

## Nursing Assistant (Aide, Orderly)

### ■ Job Description

Nursing assistants give personal care to patients in hospitals and nursing homes. They work under the direction of nursing and medical staff. Nursing assistants' duties include giving baths and back rubs; making up hospital beds; carrying meal trays; helping patients in and out of bed; taking temperature, pulse, respiration, weight, and blood pressure readings; answering call lights; writing notes on patients' charts; taking appropriate action in emergencies; and performing other procedures as directed by the nurse or team leader. Nursing assistants also transport patients in wheelchairs or beds to examining or operating rooms. They sterilize equipment and prepare and stock dressings and treatment trays. Nursing assistants also watch patients for changes in mental alertness or emotions. When they see changes, they notify the supervising nurse.

### ■ Job Settings

Hospitals, nursing homes, and private homes

### ■ Projected Need

In Illinois, average employment growth is expected through 2010. Nationally, the number of jobs for nursing assistants is expected to grow faster than average. Much of this growth can be attributed to the expansion of long-term care facilities and programs to meet the needs of our expanding elderly population. In Illinois, nursing assistant is one of the 50 occupations expected to provide the most job openings each year. Openings are plentiful because the occupation is large and turnover is high. Turnover is high because the work is hard, the pay is low, and there are not many opportunities to advance.

In Illinois, there were 53,560 people employed in this large occupation in 2000.

### ■ Salaries

The national median wage for nursing assistants is \$9.27 per hour. Half of all nursing assistants earn between \$7.81 and \$11.01 per hour.

In Illinois, median wage for nursing assistants is \$9.18 per hour. Wages range from \$7.30 per hour for beginning assistants to \$10.51 per hour for those with experience.

### ■ Related Careers

Occupational/physical therapist aide or assistant, dental assistant, medical assistant, optometric assistant, human services technician, and homemaker/home health aide

### ■ Related Educational Programs

The programs of study listed below are the recommended areas of study to pursue for this occupation. Clicking on these will lead to files that show in-state and national schools that offer these programs.

*The following link(s) will take you to CIS for more information. CIS requires an ID and password that can be obtained at <http://cis.ilworkinfo.com/loginhelp/> You must log into CIS prior to clicking on the links below.*

[Nursing Assisting](#)

### ■ Credentials

Training for nursing assistants in an approved certification program is required for employment in Medicare-certified agencies such as nursing homes. Most every community college and regional vocational center offers a program in nursing assistant/aide training. For more information and a list of state-approved basic nurse assistant training programs, contact the Illinois Department of Public Health at 217.785.5133.

### ■ Skill Standards

One way to prepare for employment in this occupation is through meeting the standards endorsed by the Illinois Occupational Skill Standards and Credentialing Council (IOSSCC). Through the combined efforts of business, industry and education leaders, skill standards are developed for those occupations critical to the Illinois economy. *Skill standards define what you must know and be able to perform in order to pass a credentialing examination and obtain and keep a job in this field.* For more information regarding skill standards, contact the guidance counselor at your local high

school or community college, visit your local Illinois Employment and Training Center (IETC), or access skill standards information at [www.ioes.org/cte\\_curr/oss/index.html](http://www.ioes.org/cte_curr/oss/index.html).

The IOSSCC has endorsed skill standards for the nursing cluster organized around the following performance areas for certified nursing assistants:

- Safety
- Comfort
- Physical care
- Bedmaking
- Elimination
- Vital signs
- Body mechanics
- Admission and discharge
- Specimen collection
- Treatments
- Communications

■ **Resources**

National Association for Home Care  
228 Seventh Street, SE  
Washington, DC 20003  
Phone: 202.547.7424  
<http://www.nahc.org>