Personal Care Aide (PCA) Training Program

Welcome & Program Overview

Welcome to the **Hybrid Personal Care Aide (PCA) Program**! This course is designed to offer flexible, high-quality training combining online learning with essential hands-on instruction.

Our program aligns with the **Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS)** 40-hour curriculum standard. It is structured into two core components:

- **32 Hours of Asynchronous Online Learning** via our Learning Management System (LMS).
    - This must be completed within 12 days of receiving your login information for the LMS.
- **8 Hours of Live, In-Person Skills Lab & Competency Evaluation** supervised by a Registered Nurse (RN).
    - This must be completed within 14 days of enrollment in the program.

Program fees are strictly non-refundable. Failure to finish either the online modules or the live skills assessment inside the mandated timeframes may lead to administrative termination from the program.

1. Enrollment Requirements

To enroll in the PCA program, candidates must satisfy the following state and institutional criteria:

- **Age:** Must be at least 18 years or older
- **Literacy:** Must be able to read, write, and speak English at a level necessary to understand care plans, document daily activities, and communicate safely with clients and supervisors.
- **Identification:** Valid government-issued photo ID and Social Security card.
- **Background Check:** Ability to pass a criminal background check as mandated by Virginia state law for direct care workers.
- **Technology Requirements:**
    - Reliable internet access
    - A smartphone, tablet, laptop, or desktop computer with working audio/video.
    - Basic computer literacy (ability to navigate online modules, view videos, and submit online quizzes).

2. Program Structure & Hour Requirements

To receive certification, students must complete **100% of the 40 required hours**:

Component	Delivery	Hours	Focus / Requirements
Online Courses	Online	32 hours	Fundamentals, disease processes, safety, rights, and communication. Knowledge checks and module quizzes.
Lab & Clinical Skills	In-Person Lab	7 hours	Hands-on skill practice, transfers, vital signs, and care scenarios with a Registered Nurse (RN).
Competency Evaluation	In-Person Assessment	1 hour	Demonstration of essential practical skills before a Registered Nurse (RN).

3. Curriculum Modules

Phase 1: Online Coursework (32 Hours via Relias)

Students must complete all self-paced online modules prior to attending the in-person skills lab:

1. **Role of the PCA:** Ethics, professionalism, HIPAA, and scope of practice.
2. **Communication & Cultural Competency:** Active listening, client rights, and managing difficult behaviors.
3. **The Aging Process & Body Systems:** Understanding physical, mental, and emotional changes in aging.
4. **Nutrition & Hydration:** Special diets, meal preparation, and fluid tracking.
5. **Infection Control Principles:** Standard precautions, bloodborne pathogens, and household safety.
6. **Observation & Documentation:** Reading a Plan of Care, tracking ADLs, and reporting client changes.
7. **Special Populations:** Basics of caring for clients with dementia, Alzheimer's, and physical disabilities.

Phase 2: In-Person Skills Lab (8 Hours On-Site)

The mandatory 8-hour lab session focuses on direct physical demonstration and safety:

8. **Proper Hand Hygiene & PPE Application**
9. **Body Mechanics & Safe Client Transfers** (Gait belt use, wheelchair transfers, positioning)
10. **Assisting with ADLs** (Bed baths, mouth care, dressing, skin care, feeding)
11. **Vital Signs** (Measuring temperature, pulse, and respiration accurately)
12. **Final Practical Competency Exam** (Demonstration of core skills before the RN instructor)

4. Class Policies & Academic Standards

Online Learning Rules (LMS)

- **Pacing & Deadlines:** Online coursework must be completed within 12 days of enrollment before a student is cleared to attend the 8-hour skills lab.
- **LMS Tracking:** Hour progress is tracked automatically through the system. Fast-forwarding videos or leaving modules idle will not count toward completion time.
- **Quiz Benchmark:** Students must score **80% or higher** on all module quizzes and the online final exam. Quizzes may be retaken up to 3 times.

In-Person Lab Policies

- **Mandatory Attendance:** Attendance for the full 8-hour in-person lab session is **100% required**. Arriving more than 15 minutes late will require rescheduling the lab portion.
- **Lab Attire:** Students must wear **scrubs** (any solid color) and **closed-toe, non-slip shoes**. Nails must be clean and short for client safety.
- **Skills Master Evaluation:** Students must demonstrate **100% competency** on mandatory clinical skills during the live evaluation.

5. Scope of Practice Notice

IMPORTANT: A Personal Care Aide in Virginia is a **non-licensed direct care worker**.

PCAs MAY: Assist with ADLs/IADLs, encourage fluid intake, assist with self-administered medications (reminders/opening containers), and document care delivered.

PCAs MAY NOT: Administer prescription medications, perform wound care, insert catheters, give medical advice, or perform any skilled nursing procedure reserved for LPNs/RNs.

6. Certificate Completion & Beyond

Upon meeting all 40-hour requirements, passing the final written exam, and clearing the skills evaluation:

1. You will receive a **Virginia DMAS Personal Care Aide Certificate of Completion**.
2. Your certification remains valid indefinitely for Medicaid-funded personal care agencies in Virginia, provided you meet your employer's required **12 hours of annual continuing education/in-service training**.