

White Paper: The Health Services Executive (HSE) in Ohio

Proposed by the Board of Executives of Long-Term Services and
Supports (BELTSS)

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Executive Summary

The HSE qualification recognizes a common core and unique entry level competencies by line of service. Successful demonstration of this combination of competencies as measured by education, experience and examination meets and exceeds the current requirements of licensure to practice as a licensed nursing home administrator (LNHA), an assisted living administrator (RCAL), and administrators practicing in the field of home and community based services (HCBS) in the majority of states, including Ohio.

Currently, most states have models representing nursing home licensure by:

- **Exam:** minimum education coursework, AIT/Practicum, state and NAB exam as indicated by state decisions (51 different state models).
- **Endorsement:** minimum experience standard for applicants moving across jurisdictional lines (51 different state models).
- **Reciprocity:** the practice of exchanging documents with others for mutual benefit, especially privileges granted by one state to another.

Licensure by Equivalency recognizes the HSE qualification standard as meeting licensure requirements for Ohio (*i.e. education, experience and national examination*). Upon validation from NAB of meeting the HSE equivalency qualification, Ohio would issue the applicable license to the candidate.

Ohio BELTSS proposed Licensure by Equivalency offers a solution to licensure portability. Portability models based on common competency standards have been successful in other professions (e.g. doctors, nurses, pharmacists, occupational therapists) as an acceptable pathway for entry-level and experienced practitioners to demonstrate qualification for licensure. NAB proposes, and BELTSS endorses, the new qualification standard of “Health Services Executive” (HSE) as a broader, more inclusive combination of education, experience, and examination as meeting the equivalence of licensure qualifications for nursing home administrators (NHAs), assisted living administrators (RCAL), and for home and community based services administrators (HCBS). Ohio wishes to adopt the HSE as an **aspirational** and **voluntary** license for nursing home administrators.

The Problem

Ohio has a growing system of long-term services and supports and LNHAs who need and desire additional education and a career ladder across the long-term services and supports continuum. Additionally, LNHAs face issues with license portability and the unintended barriers established by each state. Ohio desires exceptional candidates to efficiently earn the privilege to practice in this state while promoting public safety through rigorous education, ongoing competency development and accountability. States such as North Dakota and Kansas have adopted the HSE, and Minnesota and Nevada are actively working on legislation to establish a new HSE license category. Several other states (GA, NY, OK, CO, CA, WI, TN, VA, and AL) are also working on what they need to do to accomplish adoption. Ohio has always been seen as a leader nationally in long-term services and supports, and risks falling behind other states without adoption of the HSE license.

Why Address This Issue

1. Adopting this HSE licensure protects the public by assuring highly trained Health Services Executives serving consumers of long-term services and supports while recognizing the evolving continuum of care and services. These individuals will have gone above and beyond the minimum level requirements for licensure in Ohio.
2. Trained Health Services Executives would be better equipped to assist people in making decisions about how best to have their needs met in the living environment of their choice, regardless of setting.
3. The desire to keep Ohio in its current place as a leader in the field of long-term services and supports.
4. Enhances the image of the profession while removing unnecessary barriers to initial licensure and portability. Offers expanded career opportunities, which enhance recruitment and retention of a highly qualified leadership workforce.
5. Recognizes the long standing LNHA licensure transfer challenge confronting LTC professionals and national providers, and streamlines the regulatory interstate portability of license requirements.

The Solution

BELTSS believes that the HSE license will lead to higher quality of care by creating more highly educated executives. Those who pursue the license will have gone above and beyond the minimum requirements for nursing home administrator licensure and display a commitment to raising the bar for the profession. Organizations who hire an HSE know they are receiving a determined, dedicated health care professional. The HSE will also have knowledge of the continuum of care and be able to triage consumers for the most appropriate and cost-effective setting, which is crucial in today's fast-paced post-acute environment. An organization run by an HSE could be an effective marketing tool for attracting consumers of long-term services and supports, as well as other partners along the continuum of care.

Additionally, providers of home and community-based services would now have a choice when it comes to hiring executives. They can choose an individual who is an HSE, or one who is not an LNHA or HSE but has pursued the relevant track, i.e. a voluntary HCBS certification for a home health agency or hospice administrator position. In this setting, the HSE or individual with an HCBS certification can also triage consumers of long-term services and supports as well as prove to be an effective marketing tool for the organization.

Adopting the HSE license in Ohio requires modifying Chapter 4751 of the Ohio Revised Code to create a voluntary HSE license and authorize the Board to adopt rules governing the HSE. The HSE fits well with BELTSS' statutory charge in 4751.04 to "Create opportunities for the education, training, and credentialing of nursing home administrators and others in leadership positions who practice in long-term services and supports settings or who direct the practices of others in those settings". In carrying out this function, the board shall do the following:

- (a) Identify core competencies and areas of knowledge that are appropriate for nursing home administrators and others working within the long-term services and supports settings system, with an emphasis on all of the following:

- (i) Leadership;
- (ii) Person-centered care;
- (iii) Principles of management within both the business and regulatory environments;
- (iv) An understanding of all post-acute settings, including transitions from acute settings and between post-acute settings,

Assist in the development of a strong, competitive market in Ohio for training, continuing education, and degree programs in long-term services and supports settings administration.” (Emphasis Added)

HSE Pathways and Standards:

Experience Pathway to Health Services Executive License Requirements

- Online HSE application completed and submitted through ***NAB Verify***.
- Official Transcript verifying BA/BS from an accredited college or university.
- Passing exam score from time of initial licensure as an NHA, RCAL, and/or HCBS.
- Successful passing of additional 50 item line of service exams (NHA, RCAL, and/or HCBS) not included in exam of initial licensure.
- Review within the National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB) and finding no disqualifying actions.
- Verification of active engagement in the long term care field and/or long term care administrator profession in a licensed capacity in the following categories noted below as meeting the state AIT/practice requirements.

Education Entry-Level Pathway to Health Services Executive License Requirements

- Online HSE application completed and submitted through ***NAB Verify***.
- Official Transcript from a NAB-HSE Accredited college/university program showing completion.
- Successful completion of NAB Examination(s) required of a HSE within the two (2) years following application. Required HSE requirements are:
 - Complete and pass a 100 item core exam plus one line of service exam (NHA, RCAL, or HCBS).
 - Additional 50 Item specialty exams (NHA, RCAL, or HCBS) not completed above.
- Review within the National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB) and finding no disqualifying actions.

Source and Use of Associated Fees

BELTSS is entirely funded by its licensees. No funds are received from the General Revenue Fund (GRF). BELTSS recommends a \$50 application fee to cover the costs of processing and vetting the application and producing the license. HSEs would be required to renew biennially and obtain 10 CEUs in the domain of assisted living and/or home and community-based services in order to renew. The NHA license would also have to be kept current annually including all required CEUs and renewal fees in order to renew the HSE, since the LNHA is a foundational piece of the HSE license. The biennial renewal fee for the HSE would be \$100, to cover the cost (primarily staff time) of reviewing the CEUs for appropriateness and applicability and processing the renewal, as well as disciplinary actions if warranted. BELTSS anticipates a slow start as individuals begin learning about the license and pursuing it. An estimated 10-15 people would attain the license the first year, with an additional 25-30 the second and third year. In year four, the numbers would increase due to the graduates of the NAB-accredited university programs being eligible for the new license, which would add approximately 30 individuals per year. Some individuals may also transfer to Ohio with the license from other states and could be licensed by reciprocity.

The Desire for Knowledge

It is interesting to note that although Ohio does not require the licensing of Assisted Living Administrators, as of March 2018, 308 individuals (out of approximately 686 assisted living facilities) have taken a voluntary curriculum and national examination to receive a credential called *Certified Executive in Assisted Living (CEAL)* offered by the Ohio Centers for Assisted Living (OCAL). Additionally, the Ohio Health Care Association and the Ohio Council for Home Care and Hospice have jointly created the “Certified Executive for Health Care at Home” (CEHCH) as a new credential to address the Home and Community Based Services educational piece of the HSE. Thirty-two individuals have completed this inaugural course. This indicates a market and a desire for voluntary certifications for Assisted Living and Home and Community-Based Services executives. Ohio currently ranks third nationally in professionals actively pursuing the HSE qualification.

Stakeholder Support and Involvement

There is wide support for this initiative, from the national level to the state and local level. The Board of Executives of Long-Term Services and Supports (BELTSS), The Ohio Health Care Association, LeadingAge Ohio, The Academy of Senior Health Sciences, Kent State University, Bowling Green State University, and Shawnee State University (Universities in Ohio with NAB-accredited degree programs) are all supportive of this approach to licensure. The Ohio Department of Aging and the State of Ohio Long-Term Care Ombudsman’s Office have been informed of the HSE and are interested in policy and a well-trained competent work force to enhance the care and services for older adults and those with disabilities.

On the national level, the National Association of Long-Term Care Administrator Boards has pioneered and is strongly endorsing this approach. Not officially endorsing, but strongly encouraging success of this model, is the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS). Meetings with LeadingAge, the American Health Care Association, and the American College of Health Care Administrators have resulted

in positive support of this approach to licensure. Initial feedback received from individual LNHAs has also been positive and indicates an interest in learning more.

Conclusion

The Unified Long Term-Care System advisory group produced a final report in 2012 which helped change the scope and authority of the BELTSS Board, the structure and affiliation of the Board, and designed a plan for creating *“a unified system of education and training, and, where appropriate, credentialing and licensing of long-term care administrators and other administrative positions of leadership throughout our LTSS system”*. The conclusion stated *“By doing so, we will be better positioned to provide the most responsive and cost-effective, person-centered long-term care for Ohio’s citizens, regardless of setting. In addition, and as important, we believe that these changes will make LTSS administration and leadership an attractive practice choice for those seeking meaningful careers in our state.”* Ohio has long been recognized as a leader in the provision of long-term services and supports. Being among the first states to adopt the HSE license will continue to keep Ohio at the forefront of innovation in the provision of long-term services and supports, allow professionally trained Health Services Executives to assist people in making decisions about how best to get their needs met in the living environment of choice, and allow LNHAs to raise the bar of the profession and achieve a higher licensure status.

Definitions

NAB

“NAB” stands for The National Association of Long Term Care Administrator Boards.

Licensure by Equivalency

“Licensure by Equivalency” means the board may license any person qualified as a Health Services Executive (HSE) by the National Association of Long Term Care Administrator Boards (NAB) through licensure by equivalency as meeting the minimum qualifications of a nursing home, assisted living, or home and community based service administrator (*as applicable to Ohio licensure requirements*). All final licensure decisions are made by the Ohio BELTSS board.

Health Services Executive

"Health Services Executive" is a licensed individual who has entry level competencies of a nursing facility, assisted living community and home and community based services in Ohio or another state.

Practice as Health Services Executive

“Practice as Health Services Executive” is a license that is developed to recognize and promote a quality entry-level education, continued competency, and accountability of leadership that ultimately provides quality services and support in a home-like setting with a commitment to choice, dignity, independence, individuality, and privacy based on client/resident needs and preference in skilled nursing facilities, assisted living communities, and home and community-based services.

NAB Domains of Practice

“NAB Domains of Practice” are the tasks performed and the knowledge and skills identified as necessary to perform those tasks by NAB in its Professional Practice Analysis. The NAB Domains of Practice can be found on the National Association of Long Term Care Administrator Boards website. The domains are validated through a national survey of administrators representing multiple lines of service and updated every five to seven years.

NAB Verify

NAB Verify is the national application and review process for qualification for the HSE license.