

I want to begin by thanking you for allowing me to tell my story. My name is Addison Stover, and I am twenty years old. I am a biochemistry student at the University of Kansas on the pre-medical track. When I first began my certified nurse assistant training, I was only 15 years old. A program through my high school accepted 25 students a semester to receive their CNA certification through the Johnson County Community college. I was incredibly excited to start my training, all 96 hours of it. Through the course, I was taught the basic skills of how to take care of people. But even with the 16-week course, when I actually began working as a CNA, I realized how difficult and nuanced the job really is.

As we all know the current state requirement for CNA training is 90 hours. Though even the extra 6 hours I received did help me immensely, it still didn't feel like enough. I felt like I was not truly ready to be a CNA, but the skills and the experience I gained from my training would prove to be enough. Even though the majority of the learning happens on the job, I have found that having a solid knowledge base is quintessential to providing precise and helpful care. Now with my four years of experience working as a CNA, I am even more grateful that I received the thorough training I did. This confidence that I now have, makes me reflect on how the level of care I provide would be different if I received only 75 hours of training. What information would have been cut out of my program? What skills would I have not learned? Most importantly, would the knowledge that I would not learn to pose safety concerns for residents? The answer to this question is yes.

Not only this but lowering the class requirement by any significant amount, let alone 15 hours would make now necessary on-the-job training more difficult and time-consuming. Increasing the amount of on-the-job training would directly place increased stress on all of us in the healthcare profession, as the burden of teaching would fall on the already distressed workforce. As we've all seen since COVID-19 began a few years ago, the healthcare industry is suffering from a shortage of workers, and making their high-stress job even more stressful is only a recipe for disaster.

This shortage of workers can be just enough for some places to put CNAs with little training and experience to work in situations where they don't have a seasoned coworker beside them. This drastically increases the risk of an error and may I remind you, the people that pay the price of a mistake are your mothers, fathers, and grandparents; the people who need tender care

the most. If we reduce the number of hours of classroom training for CNAs, the direct result is that we also decrease the quality of care our loved ones are receiving. This nullifies the purpose of a CNA as they aren't able to care for their patients with the full extent of medicine available to them. Moreover, bringing in significantly less experienced CNAs and paying them the same rate as those already in the field sends the message that we are not valued. That our time and experience mean nothing in that perspective, and that would only increase worker dissatisfaction.

Staffing shortages are an issue that can be solved in a variety of ways and the cheapest and worst one is by simply cutting the class hours required to be a CNA. Cutting hours reduces the quality of care that a CNA is able to deliver. This can be avoided by attracting current CNAs who are more experienced in jobs and there are many methods by which to do this and keep those employees. Cutting CNA class hours is simply a band-aide on a bullethole, it might slow down the bleeding but what's really going to get you healthy again is a much more systemic change.

Solutions to this shortage can include broadening high school CNA programs much like the one I completed. Expanding CNA programs in general size and training would only benefit the care that our loved ones receive and would work to solve the issue of understaffing. Attracting current CNAs can be achieved by increasing wages and/or offering benefits for employees.

In conclusion, being a CNA is not for the faint of heart. It is a hard job, but the payoff of the connections that are formed with your loved ones is priceless. I want to continue being a CNA, but it is coming down to the point where my main thought is, *if not me then who?* I do not want to walk into work thinking that I am the one of few capable of providing good care. I want to be confident with those who I work with, and I want to be able to fall asleep at night assured that the resident I care so much about, are safe. I am asking you today, to please help me and so many other CNAs, care for what they do so much, and have peace of mind. Thank you again for allowing me to present my opinion. I also do have specific stories from my time as a CNA/CMA that directly correlate to ideas that I have presented in this text if you are interested in hearing them.

Thank you again for your time and consideration,

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