

ATTACHMENT C

Requirements for Paid Feeding Assistants (PFAs) in South Carolina Long Term Care Facilities

COMMON QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

- 1. What is the intent of this regulation?**
Provide more residents with help in eating and drinking to reduce the incidence of unplanned weight loss and dehydration.
- 2. What types of facilities does this apply to?**
All Medicare and Medicaid nursing facilities.
- 3. Is it mandatory that states participate in the PFA program?**
States have the flexibility not to implement a program.
- 4. Is South Carolina implementing PFA programs?**
Yes. Both the residents and staff will benefit from the PFA program.
- 5. If a state opts to participate in the PFA program, is it mandatory that all Medicare and/or Medicaid facilities participate?**
No. Facilities may decide whether or not to participate.
- 6. May individuals who have successfully completed an approved 80 hour CNA training program, but are no longer on the CNA registry serve as PFAs?**
Yes. As long as they can show proof of completion from a State-approved CNA training program and are not on the abuse registry.
- 7. What are some other examples of potential PFAs?**
Nonmedical facility employees, part-time workers such as retirees, homemakers, older students, etc. who do choose to work only a few hours a day.
- 8. What type of resident can a PFA feed?**
PFAs are used solely for feeding residents who have no feeding complications. They are permitted to feed residents only in the dining room and operate under the direction of a registered nurse or licensed practical nurse.
- 9. Will a criminal background check be required for PFAs?**
Yes. The state licensure laws require that all direct care staff have a criminal background check.

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- 10. Could a facility opt to use PFAs for one (1) or two (2) meals, but not all three (3) meals?**
Yes.
- 11. Do the same rules apply for snacks?**
Yes.
- 12. Does this new regulation mean that families and volunteers have to be trained if they feed residents?**
No. Volunteers can continue to feed residents and families can feed family members without being trained; however, it is recommended that the training be offered to both volunteers and family members since the facility is liable for the safety and well being of the residents.
- 13. Will facilities that are sanctioned for providing substandard quality of care continue to have PFA programs?**
Yes.
- 14. What is the approval process for a facility to implement a PFA program?**
SCDHHS has developed a PFA Core Curriculum Outline, based on the regulations. Facilities must sign a written agreement which outlines the conditions of approval and specifies the requirements for the PFA program, including the curriculum usage.
- 15. Can facilities use curricula developed by national associations?**
Yes, as long as they meet the requirements in the South Carolina Core Curriculum.
- 16. Will the State arrange for or maintain a Feeding Assistant Registry?**
No. However, each facility is required to maintain a record of the individuals who have successfully completed the PFA training.
- 17. Will there be a competency test for PFAs?**
No. PFAs will be required to complete a State-approved eight (8) hour course taught by a registered nurse or a licensed practical nurse.
- 18. How will facilities know if a person has completed a State-approved PFA course?**
Each person who completes a State-approved PFA course at another nursing facility or at a state approved nurse aide training program should receive a certificate of completion.

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19. How will this process be monitored?

State-approved training programs will be monitored by SCDHHS at the time of program recertification. SCDHEC will monitor during the survey process and provide the required federal oversight. If a resident has a feeding assistant, it should be documented on the resident's care plan.

20. If a facility chooses to hire PFAs, where is it reported on the cost report?

Nurse Aide Training cost center on the cost report.

21. Is any staff exempt from taking the training?

Any **licensed** personnel i.e. physical therapist, occupational therapist, speech pathologist, administrator, and social worker can be PFAs without completing the training. CNAs are also exempt.

22. What is the effective date of the regulation?

The regulations went into effect on October 27, 2003; however, SCDHHS did not implement until January 1, 2004