people do not feel competent to be a teacher without having an outline given to them; this would save them time in trying to develop their own and can help them feel more comfortable with the process knowing that the program is thorough. Administrators are required to have 50 hours of continuing education every two years and these hours would count toward the already required hours. In completing the update every 5 years the preceptor can be updated on any changes to the Domains of Practice that have occurred during that time, and can gain knowledge regarding any other events that are changing the face of our professional field.

We feel the declining number of licensed administrators in the State of Kansas is nearing crisis levels. Action is needed immediately to stem the tide of administrators leaving the field and to help those staying in the field have the greatest chance of success. The care of our Kansas seniors hangs in the balance as we try to get a handle on this current situation.

Our team wants to provide a thorough basic training to help ensure the success/survival of those entering the field of long-term care administration, as well as retaining the licensed administrators already in place. Those of us working on this project truly have a passion for the work we do and want to make sure the care of our residents is carried on.

Thank you for your time.