LAST UPDATED: SEPTEMBER 30, 2025

MEDICAID ENTERPRISE SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION

CMA FAQ Revised Sept 2025

For Georgia Department of Community Health

PREPARED BY







Georgia Certified Medication Aide Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What is the Georgia Medication Aide Registry?**

   The Georgia Medication Aide Registry is the web-based system for listing unlicensed persons who have qualified to administer certain medications in assisted living communities (ALCs), nursing homes and penal institutions as permitted by Georgia law, O.C.G.A. §31-7- 12.2, O.C.G.A. § 31-2-5, O.C.G.A. § 31-2-7 and O.C.G.A § 31-2-19. This Registry is operated by the Alliant Health Solutions on behalf of the Department of Community Health (DCH).

2. **Can GA Certified Medication Aides work in penal institutions?**

   Yes. Passed in GA H.B.497 and permitted by Georgia law O.C.G.A § 31-2-19.

3. **Who may be listed on the Georgia Mediation Aide Registry?**

   Only Georgia-Certified Nurse Aides (CNAs) in good standing who successfully complete the Georgia Medication Aide Training Program at an approved healthcare care facility may be listed on the Georgia Medication Aide Registry.

4. **What are the requirements to become a Georgia Medication Aide?**

   A CNA, on the Georgia Certified Nurse Aide Registry who is ACTIVE with no findings of abuse, neglect or misappropriation, is eligible to take the standardized medication aide training program. The medication aide training program must be administered by a Georgia licensed registered nurse or pharmacist utilizing the standardized medication aide training curriculum. The CNA must successfully complete the medication aide training program, which includes the completion of the required skills checklist and take a standardized written state competency examination. The written state competency exam must be passed with a minimum score of 80 percent. The CNA will have up to three times to pass the state standardized written competency examination within 90 days before having to retake the entire medication aide training program again.

5. **Where can I take the Medication Aide Program?**

   Many approved healthcare facilities, using the services of a registered nurse or pharmacist to teach the class, are expected to offer the approved training curriculum necessary for you to qualify to take the test to be listed on the medication aide registry. A list of registered nurses and pharmacists, who have registered to administer the Medication Aide Training Curriculum, is on the Georgia Care Connect website at https://careconnect.georgia.gov and select the Certified Medication Aide tab.

6. **Does a certified nursing assistant wanting to take the certified medication aide course have to work at an assisted living community, nursing home or penal institution at the time they take the certified medication aide training?**

   No. It is possible that a certified nurse aide could take the Georgia certified medication aide training class without having a job in an assisted living community, nursing home or penal institution at the time that certification as a medication aide is obtained. Remember though, that the completion of skills competency checklist must be done by the aide in a setting where the residents require medication administration, etc. Also, please remember the only place where a certified medication aide is authorized to function as a certified medication aide is in an assisted living community, nursing home or penal institution.

7. **Can a registered nurse or pharmacist train nurse aides without being approved as a Georgia Certified Medication Aide instructor?**

   No. The registered nurse or pharmacist must be active in good standing on the Georgia Secretary of State Board of Nursing or Georgia Board of Pharmacy. The nurse aide's name will not appear on the CMA registry if the instructor is not approved as a CMA instructor. A list of registered nurses and pharmacists, who have registered to administer the Medication Aide Training Curriculum, is on the Georgia Care Connect website at https://careconnect.georgia.gov, and select the Certified Medication Aide tab.

8. **Where do I take the written examination?**

   State medication aide written examinations are available to those who pass a Georgia Medication Aide Training Program. The examination is a computer-based standardized written test and must be proctored by the direct supervision of the Georgia-licensed registered nurse or pharmacist.

9. **What computer requirements are needed for the CMA on-line examination?**

   Note that a supported browser must be used to take the CMA Online Competency Test. Supported browsers include Microsoft Internet Explorer (versions 7.0 and above), Google Chrome, Apple Safari (versions 4.0 and above) and Firefox 9 (versions 7.0 and above). If a supported browser isn't used, the nurse aide may have issues viewing the full test screen, which could result in not being able to finish the exam.

10. Must the aide pay the $25 fee before taking the computer-based written competency test?

No, not necessarily. An applicant will be permitted by the computer-based system to take the written competency test without having paid the $25 fee. The key to being able to take the written computer-based competency test is the attestation by the instructor on the website that the instructor has personally observed the applicant successfully complete the skills competency checklist. The current computer-based system is set up to allow the applicant to print out a successful completion certificate after the written exam is passed. However, the applicant's name will not be certified as a medication aide on the registry until payment of the $25 fee is verified. Once the fee is verified, the CMA is placed in active status and the verification of certification by the assisted living community, nursing home or penal institution employer can be printed from the web portal.

11. How do I pay the $25 application fee to become a certified medication aide?

An applicant to become a certified medication aide can pay the $25 credit or debit card. The applicant must have the Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) identification number issued by the Georgia Nurse Aide Registry readily available to apply to become a Certified Medication Aide. To pay by debit or credit card, select on this link https://forms.dch.georgia.gov/Forms/HFRD_CMA_Payment to go to the secure website where your debit or credit card information will be accepted. You will need your CNA # for identification purposes. A separate debit or credit card payment must be made for each applicant to ensure that the application can be properly tracked. **Checks or money orders are not accepted.**

12. How do registered nurses and pharmacists become eligible to administer the Medication Aide Registry Program?

Interested Georgia registered nurses and pharmacists may register with the Georgia Medication Aide Registry to administer the Georgia Medication Aide Training Program by completing a simple on-line application the Georgia Care Connect website at https://careconnect.georgia.gov and select the CMA Instructor Login tab. Registering once via the web provides the nurse or pharmacist with a username and password that can be used subsequently to validate that the nurse or pharmacist administered the skills competency checklist to the aide.

13. Is it required that a detailed medication aide training program curriculum be developed by the approved licensed registered nurse or pharmacist? Will the curriculum need approval form the state?

Yes. The law requires you to use the Department-approved standardized skills checklist. However, as the listed CMA study guide is not a training curriculum, but an optional tool to use as study practice, in developing a detailed curriculum you may certainly supplement the Department-approved medication aide training guide and checklist with your own training materials.

The additional training materials you use must not conflict with the Departmentapproved standardized skills checklist, the Rules and Regulations for Assisted Living Communities, Chapter 111-8-63, Nursing homes Regulations O.C.G.A. § 31-2-5 and O.C.G.A. § 31-2-7 and penal institution O.C.G.A § 31-2-19. The CMA training program must include enough lecture and training hours to adequate cover all skills listed on the mandatory skills checklist. A CMA training program should be more than 3 days.

No. The curriculum will not need approval from the state but **must** be kept at the facility for state survey auditors.

14. How must the clinical skills checklist be administered?

The instructor (a licensed physician, registered nurse or pharmacist) who has provided the medication aide training to the qualified applicant/student aide must personally observe the applicant/student complete without prompting the tasks listed on the Department's standardized skills checklist for medication administration. This personal observation must occur in a setting where a certified medication aide may be authorized to function for individuals who actually require the administration of their medications. The candidate cannot be checked off in a lab setting; the skills must be performed on a resident in a nursing home, assisted living facility or penal institution. (Under Georgia law, certified medication aides may only function in nursing homes and assisted living communities, i.e. personal care homes with 25 beds or more which are in the process of becoming licensed as assisted living communities.)

15. The skills competency checklist has observations for specialized medications, e.g. enema. What if there is no resident that the aide can administer an enema to at the time that the skills competency checklist is completed?

At the present time, the completion of the skills competency checklist on-line requires the entry of a date of completion for all tasks listed on the checklist. Ideally, it is expected that all tasks will be performed by the aides for residents requiring the particular tasks. In isolated instances, the community may not have a resident who requires the performance of a specialized task, such as the administration of an enema, at the time that the skills competency checklist is being administered. Where there is no resident available for the aide to perform such a specialized task, the instructor must have the aide correctly identify all tasks associated with the appropriate completion of the task to enter the completion date on the checklist. The licensed healthcare professional must then note in the comments section that the actual performance of the specialized task could not be observed. If at a later date, a resident does require a CMA to administer an enema, the specific CMA would have to be determined competent on that particular specialized task by a licensed healthcare professional personally observing the aide perform the task before

allowing the aide to perform the specialized task independently. The instructor would initial/update the hard copy of the skills checklist for that particular task for that specific CMA at that time in the comments section.

16. **May an aide take the training class from one registered instructor (registered nurse, pharmacist) but have registered nurse, pharmacist observe the completion of the skills competency checklist?**

    Yes, one licensed professional who has registered as an instructor could do the training. Another licensed professional who has also registered as an instructor could observe the aide complete the skills competency checklist (back in the community/facility where the aide works) and enter the appropriate attestation statement regarding satisfactory completion of the skills competency checklist. A copy of the skills competency checklist must be retained in the aide's employment file.

17. **Can I work in another healthcare field as a medication aide if I only passed the Georgia Certified Medication Aide exam?**

    NO. A Georgia state certified medication aide can only work as a certified medication aide in a Georgia ALC, Nursing Homes or Penal Institution.

18. **How do I renew my Georgia Certified Medication Aide Registry listing?**

    Medication aides must renew their certification as medication aides every two years. To be "qualified" to continue to remain on the Certified Medication Aide Registry, the aide must be in good standing on the CMA Registry (no termination for cause relating to medications) and submit the following:

    - A skills competency checklist satisfactorily completed by a Georgia licensed registered nurse or pharmacist within the **preceding** eighteen (18) months of expiration date;
    - An application sent to the CMA registry demonstrating that the CMA has worked in an assisted living community within the past 24 months of expiration date;
    - Payment of the renewal fee of $25 either by credit/debit card at https://forms.dch.georgia.gov/Forms/HFRD_CMA_Payment

Renewal is the responsibility of the medication aide. Anytime there is a 24-month period during which a medication aide does not produce evidence of satisfactory completion of a skills competency checklist before a Georgia licensed registered nurse or pharmacist, then the aide must start the train-

ing program over as if never registered. The aide would need to complete a new Medication Aide Training Program, complete the standardized skills competency checklist, pass the written standardized examination and pay the certification fee.

19. How does a certified medication aide lose "good standing" on the Medication Aide Registry? What can the aide do if the aide doesn't agree with the termination for cause?

A medication aide loses "good standing" on the Medication Aide Registry by being separated (terminated, fired) by an assisted living community, nursing home or penal institution for causes relating to the poor performance of medication aide tasks. If a medication aide loses "good standing", the medication aide will not be eligible to work as a certified medication aide in another assisted living community, nursing home and penal institution.

If a medication aide believes that he/she should not have been separated for cause for poor performance, then the aide must timely appeal the separation notice through the Department of Labor. If the Department of Labor finally upholds the separation for cause, then the medication aide will lose "good standing" on the registry. If the medication aide does not appeal the separation or the Department of Labor upholds the separation for cause, then the aide will lose "good standing "on the registry.

20. How long will it take to renew a medication aide listing?

Allow 30 business days from the date all the required information and documentation is uploaded to the on-line registry system.

21. Is there a medication aide registry fee?

Yes. It costs $25.00 to take the state written competency exam the first time and then $25.00 to renew the certified medication aide registry listing every two (2) years. An applicant to become a certified medication aide can pay the $25 fee debit or credit card. The applicant must have the Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) identification number issued by the Georgia Nurse Aide Registry readily available to apply to become a Certified Medication Aide. To pay by debit or credit card, please select the link below https://forms.dch.georgia.gov/Forms/HFRD_CMA_Payment to go to the secure website where your debit or credit card information will be accepted. You will need your CNA # for identification purposes. A separate debit card or credit card must be made for each applicant to ensure that the application can be properly tracked.

22. Will a medication aide receive a certification card?

NO. All verification must be completed via the Georgia Care Connect website at https://careconnect.georgia.gov, and select Certified Medication Aide tab. The medication aide and/or employer can print the verification from the web portal.

23. What is the initial listing date for a Certified Medication Aide?

The initial listing date is the date the medication aide passed the state standardized competency evaluation, and all the necessary documentation has been submitted

24. How does the Georgia Medication Aide Registry determine a listing expiration date?

The initial listing expiration date is twenty-four (24) months (two years) from the date the medication aide passes the competency evaluation.

After the initial listing, the expiration date could vary depending on when the medication aide submits the renewal documentation or if a new training program and state written competency examination is required.

25. How can I or my employer verify my registry listing?

Go to the Georgia Care Connect website at https://careconnect.georgia.gov, select the Certified Medication Aide tab, select search for medication aide link to print verification information.

26. How do I report address and name changes?

Name changes may be reported in the following ways:

- By using the Name/Address Change Reporting Form- (attach PDF Form)
- By writing the registry – see Question 32 below for the registry address Include the following in letter for mailing address:
    1. Name
    2. Old and New mailing address
    3. SSN or CMA#
    4. Phone Number

Include the following in letter for name change:

1. Your previous name, full new name, mailing address, phone # & SSN or CMA#
2. A COPY of court issued marriage certificate, divorce decree, or other legal document that clearly states the name change
3. A COPY of your new, signed social security card that displays the new name

If you are listed on the Certified Nurse Aide Registry and Medication Aide Registry, your changes will appear on both registries.

27. **Does an assisted living community provider have to train certified medication aides before applying to become licensed as an assisted living community?**
    To be licensed as an assisted living community, the assisted living community must have certified medication aides listed on the CNA/CMA registry on its staff. Whether the community trains the CMAs itself or just hires CMAs off the CNA/CMA registry is up to the community.

28. **What in-service training hours are required for certified medication aides?**
    As employees of the assisted living community, certified medication aides are subject to the same training requirements as other employees. In their first year of employment, certified medication aides must receive 24 hours of training covering topics as outlined in the Rules for Assisted Living Communities, Chapter 111-8-63, especially Rule 111-8-63- .09(2) and (5). After the first year of employment, the certified medication aide must receive 16 hours of training each year. Nursing homes must follow the Georgia Department of Community Health and Healthcare Care Facility policies regarding in-service training hours. Penal Institutions must follow the Georgia Department of Community Health policies regarding in-service training hours.

29. **How long are approved healthcare facilities required to keep the hard copy skills checklists for certified medication aides on file in the facility?**
    Assisted living communities are required to keep personnel files on employees for three years following the employee's departure or discharge. The file must include evidence of skills competency determinations and recertifications. See Rule 111-8-63-.09(15) Nursing homes must follow the Georgia Department of Community Health Nursing Home policy. Penal Institutions must follow the Georgia Department of Community Health policy.

30. **Must the Assisted Living Community (ALC), nursing home or penal institution provide documentation to the Georgia Medication Aide Registry if the medication aide is terminated for cause relating to the performance of medication administration tasks?**
    Yes. The ALC and nursing home must provide a copy of the Separation Notice to the Georgia Medication Aide Registry if the certified medication aide is separated for cause related to the performance of duties as a certified medication aide. This Separation Notice must be filed with the

Georgia Medication Aide Registry after the time for appealing the termination for cause has expired or after the facility receives a final administrative decision processed through the Department of Labor that the separation for cause has been upheld.

31. Where must the ALC, nursing home or penal institution submit the termination documents?

Submit only those separation notices where the certified medication aide was terminated for cause related to the administration of medications to the Georgia Medication Aide Registry in care of Alliant Health Solutions at P O Box 105753, Atlanta, GA 30348.

32. What state agency handles complaints against medication aides?

Complaints about medication aides are handled by the ALC, nursing home or penal institutions in which they work, as any other employee of the ALC, nursing home or penal institution. If a resident or family member has concerns about the quality of care being provided in the ALC, nursing home or penal institution, then the resident or family member may file a complaint against the ALC or nursing home with the Healthcare Facility Regulation Division, Department of -Community Health by calling 404-657-5700 or mailto:hfrdcomplaintintake@dch.ga.gov. **Penal Institution complaints are filed with the Georgia Department of Corrections at 404-656-4661**

33. Will a finding on the medication aide registry affect my Certified Nurse Aide listing?

No, not directly. But if the certified medication aide has "good standing" removed, then another employer might be reluctant to hire them to work as a CNA.

34. How can I contact the Georgia Medication Aide Registry?

You may contact the registry staff at (678) 527-3010 on weekdays from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m., excluding holidays. All written correspondence should be uploaded on the web portal at https://careconnect.georgia.gov, or mailed to Georgia Medication Aide Registry, P O Box 105753, Atlanta, GA 30358.

Revised Sept 2025