

1: Introduction to Healthcare Settings

- **HOSA Alignment:** Health Professions Category - Healthcare Systems Knowledge
- **NNAAP Alignment:** Role of the Nurse Aide - Member of the Health Care Team (8% of NNAAP exam)

Lesson Objective: You will learn about the different healthcare settings where CNAs work and understand how you fit into the healthcare team. You will identify the main responsibilities of a CNA and recognize how this career can grow into exciting opportunities in nursing and healthcare.

Top 5 Important Items:

Introduction to Healthcare Settings

1. Understanding Healthcare Settings

You will work in places like nursing homes, hospitals, assisted living facilities, and home health agencies. Each setting has different patient needs and daily routines.

2. The Healthcare Team

You are part of a team that includes nurses, doctors, therapists, and other professionals. Everyone works together to give patients the best care possible.

3. CNA Scope of Practice

You have specific tasks you can and cannot do as a CNA. Knowing your responsibilities keeps patients safe and protects your nursing license.

4. Patient-Centered Care

Your job focuses on helping patients with daily activities like bathing, dressing, eating, and moving safely. You spend the most time with patients and get to know them best.

5. Career Pathways

Starting as a CNA opens doors to becoming an LPN, RN, or other healthcare professionals. Many successful nurses began their careers exactly where you are now.



Starting your CNA career places you on the front lines of patient care, where your skills and compassion directly impact lives and open doors to many healthcare opportunities.

Your Future in Healthcare

A Certified Nursing Assistant, or CNA, is a healthcare professional who provides hands-on care to patients in various settings. You help people with their daily activities when they cannot fully care for themselves. This includes helping with bathing, dressing, eating, and moving around safely. You spend the most time with patients, making you the eyes and ears of the healthcare team. You notice changes in their condition and report important information to nurses and doctors.

Your role creates a unique bond with patients. You are there during their most vulnerable moments, providing not just physical assistance but also a friendly presence and genuine care. This personal connection makes the CNA role both meaningful and rewarding.

Where Do CNAs Work?

CNAs work in many different healthcare settings, each offering unique patient experiences and learning opportunities.

Long-Term and Assisted Living Care

Nursing homes, also called long-term care facilities, are where many CNAs begin their careers. These facilities provide 24-hour care for people who cannot live independently, often elderly residents who need ongoing assistance. You help the same residents every day, building genuine relationships and becoming part of their daily routine. The pace allows you to practice skills thoroughly and develop confidence.

Assisted living facilities offer a middle ground. Residents need some help but maintain more independence than nursing home residents. Your role focuses on supporting residents while encouraging them to do as much as they can for themselves. This setting teaches you how to balance providing assistance with promoting independence.



CNAs spend more direct time with patients than any other healthcare professional, making them the eyes and ears of the healthcare team.

Hospitals, Acute and Rehab Care

Hospitals employ CNAs in various departments, from medical-surgical units to emergency rooms and intensive care units. Hospital work tends to be faster-paced, with patients coming and going more frequently. You might care for someone recovering from surgery one day and someone with a medical emergency the next. This variety helps you learn quickly and develop diverse skills.

Rehabilitation centers help patients recover from injuries, surgeries, or illnesses. You work alongside physical therapists and occupational therapists to help patients regain their strength and independence. Your role here includes encouraging patients through difficult exercises and celebrating their progress milestones.

Your CNA scope of practice is set by state law to protect patient safety and your certification.

Your Future in Healthcare

Home and Hospice Care

Home health agencies send CNAs directly to patients' homes to provide care in familiar surroundings. This one-on-one setting lets you really get to know your patients and their families. You adapt care to each home's unique environment and help patients maintain independence in their own space.

Hospice care provides comfort to patients nearing the end of life. This setting requires CNAs with compassion and excellent observation skills. You focus on patient comfort and dignity while supporting grieving families.

Your Role on the Healthcare Team

As a CNA, you are a vital member of an interdisciplinary healthcare team. This team includes registered nurses (RNs), licensed practical nurses (LPNs), doctors, physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech therapists, social workers, and dietary staff. Each person brings different skills and knowledge to patient care.

Your position on this team is special because you provide the most direct, hands-on care. While nurses give medications and doctors make diagnoses, you help with the fundamental activities of daily living. You assist with bathing, grooming, toileting, eating, and mobility. You take vital signs like temperature, blood pressure, and pulse. You help maintain a safe, clean, and comfortable patient environment.

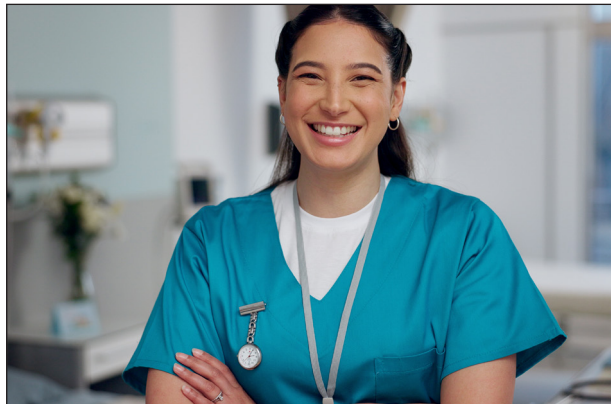
Communication is one of your most important responsibilities. You report changes in a patient's condition to the

nursing staff immediately. If a patient refuses to eat, develops a new skin problem, seems confused, or complains of pain, you need to let the nurse know right away. Your observations often provide the first warning signs that something is wrong.

Understanding Your Scope of Practice

Your scope of practice defines what you can and cannot do as a CNA. Every

state has laws and regulations that specify CNA responsibilities. Understanding these boundaries keeps patients safe and protects your career. Generally, CNAs can perform tasks related to basic patient care and comfort. You can help with hygiene, feeding, positioning, and mobility. You can take vital signs and document your observations.



The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that CNA jobs will grow much faster than average for all occupations due to the aging population.

However, certain tasks are outside your scope of practice. CNAs cannot give medications, even over-the-counter drugs like pain relievers. You cannot perform sterile procedures or change sterile dressings. You cannot make diagnoses or create care plans. You cannot take telephone orders from doctors. You cannot insert or remove tubes of any kind. You also cannot cut or file toenails if a patient has diabetes or circulation problems, because these conditions require specialized foot care by a nurse or podiatrist to prevent serious infections.

Healthcare teams are called interdisciplinary because they bring together professionals from different disciplines like nursing, medicine, physical therapy, social work, and dietary services.

Your Future in Healthcare

If someone asks you to do something you are not trained or authorized to do, speak up. Say, “That’s outside my scope of practice. Let me get the nurse to help you.” Never attempt tasks beyond your training, even if you think you can figure it out.

Building Your Career Path

Starting as a CNA opens doors to many healthcare careers. Many successful nurses, from LPNs to nurse practitioners, began as CNAs. The experience you gain as a CNA gives you a strong foundation for understanding patient care. You learn medical terminology, develop clinical skills, and discover how healthcare facilities operate. This knowledge makes nursing school easier because you already understand the basics.

Some CNAs advance their careers by specializing in certain areas. You might become a restorative aide, helping patients with rehabilitation exercises. You could train as a medication aide in states that allow this expanded role. Some CNAs become unit coordinators or schedulers, taking on leadership responsibilities while staying in long-term care. Others use their experience as a stepping stone to become paramedics, surgical technicians, or other healthcare professionals.

The demand for CNAs continues to grow as the population ages. The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that CNA jobs will increase much faster than average for all occupations. This growth means job security and opportunities to choose where and when you work. Many facilities offer flexible schedules,

making it easier to balance work with school if you decide to continue your education.

Setting Yourself Up for Success

Successful CNAs balance three key areas: professional skills, personal wellness, and clear communication. You maintain professional boundaries while being caring—staying friendly but remembering your role is professional, not personal. You develop strong time management skills to handle multiple patients efficiently without feeling overwhelmed.

Your physical and emotional health matters too. Healthcare work is demanding, so taking care of yourself through rest, healthy habits, and stress management helps you provide better care to others.



Some CNAs focus on areas like pediatrics, geriatrics, or post-surgical care, building unique career paths.

Your CNA journey starts here with understanding the healthcare landscape and your place in it. Whether you stay in this role long-term or use it as a stepping stone to nursing or other healthcare careers, the skills you gain will serve you throughout your professional life. Welcome to a career that truly makes a difference in people’s lives.

CNAs work in more than six different healthcare settings including nursing homes, hospitals, assisted living facilities, rehabilitation centers, home health agencies, and hospice care programs.

1: Introduction to Healthcare Settings - Guided Notes

Three Most Important Concepts

Identify and explain the three most important topics you learned from the article.

Concept 1: _____

Concept 2: _____

Concept 3: _____

Main Concept Overview

Complete the sentences below using the words from the word bank.

Word Bank: interdisciplinary, scope of practice, hands-on, eyes and ears, home health

1. A Certified Nursing Assistant provides _____ care to patients in various healthcare settings.
2. CNAs spend the most time with patients, making them the _____ of the healthcare team.
3. Your _____ defines what tasks you can and cannot perform as a CNA.
4. CNAs work in many settings including nursing homes, hospitals, assisted living, and _____ care.
5. The healthcare team is _____, meaning it includes many different professionals working together.

Matching Section

Match each term with its correct description.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| _____ 1. Long-term care facility | A. Provides end-of-life comfort and support to patients |
| _____ 2. Scope of practice | B. A team with nurses, doctors, therapists, and other professionals |
| _____ 3. Hospice care | C. Laws that define what CNAs can and cannot do |
| _____ 4. Interdisciplinary team | D. Facilities that provide 24-hour care for people who cannot live independently |
| _____ 5. Rehabilitation center | E. Helps patients recover strength and independence after injury or surgery |

True/False Questions

Write **T** for True or **F** for False in the blank.

1. ____ CNAs can give over-the-counter medications to patients if they ask for them.
2. ____ Hospital work for CNAs tends to be faster-paced than nursing home work.
3. ____ CNAs are responsible for making diagnoses and creating patient care plans.
4. ____ Many successful nurses began their careers as CNAs.
5. ____ Assisted living residents need less help than nursing home residents and maintain more independence.

Fill in the Table

List five basic patient care tasks that CNAs perform as part of their daily responsibilities.

CNA Daily Responsibilities	Your Examples
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Application Question

If you were deciding between working in a nursing home or a hospital as a new CNA, what factors would you consider? Explain how the two settings differ in pace, patient relationships, and daily responsibilities.

1: Introduction to Healthcare Settings - Hypotheticals

Scenario 1: First Day Choices

You just completed your CNA certification and received three job offers. The first is at a large hospital on a medical-surgical floor with 12-hour shifts and higher pay. The second is at a nursing home near your house with 8-hour shifts and consistent residents. The third is with a home health agency offering flexible hours and one-on-one patient care.

- A. Based on the article, what are the main differences between these three healthcare settings in terms of pace, patient relationships, and daily responsibilities?
- B. Which setting would help you build the strongest foundational CNA skills as a new graduate, and why?
- C. How might your choice affect your future career path in healthcare?

Scenario 2: Scope of Practice Situation

During your shift at an assisted living facility, a resident's family member asks you to give their mother her afternoon blood pressure medication because the nurse is busy with another patient. You know where the medication is kept, and the family member says, "You take blood pressure all the time, so you know about this stuff."

- A. According to your scope of practice, can you give this medication? Why or why not?
- B. What should you say to the family member, and what action should you take instead?
- C. How does following your scope of practice protect both you and the patient?

Scenario 3: Team Communication Challenge

You are working in a rehabilitation center, helping Mr. Garcia practice walking with his walker. You notice he seems more unsteady today than yesterday, and he mentions feeling dizzy when he stands. The physical therapist already finished her session with him this morning and left. The nurse is in a meeting for another 20 minutes.

- A. Why is your observation about Mr. Garcia's condition important to the healthcare team?
- B. What should you do immediately, and who needs to receive this information?
- C. How does this situation show the CNA's role as the "eyes and ears" of the healthcare team?

Scenario 4: Career Path Planning

Your friend Maria is deciding whether to become a CNA or go straight to nursing school. She wants to become an RN eventually but is worried that working as a CNA first will delay her nursing career. You share what you learned about CNA career pathways and how many successful nurses started as CNAs.

- A. What are three benefits of working as a CNA before becoming a nurse that you could explain to Maria?
- B. How does CNA experience help prepare someone for nursing school and working as an RN?
- C. What other healthcare careers could Maria pursue using CNA experience as a foundation?

1: Introduction to Healthcare Settings - Reflection Questions

1

Which healthcare setting described in the article appeals to you most, and why does it match your personality or career goals?

Think about whether you prefer building long-term relationships with patients or experiencing variety and faster-paced work. Consider your strengths in communication, time management, and handling change.

2

How do you think being the “eyes and ears” of the healthcare team will feel when you start working as a CNA?

Imagine noticing an important change in a patient’s condition and reporting it to the nurse. What responsibilities come with being the person who spends the most time observing patients?

3

What aspect of the CNA scope of practice surprised you most, and how will knowing these boundaries help you in your future work?

Consider which tasks you thought CNAs could do but actually cannot. Think about how following your scope of practice protects both patients and your certification.

TERM	DEFINITION
Assisted Living	
Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)	
Healthcare Team	
Home Health	
Hospice	
Interdisciplinary	
Long-Term Care Facility	
Rehabilitation Center	
Scope of Practice	
Vital Signs	

Introduction to Long-Term Care and Healthcare Settings

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Scope of Practice

Rehabilitation Center

Long-Term Care Facility

Healthcare Team

Certified Nursing Assistant

Vital Signs

Interdisciplinary

Hospice

Home Health

Assisted Living

Introduction to Long-Term Care and Healthcare Settings

Across

4. A healthcare facility that helps patients recover strength, mobility, and independence after illness, injury, or surgery through physical therapy and other treatments. ____ Center

5. A group of professionals including doctors, nurses, therapists, and CNAs who work together to provide complete patient care. Each member has specific responsibilities and expertise. ____ Team

6. A healthcare professional who provides hands-on basic care to patients, including help with bathing, dressing, eating, and mobility. CNAs work under the supervision of nurses. Certified ____ Assistant

7. A residential setting that provides 24-hour nursing care and assistance for people who cannot live independently. Also called nursing homes or skilled nursing facilities. ____ Care Facility

8. A residential facility for people who need some help with daily activities but want to maintain independence. Residents have their own apartments and receive support services as needed. (Two words)

10. Specialized care focused on comfort and quality of life for patients nearing the end of life. The goal is to provide dignity and support rather than cure.

Down

1. Involving multiple professional disciplines working together toward a common goal. In healthcare, this means doctors, nurses, therapists, and other specialists collaborate on patient care.

2. Healthcare services provided in a patient's own home instead of a facility. CNAs visit patients to help with daily activities in familiar surroundings. (Two words)

3. Basic measurements of body functions including temperature, pulse, blood pressure, and respiration rate. CNAs take vital signs to monitor patient health and detect changes. (Two words)

9. The specific tasks, procedures, and responsibilities that a healthcare professional is legally allowed to perform based on their training and certification. These boundaries protect patients and healthcare workers. ____ of Practice

