

# OHCC Connections

Tips from the experts.



## **Episode 004: Continuing Education for homecare workers, personal support workers, and personal care attendants**

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**Cheryl Miller:** Welcome back everyone to the OHCC Connections podcast. We are so glad to be back with you today. I am Cheryl Miller, the Executive Director of the Oregon Homecare Commission. This podcast is Part 4 of a five-part series on new training requirements for home care workers, personal support workers and personal care attendants. I'm joined again by our partners from Care Well SEIU 503 Training, Sarah and Whitney. Please introduce yourselves.

**Sarah Edwards:** Hi everyone. I'm Sarah Edwards and I'm the Director of Carewell SEIU 503 Training.

**Whitney Taylor:** Hello. I'm Whitney Taylor, the Curriculum Development Manager for Carewell Training.

**Cheryl Miller:** So far, we've talked about the training requirements and where it came from, what this looks like for new workers and how it affects current workers. Today we are discussing the continuing education component. While this isn't something that folks will need to do for quite some time, we know there's a lot of curiosity around it, so we thought it would make sense to talk about it and what workers should expect. Sarah, I know we've talked about this some in our first episode, but why is there continuing education?

**Sarah Edwards:** That's a great question. I know that it can feel hard sometimes to fit training and professional development into our schedules, but we know that those who complete training often choose to remain in their careers longer, and that's partly because it allows folks to strengthen their skills and be better equipped to handle the pressures and stresses that can come with this work.

**Whitney Taylor:** And critically what we all care about is that training ensures the wellbeing, the quality of life, and the safety of people who receive services and supports. The combination of both of those things, increase job satisfaction and increased quality of care are why this requirement was put into place. Additionally, being a care provider is a job that has many different aspects and facets, so there are a lot of different areas that folks may not have as much experience with, just because of the types of consumers that they worked with before, and this gives people an opportunity to explore and learn about different aspects of the job that they may not be as familiar with.

**Sarah Edwards:** And training is important for career development and career advancement, and being a care provider is a professional career, and this requirement falls in line with many other professions that require continuing education, like, nurses and teachers, just to name a few.

**Cheryl Miller:** Sarah and Whitney, thank you. That makes a lot of sense. Sarah, can you remind everyone what the continuing education requirement is?

**Sarah Edwards:** Yeah. So, starting in 2023, all workers will need to complete 12 hours of continuing education every 24 months.

**Cheryl Miller:** Thank you. I think the most frequently asked question that I've been hearing from workers is will they have a choice of the courses to take. You know, will there be options?

**Sarah Edwards:** Yeah, there will be a required element so there was an additional law that was passed that impacts care provider training and it requires that every 2 years all care providers receive cultural competency training. This training will help give care providers additional skills to understand and interact effectively with people from other cultures and backgrounds and social orientations. We're currently in the process of developing that training and we anticipate it'll be about 3 or 4 hours in length and then care providers will be able to choose what courses they take to complete the remaining of their continuing education training hours and they'll be lots of courses, um, to choose from.

**Cheryl Miller:** Wow, Sarah, what types of courses will be available or Whitney, either one of you could answer this question, and will they all be in person?

**Whitney Taylor:** We will have a variety of course types available. We're working on quite a few self-paced online courses right now. We know those are really popular with care providers and we'll also have in person type courses available when the training requirement goes into effect. We're even looking into the possibility of having remotely connected classrooms, meaning that you would be in a classroom with others, but the trainer may be located somewhere else and this would allow people to get the benefits of in person training but not have to travel as far to a classroom and not have to have their own technology in order to participate. So, that's something we're considering.

**Cheryl Miller:** Mm, that sounds really interesting. That is great that you are trying to think outside the box about how you can reach people across the great State of Oregon. What are some of the courses that you are developing? What topics will be available?

**Whitney Taylor:** So, currently, we are working on courses about food safety, understanding medical terminology and drug overuse. We'll be developing many, many more courses but that's just what we're starting with. We're in the process of surveying care providers to get a better understanding of what types of classes there's a greatest need for. The other thing I want to say is that we want to hear from you so what topics do you want training on? It's really important to us that we create training that is wanted and needed by you all.

**Cheryl Miller:** That's great that there's an opportunity to provide feedback. If someone wants to suggest topics, where should they send this information?

**Whitney Taylor:** So, they can reach out to [www.carewellseiu503.org/contact/](http://www.carewellseiu503.org/contact/) and we will have a link to that web address in the show notes and from there you can just fill out the form and submit it right to us.

**Cheryl Miller:** Perfect. Sarah, does everyone have to take continuing education courses?

**Sarah Edwards:** Yeah, everyone who has a provider number does need to fulfill the continuing education requirement and you can either do this by completing training through Carewell, or if you already have an OHCC credential, then you can complete the continuing education requirement by continuing to keep that credential current. And as a reminder, those credentials are the professional development certification which is sometimes called PDC. The enhanced homecare or personal support worker credential, the exceptional personal support worker, ventilator dependent quadriplegia, or VDQ, and then the traditional health worker certification.

**Cheryl Miller:** So, some are wondering, will there be a cost associated with any of the continuing education courses?

**Whitney Taylor:** No, just like all of the OHCC courses, they will be free to all care providers.

**Cheryl Miller:** Perfect, well this is a great place to end our podcast today. Thank you so much, Whitney and Sarah for, you know, discussing this very important requirement and providing the details on how training will continue to be a part of the work to ensure people living in Oregon are able to give and receive the best care possible. I know everything is still under development, so I appreciate you sharing what you can. We appreciate everyone who takes the time to join our conversations through this podcast. We look forward to sharing more information with you. For our next and last episode in the series, we are going to walk through some of the questions that have been popping up and haven't been covered yet. We look forward to sharing that with you.