



## STATE OF WASHINGTON

February 15, 2022

Honorable Pat McCarthy  
Washington State Auditor  
P.O. Box 40021  
Olympia, WA 98504-0021

Dear Auditor McCarthy:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and respond to the State Auditor's Office performance audit, *I-1163: Evaluating Relevance of Required Training for Long-term Care Workers*. The Department of Social and Health Services and Office of Financial Management worked together on this response.

We appreciate that the report recognizes that most providers and clients were satisfied with the state's required training. The report found that 85% of the providers are satisfied with the training and that the training helped them feel confident about meeting the needs of their clients. It also is reassuring to note that 93% of the clients felt that their provider met their needs as well.

We are limited in our ability to modify the 70-hour basic training content due to statutory requirements. However, we will continue to work closely with the Training Partnership to address the training needs of the long-term care workforce and to offer continuing education courses targeted to client and worker needs based on research conducted by DSHS.

Sincerely,

Gilma Meneses  
Secretary  
Department of Social and Health Services

David Schumacher  
Director  
Office of Financial Management

cc: Jamila Thomas, Chief of Staff, Office of the Governor  
Kelly Wicker, Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of the Governor  
Keith Phillips, Director of Policy, Office of the Governor  
Patricia Lashway, Deputy Director, Office of Financial Management  
Christine Bezanson, Director, Results Washington, Office of the Governor  
Tammy Firkins, Performance Audit Liaison, Results Washington, Office of the Governor  
Scott Frank, Director of Performance Audit, Office of the Washington State Auditor

## OFFICIAL CABINET AGENCY RESPONSE TO PERFORMANCE AUDIT ON I-1163: EVALUATING RELEVANCE OF REQUIRED TRAINING FOR LONG-TERM CARE WORKERS – FEBRUARY 14, 2022

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The Department of Social and Health Services and the Office of Financial Management provide this management response to the State Auditor’s Office performance audit report received on January 14, 2022.

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### SAO PERFORMANCE AUDIT OBJECTIVES:

This performance audit was designed to address the question:

- How can Washington improve the relevance of required home care worker training to better prepare long-term care workers to meet the needs of people who have complex or special care needs?

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### Recommendations to DSHS:

**SAO Recommendation 1:** To better align the first aid/CPR training requirements for individual providers with that of residential providers in Washington, as described on page 18, we recommend the agency:

1. Offer training in first aid and/or CPR to individual providers in collaboration with stakeholders such as the Training Partnership.

### STATE RESPONSE:

DSHS’ Aging and Long-Term Support Administration does not have the authority to extend the basic training beyond 70 hours, per RCW 74.39A.074 and voter approval of I-1163. State law stipulates the required core competencies and learning objectives for basic training, as well as population-specific competencies. The Training Partnership provides continuing education (CE), and certified individual providers are required to complete 12 hours of CE each year.

The Training Partnership was approved to provide continuing education for CPR, First Aid or CPR, and First Aid to individual providers since September 2014, but these courses are currently not offered as a CE option.

### Action Steps and Time Frame:

- Clarify on the training website that CPR and First Aid are required for certain long-term care workers, but are not required for other long-term care workers, including individual providers.  
*By March 15, 2022*
- Discuss the feasibility of the Training Partnership offering First Aid and CPR courses as continuing education. *By April 30, 2022*
- While discussions take place with training partners, the training website will be updated to include the locations of Red Cross offices, American Heart Association offices, and online courses for individual providers who have a desire to take the CPR, First Aid, or CPR and First Aid trainings.  
*By June 15, 2022*

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**SAO Recommendation 2:** To improve the relevance of the training going forward for the full range of clients and individual providers, as described on pages 19-20, we recommend the agency:

2. Establish a more robust process for ensuring alignment between training content and client needs. Such a process should include:
  - A. A mechanism to assess how well training aligns with client needs

- B. Using the results of the analysis to evaluate relevance during DSHS' formal review and approval of training curricula
- C. Implement revisions to the training as needed. For example:
  - Work with the Training Partnership to modify the training curriculum
  - Revise relevant WACs in Chapter 388-71 to better align training requirements with client needs
  - Work with the Training Partnership to grant providers flexibility in selecting population-specific training

**STATE RESPONSE:** While we cannot change the statutory requirements for the 70 hours of basic training for individual provider home care aides, we are currently working with the Training Partnership on the revised curriculum for Basic Training 70 v4, as well as the Advanced Home Care Aide Specialist v3 training that includes a holistic track and a behavioral health track for addressing client needs. These trainings were revised based on research conducted by the DSHS Research and Data Analysis Division. New training content includes person-centered care, trauma-informed care, mental health and challenging behaviors.

Continuing education is available to caregivers who can select topics based upon population-specific needs of clients they serve. These topics include verbal de-escalation, anxiety disorders, mental and emotional health, traumatic brain injury, autism, and others.

The Training Partnership conducts research to determine training needs through:

- Provider surveys
- Course evaluations from individual providers
- Continuous communication loops to solicit feedback
- Focus groups
- Customer experience roundtables with employers and DSHS field staff
- Reports from research done by the Service Employees International Union
- Regular meetings and collaboration with DSHS

DSHS data is obtained through annual quality assurance client surveys and annual research conducted by the DSHS Research and Data Analysis Division, and DSHS shares the information with the Training Partnership.

The Training Partnership plans to roll out the revised Basic Training 70 this summer and pilot the revised Advanced Home Care Aide Specialist Training by June 2024. This revision is structured around three pillars: core, holistic and behavioral health. Client surveys are planned to assess if the course:

- Strengthened client/caregiver relationships
- Improved client engagement (fostering choice, independence, autonomy, and control)
- Increased client satisfaction with the care and support they receive
- Improved client physical, mental, and emotional well-being

**Action Steps and Time Frame:**

- Continue collaboration with the Training Partnership to assess training and client outcomes by analyzing data gathered annually to evaluate the relevance of training curricula; however, we are limited by the need to meet statutory requirements. *Complete and ongoing*
- Discuss with the Training Partnership leadership flexibility in selecting population-specific training. *By February 28, 2022*