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December 20, 2019

Senator Erin Herbig, Chair  
Representative Jessica Fay, Chair  
Commission to Study Long-term Care Workforce Issues  
#100 State House Station  
Augusta, Maine 04333-0100

Dear Senator Herbig, Representative Fay, and Members of the Commission to Study Long-term Care Workforce Issues:

Thank you for sharing your concerns regarding the revised Personal Support Specialist (PSS) curriculum in your recent letter.

The Division of Licensing and Certification's (DLC) Workforce Development Unit was tasked with the challenge of revising the PSS curriculum in large part because the textbook associated with the program is out of print. There were also concerns regarding the scope of practice being taught in the course and potential conflicts with other relevant State Agency jurisdictions such as the Board of Nursing's (BON) Certified Nursing Assistant courses and the BON rules regarding delegation of nursing care to unlicensed assistive persons.

As part of the development of the new PSS curriculum, staff conducted a review of the draft PSS curriculum that was written in 2010 and utilized for the Direct Service Worker Training Project (DSWTP), which was funded through a grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). A determination was made that this draft curriculum would require revisions and updating due to content that conflicted with the BON scope of nursing delegation. DLC made the determination that it was more beneficial to start with a clean slate and the new revised PSS curriculum was shared with the BON to ensure that the curriculum did not conflict with BON rules.

The implementation of the new PSS curriculum started on October 1, 2019. Stakeholders were sent notice of the new curriculum and the roll-out plan in September and were advised that, after December 31, 2019, DLC would only issue course certificates based on the new curriculum. Since utilization of this new curriculum has been in place since October 1, 2019 and there have been several trainers and courses conducted with this new curriculum, we are unable to delay the launch of this curriculum.

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However, the Department can accommodate the Commission's request for a delay in the end date for utilization of the old curriculum for an additional 90 days until April 1 to allow for further review and discussion. We will post this on the DHHS website and inform stakeholders of this extra time.

The Division of Licensing and Certification and the Office of Aging and Disability Services would welcome the opportunity to work with the Commission, Legislature, and stakeholders on the curriculum going forward.

Sincerely,



Jeanne M. Lambrew, Ph.D.  
Commissioner

JML/klv

cc: William Montejo, Director, Division of Licensing and Certification  
Molly Bogart, Director of Government Relations