

Dear Nurse Aide Training Program Instructor or Coordinator:

In 2010, Prometric completed its National Nurse Aide Job Analysis Study which included a survey of nurse aides working in nursing homes and their supervisors. Survey respondents, representing 31 states and the District of Columbia, included 231 nurse aides and 243 nurses employed in the nursing home setting. While the Nurse Aide Competency Exam's content is driven by federal regulations, this survey is an important step in validating the content and developing the test specifications for the knowledge (written/oral) test and clinical skills test.

In October 2010, Prometric also conducted a four-day National Nurse Aide Examination Council Meeting to review and update the clinical skills test. Participants, including 12 instructors from nursing home and community-based nurse aide training programs, 3 CNAs, and 4 Senior Nurse Aide Evaluators, worked to update the criteria (checkpoints) for evaluating each skill. The meeting was conducted in a nursing lab so that each skill could be performed and rated to ensure the checkpoints appropriately evaluated important aspects of each skill. The participants also reviewed the National Nurse Aide Job Analysis Study to make decisions about skills appropriate for inclusion in the performance-based Clinical Skills Test.

The purpose of this letter is to advise instructors about updates in the Clinical Skills and Knowledge (Written/Oral) Tests that will be implemented in 2011 and 2012. Information is provided later in this correspondence about web conferences that Prometric is conducting to provide a more extensive overview for instructors, and also provide a forum where questions can be asked about the updates.

### **Clinical Skills Test**

The updates in the Clinical Skills Test are currently targeted for implementation around September 2011. Training programs should periodically check their state's web page on Prometric's nurse aide website at [www.prometric.com/nurseaide](http://www.prometric.com/nurseaide) for announcements about the exact implementation date; updated Skills Checklists will be posted on the website by June 2011. Skills testing will continue to be based on the current set of skills until the implementation date.

When the committee reviews skills for content in the test, consideration is given for the frequency in which any skill is performed by nurse aides in the daily care of residents and whether the skill can be tested in a standardized, fair and reasonable manner. Two skills that are currently tested are being removed from the test when the updated tests are implemented: measuring and recording of blood pressure (not tested in all states) and measuring and recording of weight. The reason these skills are being removed is related to the increased use of digital devices for their measurements and an inability to test the skill in a standardized manner when digital equipment is used.

Prometric reminds instructors that excluding these skills from the Clinical Skills Test does not mean that these skills or content about these skills are removed from nurse aide training curricula. Training programs are required to follow their state's specific curriculum requirements.

When a skill is tested, a scenario is developed to provide a context to capture important aspects of the performance of that skill, and this scenario is also used to develop the appropriate checkpoints. For example, while an instructor teaches students about feeding residents positioned in a bed, chair or recliner, when the skill is tested, it will focus on feeding a resident who is positioned in a specific way. For example, while the scenario for feeding a resident is being revised to test with the resident sitting in a chair, instructors are still responsible for teaching feeding of residents positioned in other ways. During testing, instructions given to the candidate along with how the resident and resident area are setup for the skill will provide information for what is expected of the candidate for performance of each skill.

It is important that instructors understand that the checkpoints are developed to evaluate candidates' performances of a skill based on the context of a scenario. The skills and their checkpoints are not written as procedures and should not be used to teach students how to perform skills. Efforts are made to write

checkpoints to allow for variances in how skills might be performed. For example, there are several ways to assist a resident to a sitting position at the edge of the bed; the related checkpoint is not written to expect only one specific way. The purpose of the test is to establish that candidates who pass have demonstrated standards of minimal competency and thus the checkpoints capture safe practice but not necessarily all best practices. Procedures for skills often include more detail than may be included in the checkpoints, and a candidate doing more than is in the checkpoints is not counted against the candidate who is performing a skill in the context of the scenario/instructions.

Below are highlights of some changes in the scenarios for the testing of different skills that will change when the updated Clinical Skills Tests are implemented:

- **Handwashing:** The time evaluated for the cleansing/friction aspect of handwashing is increasing to 20 seconds for compliance with CDC's current standards. Handwashing will remain an unprompted skill in the Clinical Skills Test, meaning candidates are not given instructions to wash their hands. Handwashing technique is evaluated at the beginning of the Clinical Skills Test when candidates begin to perform their first skill.
- **Range of Motion:** Range of Motion (ROM) will still be tested as passive ROM; however, instructions will now direct candidates to the specific joints to be exercised and the specific exercises for those joints. Currently, ROM is tested in two different skills but is changing to be tested in three different ROM skills: (1) elbow and wrist; (2) shoulder; and, (3) hip, knee and ankle.
- **Feeding:** The feeding skill will now be evaluated with the candidate feeding a resident who is sitting at an overbed table instead of lying in bed. The updated checkpoints evaluate that the candidate demonstrates ensuring resident is sitting in proper alignment-posture for feeding and that the candidate also sits at eye level to feed.
- **Partial Bed Bath:** The instructions given to the candidate will direct the candidate to wash only one side of the body (for testing purposes). This change is based on recognition that what is evaluated can be accomplished by viewing bathing on just one side.
- **Measure and Record Pulse and Respirations:** This skill has been modified to separate the measuring of the pulse and the measuring of respirations into their own distinct skills.
- **Dressing:** For purposes of standardization, the testing of the dressing skill will be done exclusively on a mannequin.
- **Indirect Care:** This skill includes checkpoints to evaluate behaviors common to every skill performed related to Standard Precautions/infection control measures and promoting resident rights, comfort and safety. Candidates are not given instructions to perform this skill, as they are demonstrated by candidates throughout the performance of any skill they are performing. The update to Indirect Care is to encompass a person-centered orientation. For example, a new checkpoint has been added, "Ask resident about preferences during care" and the comfort related checkpoint revised to, "Ask resident about comfort or needs during or before completing care."

### **Knowledge Test (Written or Oral)**

The updates in the content of the knowledge test are very minor. The test remains a 90 minute, 60 question test, with 50 scored questions and 10 pretest questions. The pretest questions, which are not scored, are in the test for the purpose of collecting data on their statistical performance. The targeted timeframe for implementation of the updated Knowledge (Written/Oral) Tests is mid- to late 2012. Training programs should periodically check their state's web page on Prometric's nurse aide website at [www.prometric.com/nurseaide](http://www.prometric.com/nurseaide) for announcements about the exact implementation date. The updated content outline for the Knowledge Tests will be posted on the website in early 2012.

Highlights of the changes are:

- The number of questions in **Domain II Promotion of Safety** is increasing from 8 to 9 questions, while **Domain V Providing Specialized Care for Residents with Changes in Health** is decreasing from 8 questions to 7 questions.
- **Domain I Role of the Nurse Aide** will include content related to the nurse aide registry. Candidates can be asked general questions related to:
  - requirements for maintaining certification
  - employer requirement to verify the nurse aide's standing on the registry before employing in the nursing home
  - how a findings of resident abuse, neglect or misappropriate of resident property can affect the nurse aide's status on the registry and ability to work in a nursing home
- **Domain II Promotion of Safety** will include questions about risk factors related to elopement (residents leaving the facility without staff knowledge).
- **Domain III Promotion of Function and Health of Residents** will include questions related to residents need for sleep and rest, and the effects of immobility.

### **Test Development Process to Update the Nurse Aide Competency Examination**

There are a number of test development activities that are involved with updating the Knowledge (Written/Oral) and Clinical Skills Tests. Prometric is engaging RNs and LPNs working in nursing homes or who bring their students into the nursing home for clinical experience, to participate in a review of test questions to ensure the currency and appropriateness of test questions for inclusion in the test. Prometric will also be conducting another Nurse Aide National Examination Council Meeting in October 2011 for a Standard Setting Study used to determine the number of points required to pass the Knowledge (Written/Oral) Test and to write new test questions for the examinations. (See below for information on how you can participate in any of this important work!) The item writing will focus on the updated content areas. After these questions are pretested and deemed appropriate for inclusion on new exams, Prometric will begin the implementation of the updated tests.

### **Web Conference Schedule**

Prometric will be conducting web conference(s) for nurse aide training program instructors and training program coordinators about the exam updates. Advance registration is required; to register, use the website link provided below and complete the survey. To participate, you must be able to dial in to a toll-free number and also access the internet at the same time. Prometric will send an email to registrants the day before the scheduled event with instructions for accessing the web conference. If several instructors will be participating together (sitting in front of the same computer using a speaker phone), only one person from the training program needs to register for the web conference. These web conferences may be attended by other interested stakeholders such as nursing home administrators and directors of nursing; however, they are generally NOT appropriate for nurse aides or nurse aide students.

**Alabama:** To register go to [www.surveymonkey.com/s/ALupdate](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ALupdate)

Friday, June 17, 2011	9am-11am (CT)
Tuesday, June 21, 2011	3pm-5pm (CT)

**Arkansas:** To register go to [www.surveymonkey.com/s/ARupdate](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ARupdate)

Friday, June 03, 2011	9am-11am (CT)
Tuesday, June 14, 2011	2pm-4pm (CT)

**Connecticut:** To register go to [www.surveymonkey.com/s/CTupdate](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CTupdate)

Friday, May 06, 2011	10am-12pm
Friday, May 20, 2011	2pm-4pm

**Florida:** To register go to [www.surveymonkey.com/s/FLupdate](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/FLupdate)

Thursday, May 05, 2011	1pm-3pm
Tuesday, May 10, 2011	10am-12pm
Thursday, May 19, 2011	9am-11am
Friday, June 10, 2011	9am-11am

**Louisiana:** To register go to [www.surveymonkey.com/s/LANAupdate](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LANAupdate)

Friday, June 17, 2011	9a-11a (CT)
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**Michigan:** To register go to [www.surveymonkey.com/s/MIupdate](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/MIupdate)

Friday, May 13, 2011	10am-12pm
Friday, June 03, 2011	2pm-4pm
Thursday, June 16, 2011	9am-11am

**New Mexico:** To register go to [www.surveymonkey.com/s/NMupdate](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/NMupdate)

Tuesday, May 17, 2011	2pm-4pm (MT)
Thursday, June 09, 2011	9am-11am (MT)

**Nevada:** To register go to [www.surveymonkey.com/s/NVupdate](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/NVupdate)

Thursday, June 02, 2011	2pm-4pm (MT)
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**Oklahoma:** To register go to [www.surveymonkey.com/s/OKupdate](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/OKupdate)

Friday, May 13, 2011	2pm-4pm (MT)
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**Interested in Participating in Prometric's Nurse Aide Test Development?**

Prometric has several opportunities available for RNs and LPNs to serve as subject-matter experts (SMEs) for different test development activities. Participation is voluntary (no monetary compensation), but is an important contribution to your state's Nurse Aide Competency Examination. Below are upcoming activities that need SME representation. The requirements for participation are included below:

**Qualifications: RNs and LPNs who are:**

- Employed in a nursing home either supervising nurse aides or training nurse aides
- OR**
- Instructors for a community-based (non-nursing home) nurse aide training program that bring their students into the nursing home for clinical/practical experience

**Activities/Projects:**

**Timing Study:**

Participate in a study to validate appropriate (fair) timing for the Clinical Skills Test. If you have a nurse aide training class that is nearing completion before May 15, 2011 and you are willing to time your students performing skills, please let us know by submitting your information online at [www.surveymonkey.com/s/statetiming](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/statetiming). Instructors who sign-up will be emailed information on the procedures and how to submit their timing data.

**Item (Question) Reviews for the Nurse Aide Written Test:**

Participate in web conference sessions conducted to review questions that are in the Written Test pool to verify their currency and appropriateness. There will be 20+ sessions conducted. Volunteers can participate in only one session or up to ten sessions. If you are interested, please enter your information online at <http://prometriccontract.submit4jobs.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=85339.viewjobdetail&CID=85339&JID=104128&BUID=> or you may contact Prometric's Test Development Recruiter, Ashley La Fond, by email at [psp.tdrecruiting@prometric.com](mailto:psp.tdrecruiting@prometric.com) or by calling 651-603-3387 or 800-786-3926 Ext. 3387. In email or phone message, please indicate specific interest in the Nurse Aide Item Reviews.

**Clinical Skills Standard Setting:**

Participate in a web conference and take an online survey used to establish the number of points required to establish minimal competency for each skill. If you are interested in participating in this activity, submit your interest online at [www.monkeysurvey.com/s/skillsstandardsetting](http://www.monkeysurvey.com/s/skillsstandardsetting). Prometric will work with each state to finalize selected participants. This activity is scheduled for the week of May 4, 2011.

**National Examination Council Meeting 2011:**

Participation is for a 4-day in person meeting to be held in Las Vegas, Nevada. Selected participants will have travel and lodging directly arranged by Prometric, and approved travel-related expenses reimbursed. Meeting activities will include writing new test questions and completing activities for a study to establish the number of points required to establish minimal competency to pass the Written Test. If you are interested in participating in this activity, submit your interest online at [www.monkeysurvey.com/s/NECmeeting](http://www.monkeysurvey.com/s/NECmeeting). Prometric will work with each state to finalize selected participants. This activity is scheduled for October 3 -6, 2011.