



# Worker Classification Workforce Development Committee Report

Prepared for the Interim Committees of the  
Legislative Assembly Related to Human Services

November 16, 2015

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## Executive summary

Senate Bill 774, passed during the 2015 legislative session, directs the Oregon Home Care Commission (OHCC) to adopt a statewide plan to increase the workforce available to provide in-home services to seniors, people with physical or intellectual/developmental disabilities, and individuals experiencing mental illness. The OHCC, with the assistance of the Worker Classification-Workforce Development Committee, is charged with investigating potential strategies to increase the workforce and report findings to the Legislature on or before November 16, 2015.

Increasing the home care workforce is urgent for multiple reasons. The senior population is the fastest growing population in the world. From 2009–2020, it is anticipated the senior population in Oregon will increase by 57 percent. There is already a shortage of workers available to provide assistance to individuals living at home, which will become even more pronounced as the population ages and the ratio of available workers decreases.

In addition, the U.S. Department of Labor's Final Rule published in 2013 extends minimum wage and overtime protections to home care and personal support workers under the Fair Labor Standards Act. The change in federal law, and anticipated fiscal impact, has prompted the Department of Human Services to implement changes to its Medicaid in-home services programs. As a result, additional homecare and personal support workers will be needed.

The increasing number of children eligible for services under the Community First Choice State Plan Option under Medicaid (commonly referred to as the K Plan) has resulted in the need for additional personal support workers to provide in-home community supports and services.

Finally, the OHCC is implementing the new Homecare Choice Program, created with the passage of Senate Bill 1542, that enables private pay individuals to purchase in-home services through the OHCC registry. The OHCC is required to build and strengthen the home care workforce, both for those participating in Medicaid in-home service programs and those paying privately for services.

The Worker Classification-Workforce Development Committee's report includes:

- a) Ways to remove barriers for new home care workers (as defined in 410.604) to enter the workforce;
- b) Ways to increase the number of home care workers on the registry maintained by the OHCC;
- c) Strategies for creating a career ladder/lattice for home care workers; and
- d) The feasibility and benefits of certifying home care workers.

# Worker Classification — Workforce Development Committee

The Oregon Home Care Commission's Worker Classification-Workforce Development Committee consists of in-home services consumers, stakeholders, community partners, advocates, Oregon Home Care Commission Commissioners and subject matter experts with the Department of Human Services and Oregon Health Authority.

Before passage of Senate Bill 774, the Oregon Home Care Commission (OHCC) began efforts to increase the home care workforce and convened the Workforce Development Workgroup in June of 2015. The workgroup later became the Worker Classification-Workforce Development Committee. Committee membership includes representatives from:

- Aging and People with Disabilities
- Area Agencies on Aging
- Association of Oregon Community Mental Health Programs
- Clackamas County Workforce Investment Council
- Commissioners with the Oregon Home Care Commission
- Community Developmental Disability Programs
- Department of Human Services (DHS) Self-Sufficiency/JOBS program
- DHS Employment First Program
- DHS/OHA Background Check Unit
- DHS Tribal Support
- OHCC
- The Oregon Consortium and Oregon Workforce Alliance
- Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities
- Office of Developmental Disability Services
- Oregon Health Authority (OHA)
- Oregon Support Services Association
- Service Employees International Union (SEIU), Local 503
- State Independent Living Council



The OHCC builds upon committee members' existing relationships within their organizations, such as Workforce Oregon, county workforce investment boards and community colleges.

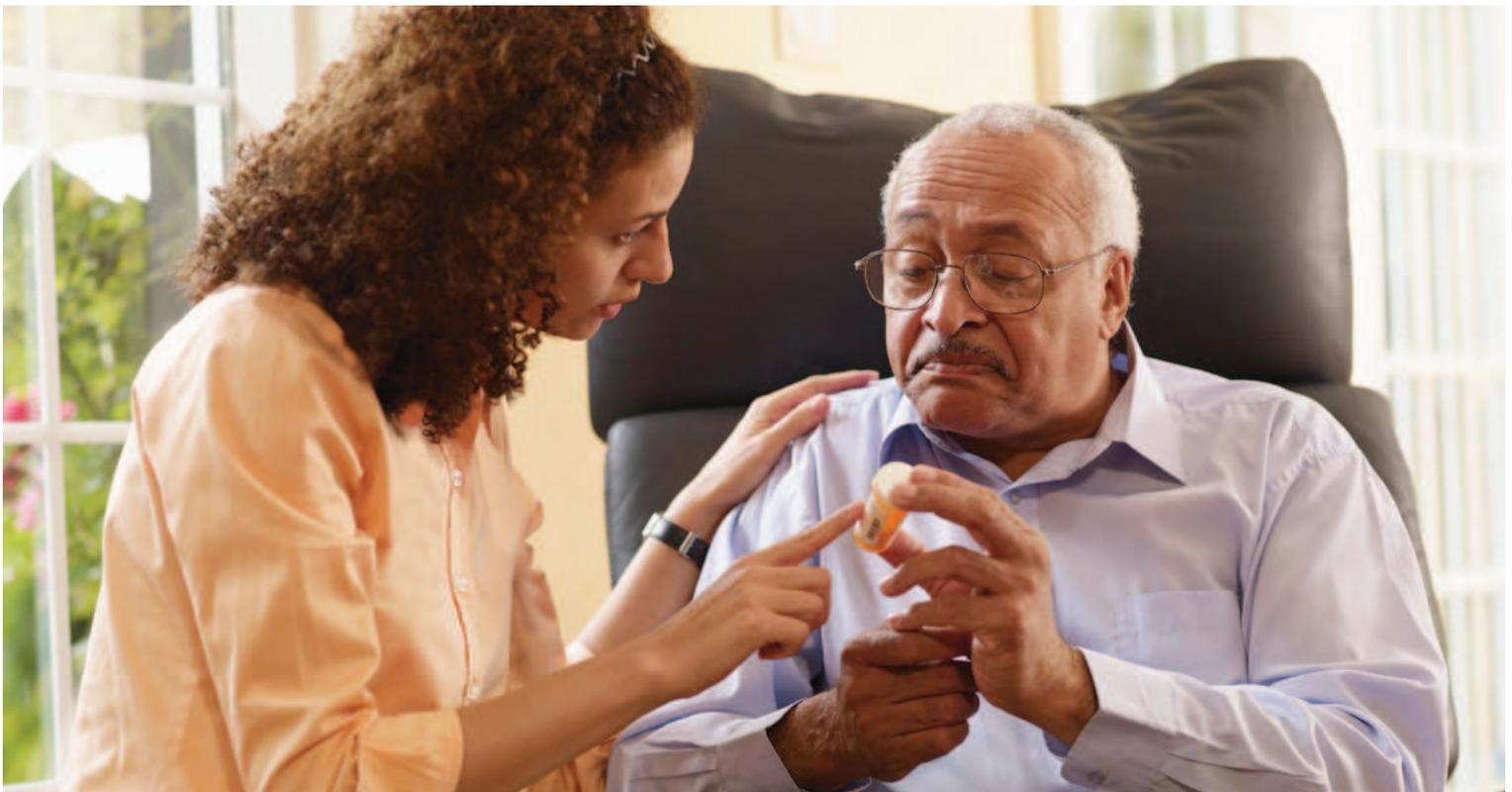
The committee has created a vision statement and recruitment goals that reflect ways to attract individuals to join the home care workforce.

## Worker Classification — Workforce Development Committee Recruitment — Goals

- Attract a committed and diverse workforce to meet the specific needs of individuals.
- Improve worker retention.
- Fully develop a career lattice.
- Provide professional development opportunities.
- Streamline worker onboarding process.
- Establish a universal provider number.
- Establish a single online provider enrollment application through the Oregon Home Care

## Worker Classification — Workforce Development Committee — Vision

*Individuals will have access to supports and services from a qualified, trained and diverse workforce through the OHCC Registry.*



# Report topics

## I. Ways to remove barriers for new homecare and personal support workers to enter the workforce

The committee has identified barriers that prevent or delay entry into the homecare workforce. The major barrier occurs at local offices where homecare and personal support worker enrollment is processed. Changes in local office enrollment practices around the state have unintentionally limited homecare and personal support worker availability. The enrollment process can become more efficient through automation, eliminating redundancies and investing in technology, all of which will ease workload and allow staff to dedicate more time to complete critical tasks.

Another barrier is a lack of sufficient marketing and promotion of the benefits of entering the workforce. Homecare and personal support workers in Oregon receive a competitive wage, have access to free training, receive workers' compensation coverage and may be eligible for medical benefits and paid time off. Those who previously have not considered entering the home care workforce may be willing once they become aware of the benefits and career advancement opportunities.

An additional barrier is the underuse of the Registry by local offices. Although not widespread, local offices have maintained referral lists instead of entering the workers' information directly into the Registry. Therefore, qualified workers were not available for referral to individuals who were served by different offices.

### The committee has identified new processes and plans to remove barriers to entry into the home care workforce.

- A. Implement new member orientations through the OHCC that include online and quarterly regional in-person options. This will make orientations more accessible and eliminate waitlists. Individuals will receive orientation quickly and efficiently around the state. New member orientation will also be provided during recruitment events. Until online orientations are available, the OHCC will work to establish a relationship with Office of Developmental Disability Services regions to provide orientation. OHCC is currently working with the Office of Information Systems to receive approval for a software solution for a learning management system for online orientation and future trainings.
- B. Work with DHS this biennium to develop a plan to create a pathway to a single online application through the registry, and a universal provider number and enrollment process for home care and personal support workers. This will streamline the

enrollment process, eliminate redundancies and expand the workforce that is currently divided between Medicaid-funded programs.

As an example, if an individual currently would like to work for seniors and people with disabilities, and individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities, the applicant would need to complete two separate enrollment processes and receive two different provider numbers. Allowing for a universal provider number would increase the workforce available for all individuals participating in Medicaid-funded in-home services. It also eliminates redundancies in the enrollment process, with strong potential for cost savings.

- C. Remove barriers by changing local office enrollment practices. This includes accepting all applications and eliminating orientation waitlists. By implementing online and quarterly regional in-person orientations conducted by the OHCC, local offices would no longer need to dedicate limited resources to conducting regular in-person orientations, but rather facilitate the enrollment process without delay.
- D. Support and promote OHCC local recruitment events.

The OHCC develops local partnerships with the following organizations to help coordinate and promote recruitment events:

- Aging and People with Disabilities;
- Community colleges;
- Community mental health programs;
- Community Developmental Disability Programs;
- Culturally specific community groups
- DHS Self-Sufficiency;
- Vocational Rehabilitation;
- Workforce boards; and
- WorkSource Oregon offices

The OHCC held the first recruitment event in July of 2015 in Clackamas County and continues to coordinate events throughout the state.

- E. Invest in ongoing marketing of the benefits of entering the home care workforce by developing a communication strategy that attracts workers from various communities, and addresses the list of action items described in section II.
- F. Provide enrollment materials in an applicant's primary language.
- G. Provide trainings to local offices on how to effectively use the Registry and eliminate individual referral lists. This will offer individuals and families more homecare and personal support workers from which to choose.

## II. Ways to increase the number of home care workers on the Registry maintained by the OHCC as defined in ORS 410.604.

Approximately 2,000 home care workers are currently on the Registry who are looking for work. It is anticipated that 1,900 additional home care workers will be required based on changes to Medicaid policies prompted by the Fair Labor Standards Act requirements. Removing the barriers identified in section I and continuing to offer statewide recruitment events will increase the number of home care workers on the Registry. One of the goals is to attract a committed and diverse workforce. This can be accomplished through targeted outreach and marketing. In Oregon, the typical home care worker is a white, non-Hispanic female aged 18–44. Recruitment efforts should reflect the communities home care workers serve. A diverse workforce can be achieved by reaching out to:

- Men
- Recent high school graduates
- College enrollees
- Immigrant workers
- Employment First workers
- Individuals receiving assistance through self-sufficiency programs
- Second career workers
- Former or current family caregivers
- Workers with comparable job experience in other areas
- Bilingual workers
- Culturally competent individuals
- Multicultural organizations
- Individuals living in rural and frontier areas of the state

### Marketing strategies

Another way to increase the number of home care workers is to invest in strategic marketing. Tactics may include, but are not limited to:

- Developing brochures, direct mailers and posters;
- Creating a dedicated web landing page for workforce development;
- Creating testimonial videos;
- Using social media;
- Publishing home care worker profiles in newspapers, social media, websites and newsletters;
- Creating infographics detailing the benefits of joining the workforce;
- Leveraging existing partnerships for recruitment and promotion;
- Participating in radio and television interviews; and
- Using search engine optimization for online job seekers.

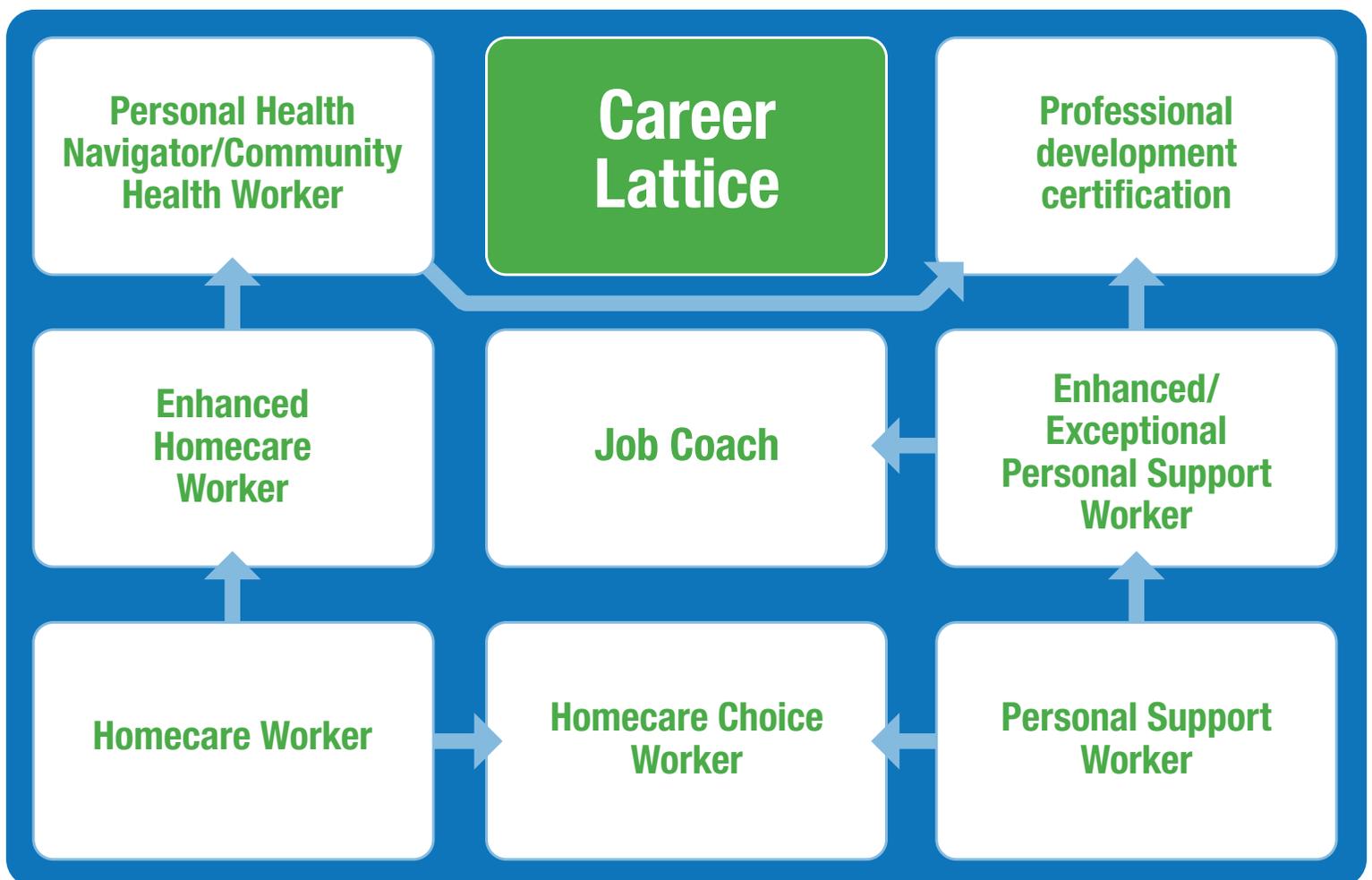
### III. Implement strategies to create a career ladder/lattice for home care workers so they may become better skilled and qualified to be exceptional home care workers.

#### Career ladder versus career lattice

A career ladder differs from a career lattice because career ladders only provide for upward or linear progression. A career lattice provides opportunities for growth or enrichment within an existing position, lateral movement, realignment or vertical movement. The career lattice provides multiple pathways to develop better-skilled workers, opportunities to attract new workers and retain existing workers.

The OHCC career lattice provides opportunities for growth and skill development through varied pathways allowing workers to broaden their knowledge and to develop advanced skills.

DHS and SEIU Local 503 have worked with the OHCC to develop the career lattice.



Through the collective bargaining process, several training certification programs have been established to build a skilled workforce. A new professional development certification was bargained during the most recent negotiations. This certification will raise the level of competence for entry-level workers. Workers that complete the professional development certification program will receive a \$.50 training differential beginning on January 1, 2017.

## OHCC trainings

The OHCC offers 24 skill-based training courses ranging from two to four hours in duration. (Please refer to the appendices for a list of available trainings.) Most of the trainings build upon the core competencies developed by the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). The OHCC continues to develop trainings for specific person-centered skills using the core competency framework. Some examples include skills related to community engagement, job coaching, driver safety, communication and supporting living skills.



More than 80 training sessions are offered throughout the state every month. In the past 10 years, more than 9,000 individual homecare and personal support workers attended training, many of whom attended multiple trainings. Between July 1, 2014 and June 30, 2015, the total training attendance was 15,313. To date, 641 home care workers have been awarded professional development recognition by participating in select trainings and maintaining Adult CPR and First Aid certification.

The OHCC has also developed training certification programs that consist of additional training components.

## Existing training certification programs

A blended training curriculum has been developed for most of the existing certification programs.

### **A. Enhanced Homecare and Personal Support Worker Training Certification Program (25 classroom/online hours)**

The curriculum is designed to develop skills related to critical thinking, person-centered practices, effective communication, dignity and respect, self-determination and personal responsibility, medically driven supports and services, behaviorally driven supports and services, safe intervention and de-escalation techniques, and professional and ethical behaviors.

## **B. Exceptional Personal Support Worker Training Certification Program**

An individual must obtain both the Enhanced Personal Support Worker Certification and Oregon Intervention System (OIS) General (G) or Parent (P) Level Certification, and successfully complete the 10–12 hour Exceptional Personal Support Worker course.

## **C. Community Health Worker Training Certification Program (96 classroom hours)**

The curriculum includes topics such as roles and expectations, working in a multi-disciplinary health care team, social determinants of health, patient-centered care, community engagement, health promotion, advocacy and communication.

## **Training certification program worker classification definitions**

### **A. Enhanced homecare worker**

An enhanced home care worker provides services to consumers who require medically driven services and supports as defined by DHS and assessed by the case manager.

The enhanced homecare worker must be certified through a certification process or training program approved by OHCC to be eligible for the enhanced hourly or live-in wage.

### **B. Enhanced personal support worker**

An enhanced personal support worker provides services to consumers who require advanced medical or behaviorally driven services and supports as defined by DHS and assessed per the Adult or Child Functional Needs Assessment Tool.

A personal support worker receiving enhanced service payments must be certified through an OHCC-approved certified process or training program before providing services to a consumer with enhanced service needs.

### **C. Exceptional personal support worker**

An exceptional personal support worker provides services to consumers who require extensive medical and/or behaviorally driven services and supports, beyond the enhanced services (provided by an enhanced personal support worker) as assessed per the Functional Needs Assessment Tool, and requiring staff to be awake more than 20 hours in a 24 hour period.

A personal support worker receiving exceptional service payments must be certified, before delivering services, through the applicable OHCC-approved certification process or training program for extensive medical services as defined by DHS. For extensive behavioral services, the Oregon Intervention System (OIS) must certify the personal support worker before providing services.

## **D. Community health worker**

Certified community health workers are people who help individuals and communities adopt healthy behaviors. A certified community health worker usually shares the same ethnicity, language, socioeconomic status and life experiences as those he or she serves. Certified community health workers work for a local health care practice or coordinated care organization to deliver culturally appropriate health education that promotes, maintains and improves individual and community health. They may provide information on available resources, provide social support and informal counseling, advocate for individuals and community health needs, and provide services such as blood pressure and other health prevention screenings.

## **E. Job coach**

Job coaches are personal support workers who provide job coaching services to individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities. OHCC and the Office of Developmental Disability Services are in the process of developing training curriculum for job coaches.

## **Professional development certification and requirements**

The Professional Development Certification Program is based on the core classes of “Keeping it Professional,” “Working Together,” and “Helping Caregivers Fight Fraud and Abuse.” Workers must attend five hours of safety-skills training, and five hours of other services and skills trainings.

This certification-training differential is awarded to homecare and personal support workers who successfully complete the program. Homecare and personal support workers in the Professional Development Certification Program are not required to have a consumer with specific needs.

The certification program consists of 25 hours, excluding CPR/First Aid training hours. Workers are required to achieve a set standard of attendance and must maintain a valid CPR/First Aid certification. Workers must be recertified every two years. The training certification differential cannot be combined with the enhanced, exceptional, ventilator dependent quadriplegic (VDQ), or job coaching differentials.

The OHCC may approve recommendations from the homecare or personal support worker training or worker classification committees to amend the Professional Development Certification Program requirements. If more than 30 percent of the workforce receives the training differential, the parties to the collective bargaining agreement must meet and confer to keep the cost of the training differential within available funds.

## IV. The feasibility and benefits of certifying home care workers

### Benefits of certifying homecare and personal support workers

The benefits of certifying home care and personal support workers are in alignment with the OHCC's constitutional and statutory responsibility to ensure the high quality of in-home services received by seniors and people with disabilities. This will set the foundation for a competent, skilled workforce that leads to higher quality of care for consumers receiving in-home services.

Certifying the workforce may also provide a structure for wage increases based on training.

Another benefit of certifying the workforce is to ensure all workers receive mandatory competency-based training that improves job quality through the development of new skills, improves retention, improves worker and consumer safety, and leads to successful employment and advancement opportunities. As part of the certification process, provisions could be put in place for mandatory CPR/First Aid certification, continuing education requirements and uniform provider qualifications.

Finally, certifying the workforce provides a mechanism to receive increased federal funding tied to training and the Registry.

### New federal funding options

1. Training funding options
  - o Acuity rate model – Enhanced and Exceptional Training Certification;
  - o Costs associated with maintaining provider qualifications may be included to determine the service payment rate; and
  - o Medicaid administrative match may be available for provider training activities that improve the delivery of Medicaid services. The OHCC will seek guidance from the state Medicaid agency to determine if the OHCC would be eligible to access additional funding.
2. According to information released by CMS on July 8, 2015, Medicaid funding is available for the establishment and maintenance of registries and is reimbursed as an administrative cost. Administrative costs are reimbursed at 50% Federal Medical Assistance Percentage rate. The cost would need to be prorated if non-Medicaid individuals and providers use the registry. The OHCC will work closely with the state Medicaid agency to determine what actions would be required for reimbursement.

## Feasibility of certifying homecare and personal support workers

The OHCC offers 24 trainings for home care workers, most of which meet the CMS competency criteria.

The OHCC also offers certification programs within its career lattice that have additional training requirements.

Certifying a workforce, however, is not isolated to training requirements. There must be an infrastructure to support the certification and recertification process. This requires collaboration with other programs within DHS, and information technology changes, particularly around credentialing and payment systems.

Outstanding questions that may present challenges related to certifying homecare and personal support workers include:

1. Will family members be required to comply with certification requirements?
2. Will there be exemptions?
3. Does the requirement only apply to workers who seek employment through the registry?
4. Will there be continuing education requirements?
5. Should certification be addressed through statute, bargaining or both?
6. Will certified home care and personal support workers receive a higher rate of pay?
7. How will certifying the workforce be funded?



## Conclusion

The Worker Classification–Workforce Development Committee has identified several strategies to increase the home care workforce available on the Registry. Improvements begin with eliminating existing barriers and preventing new barriers through efficient recruitment and enrollment process using technology and current resources. This can be accomplished by offering online and quarterly regional in-person orientations, revising the enrollment processes at local offices, and working with the DHS to develop a plan to create a pathway to a single online application through the Registry and universal provider number.

Ongoing marketing, outreach and recruitment events will attract new workers to the registry. Providing a career lattice will offer additional opportunities for skill development certification for homecare and personal support workers, attract new workers to the home care workforce, and will improve retention for existing homecare and personal support workers.

Providing on-going trainings to local offices on how to effectively use the Registry will increase the number of workers available to serve seniors and people with disabilities, individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities, and individuals experiencing mental illness. The elimination of individual referral lists maintained by local offices and the effective use of the Registry ensure all qualified workers are available for referral.

The OHCC has been successful in creating a career lattice and comprehensive training program. It is feasible that the OHCC, in partnership with stakeholders and subject matter experts, can create a comprehensive workforce certification program.



# Appendix

## Oregon Home Care Commission trainings

Course	Description	Class Length in hours
Bathing & Grooming	This class covers skills in personal care activities of bathing, shaving, skin care & grooming. Focus is on using person-centered values and techniques. A video demonstrating hands-on care is shown.	3.5
Blindness & Low Vision	An overview of eye diseases and definitions of low vision and vision loss; techniques for working with someone sight-impaired and helping someone to live independently. Resources and adaptive equipment for the home are demonstrated and/or discussed.	3
Challenging Behaviors	COMPASS is a multi-session course that creates a safety and wellness team. Workers learn about caring for their own health and safety, safe work practices, healthy eating, reducing hazards, communication techniques, and receive support from teammates on challenges.	3
Dementia & Alzheimer's	Understanding the disease process; hands-on techniques; tips for the details and dilemmas of daily care and establishing realistic expectations; finding ways to Enjoy Being Together.	4
Diabetes By the Numbers	Definitions and diagnosis of diabetes; warning signs and how the disease affects the body; meal planning and portion control; regular monitoring and daily care in controlling the disease.	3.5
Durable Medical Equipment	Helpful ideas for choosing, fitting and using equipment devices. Class will provide some demonstrations and practice.	3
Everyone Communicates	Effective communication partner strategies that make a positive impact on the people you support with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities who experience communication challenges. Also includes an introduction to communicating with individuals who use augmentative or alternative communication systems or devices.	4
End of Life Care	A comprehensive overview of end of life planning and care. Content includes: the dying process; pain and symptom considerations; advanced planning; and common spiritual, emotional and social concerns.	4

Grief and Loss	Process of grief, myths and realities of grief and loss; how to help another; compassion fatigue; practical issues of provider grief; and self-care.	3.5
Heart Healthy	How the heart works, common heart problems, monitoring blood pressure, recognizing heart emergencies; and creating a heart healthy lifestyle.	3
Helping Caregivers Fight Fraud & Abuse	Recognizing & reporting Medicare & Medicaid fraud; identity theft; recognizing and reporting abuse & neglect of vulnerable adults. Also covered is the role of the caregiver, communication techniques, and some problem solving around these issues.	3.5
Keeping It Professional	The role of workers in maintaining professional boundaries and working with the task list or job description. The class also covers recordkeeping and principles of confidentiality.	3.5
Diversity Awareness: Challenges Facing Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Adults	Understanding and awareness of LGBT issues and healthcare challenges; terms and definitions; how to create a welcoming and inclusive working relationship.	3
Medication Safety	Types of medications; effects medications have on the body; risks and warning signs; documentation; storage and disposal; and role of the worker. Emphasis is on assisting a consumer who manages his/her own medications.	3
MoneyWise	Personal money management; identifying personal priorities; developing a budget; money-saving ideas; recordkeeping.	3
Nutrition Basics	Foundations of good nutrition; meal planning; nutrient categories; meal balance using person-centered strategies and tools to promote informed choices; common nutrition-related concerns.	4
Protect Against Sprains & Strains	Basics of good body mechanics; how to minimize risks to avoid and/or prevent sprain and strain injuries; best practices in workplace activities; review of assistive equipment.	3.5
Preventing Disease Transmission	Causes of infectious diseases and routes of transmission; reducing risks; best practices in housekeeping and caregiving to prevent the spread of diseases.	2
Respiratory Care: Oxygen to Ventilators	Understanding end-stage respiratory diseases; symptoms and warning signs; basics on the use of oxygen and other respiratory equipment. Does not teach ventilator operation.	3.5
Ready Set Work	Using the Registry & Referral System; taking a professional approach to finding and getting work; interviewing; and establishing an employment arrangement.	4

Substance Abuse Awareness	A review of the Home Care Commission policy on maintaining a drug-free workplace. This training also covers common drugs and their affects, resources for treatment, the role of the homecare worker.	3
SMART: Stress Management and Relaxation Techniques	Understanding stress and its affects; recognizing signs and symptoms; identifying triggers; techniques for coping with stress.	3
TRIPS: Taking Responsibility in Personal Safety	Practical ideas for preventing injuries from slips and trips in the home and assessing risk factors; assisting someone in planning and preparing for emergencies, including the role of the in-home worker; safe driving tips. Emphasis is on caregivers assisting others in their own homes.	3
Working Together: Making the Most of the Employer /Employee Relationship	Assertive communication and problem solving techniques for employers who are seniors and people with physical disabilities & workers; clarifying expectations and sharing information in the interview and during a working relationship; developing an employment agreement. Also includes person-directed values, language and empowerment.	3

This document can be provided upon request in an alternate format for individuals with disabilities or in a language other than English for people with limited English skills. To request this publication in another format or language, contact the Oregon Home Care Commission at 877-624-6080.

