

# Nursing Assistant

## *Nature of the Profession*

*Nursing assistants, also called nursing aides, perform a variety of duties to care for sick and injured people under the direction of nurses. They answer patients' bell calls, deliver messages, serve meals, and make beds. They also feed, bathe, and dress patients; take temperatures; and help patients get around. Some store or move supplies and clean patients' rooms. Those who work in patients' homes may also clean laundry, plan meals, shop for food, and prepare meals.*

## **APTITUDES**

- Be able to learn the methods and procedures of patient care.
- Have average verbal and numerical abilities.
- Be able to move often from one task to another and to use several different skills.
- Have good space and form perception and hand and finger dexterity.
- Be able to work with people who are ill.
- Be able to respond quickly in emergencies and keep accurate records.

## **HELPFUL HIGH SCHOOL SUBJECTS**

High school subjects that may help prepare individuals for this occupation include biology, chemistry, speech, composition, health, psychology, and algebra I and II.

## **EDUCATION**

Most employers prefer to hire high school graduates. On-the-job training is given through both classroom teaching and supervised work and may last several days or weeks. The Nebraska Health Care Association offers a course for nursing assistants, and a few schools offer short training programs. First-aid and home nursing classes and hospital volunteer work are helpful.

## **EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS IN NEBRASKA**

- Central Community College- Columbus, Grand Island, Hastings, Kearney (C)
- Metropolitan Community College— Omaha (C)
- Nebraska Methodist College— Omaha (C)
- Southeast Community College – Beatrice, Lincoln (C)
- Western Nebraska Community College – Scottsbluff, Alliance, Sidney (C)

## **JOB OUTLOOK**

Job prospects for nursing aides should be good through the year 2008. Numerous openings will arise from a combination of fast growth and high turnover for this large occupation. Employment of nursing aides is expected to grow faster than the average for all occupations in response to an emphasis on rehabilitation and the long-term care needs of a rapidly growing elderly population.

## **LICENSURE/CERTIFICATION**

Most employers prefer to hire high school graduates. On-the-job training is given through both classroom teaching and supervised work and may last several days or weeks. The Nebraska Health Care Association provides an approved book for nursing assistants. To work in nursing homes or home health an individual must be on the Nebraska Nursing Assistant Registry. To be eligible to be on the Registry, the individual must pass a State approved course and a written and clinical exam.