CCA PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT

2018/2019

Mission

Working together to promote excellence in person-centered care for people in Nova Scotia by maintaining standardized education and support for Continuing Care Assistants.

Vision

CCAs contributing to Nova Scotians living well.

Values

Leadership, Integrity, Quality, Growth and Development

The CCA Program is owned by Department of Health and Wellness (DHW) and governed by the CCA Program Advisory Committee (CCAPAC). The CCAPAC acts in an advisory capacity and makes recommendations to the Department of Health and Wellness on policy matters relating to the CCA Program and its services, including but not limited to curriculum standards, certification, and CCA Registry. The Committee reports to the Executive Director, Risk Mitigation- Continuing Care, DHW.

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Executive Summary

The *coming together* of key stakeholders – health care government, was the catalyst for the CCA Program. *Keeping* years of progress. *Working together* has offered the program philosophy of continuous improvement. Our successes can be commitment to work together to achieve the common goal of a

> *"Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success."*
>
> *-- Attributed to Henry Ford*

employers, educators, and *together* has resulted in 19 many successes built on the attributed to your quality CCA workforce.

common goal is the CCA process for continuous collaborating to acheive a

A key accomplishment attributed to working towards the Competency Framework. The framework supports a systematic improvement and was built on the collective input from years of quality CCA workforce. Validation of the framework occurred over the past year through extensive consultations including CCAs, employers, associations, educators, and government.

Embracing the philosophy of continuous improvement, the CCA Program is embarking on a curriculum standards revision; the sixth revision. *Coming*, *keeping* and *working together* is essential to support a successful revision of the program. The revision will incorporate the results from broad stakeholders' consultations[1] completed over the past two years and address topic areas identified during the consultations. Key to the revision is aligning the CCA Competency Framework by applying the framework's competency-based approach to updating the Curriculum Standards.

Another example of the program's success is the national recognition of the CCA Recognizing Prior Learning (RPL) Program. In November, we presented on the RPL Program at the Canadian Association of Prior Learning (CAPLA) and our RPL expert, Cailleagh Sharples, accepted a seat on the CAPLA Board.

This year, we started a certification exam review, starting with completing an examination of items (questions) for language and minority bias. Once the first step, Standards Setting: job requirements/framework and curriculum, required for a reliable and defensible certification process is completed, the exam review will continue with an examiniation of the remaining steps.

Pam Shipley, Manager, CCA Program participated, as a member of the Advisory Committee, in the Health Care Human Resource Sector Council (HRSC) project to design the Health Career Exploration Tool.

There are many groups we would like to thank for the CCA Program's continued success, including the stakeholders who contribute through consultations, participation on committees, and support student placements; the CCA Program Advisory Committee (CCAPAC) for there dedication and guidance; education providers who strive to instill in students a passion for the industry and the role of the CCA; CCA Program staff for commitment and industry for the ongoing recognition of the role of the CCA as a vital part of the health care team.

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[1] CCA Readiness Assessment, CCA Competency Framework, and Evaluation of Placement Structure

CCA Competency Framework

The CCA Competency Framework supports a systematic approach for the Department of Health and Wellness (DHW) and the health care industry to define and communicate required competencies for the CCA occupation (CCA Scope of Practice). The competency-based approach allows for continuous maintenance and validation of the CCA's competency requirements as health care needs evolve. The CCA Competency Framework is foundational to building a sustainable, effective, and productive CCA workforce. In February 2019, the CCA Program Advisory Committee (CCAPAC) submitted the framework as the *CCA Scope of Practice and Competency Framework* to DHW, for final approval.

The *CCA Scope of Practice and Competency Framework* merges the Scope of Practice and updates the entry level competencies approved by Department of Health and Wellness in 2009. Given the merger of the DHW approved Scope of Practice's core components into the framework, it is recommended DHW approve the CCA Scope of Practice and Competency Framework 2019 to replace the current *Scope of Practice of the Continuing Care Assistant (CCA) in Nova Scotia – April 2009*.

For the CCAPAC, the framework offers a structured mechanism to set curriculums standards, thereby, strengthening the standardization of curriculum content and certification process to meet industry requirements for the CCA occupation at entry level.

The framework offers CCA employers a consistent Scope of Practice as the foundation to build organizational specific competency models and determine scope of employment for Certified CCAs in their employ. The framework supports alignment with human resource functions such as, performance management, recruitment and retention practices including development of job descriptions and effective hiring/screening tools. The framework can feed into organizational specific competency needs and proficiency scales

required beyond entry level; it supports performance development. The newly Certified CCA enters the the CCA gains experience and efficiency, the employer advance to the level of proficiency required beyond entry competencies required outside of the framework.

As the framework is applicable and relevant as a sustainable, effective, and productive CCA workforce, from the health sector is vital to endorse, apply, and CCA Scope of Practice and Competency Framework:

- Provides common understanding and knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA) occupation and how CCAs can organizational needs.
- Aids employers in the systematic succession planning of their CCA use the framework to develop valid hiring practices, performance continued competency development. entry level criteria to develop scope of descriptions.
- Provides DHW, employers, CCAPAC, stakeholders with clear definitions of which support further development performance evaluation tools.

The framework supports a systematic communicating required competencies for Adoption of the framework supports an CCA workforce. Updating and revalidating effective formalized process be implemented by the relevant stakeholders CCAPAC).

I shared with the CNE [Clinical Nurse Educators] group. They are happy with the framework, [the group] suggests we look at the CCA role in acute care settings organizationally and set a proper and consistent process for BELC [Beyond Entry Level Competency] training for CCAs. We should probably look at what delegated

Organizational Specific Competencies

------ Certified CCA ------

Core Competencies
Care Setting Management
Communication
Infection Prevention & Control
Mental Health & Wellness
Nutrition
Personal Care
Safe Handling & Mobility
Safety Protocols

Foundational Competencies
Accountability
Integrity

standards and competency workforce at entry level; as supports the CCA to level as well as additional

foundation to supporting a participation and leadership update the framework. The

language as it relates to the necessary for the CCA contribute to meeting

management and workforce. Employers can consistent, reliable and management, and The framework provides employment and job

educators and other competency requirements and implementation of

process for defining and the CCA occupation. effective and sustainable the framework requires an established and (DHW, CCA employers,
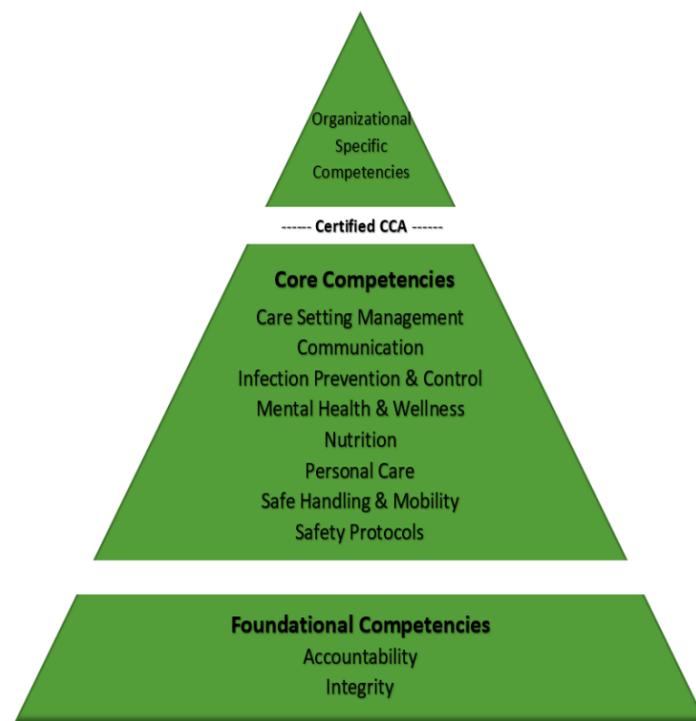
Alignment between the Competency Framework and organizational competency models is instrumental in the successful adoption of the framework. Each employer can use the framework to develop a process to align the competencies with their human resource practices such as recruitment, retention, and performance management. To support a sustainable workforce the process should align with the formal health sector's process for the framework's maintenance and validation.

Although CCAPAC took the lead to build this edition of the framework and does have a role to play in the continued maintenance, the ownership and leadership rests with industry (sector and DHW). CCAPAC will look to the framework when seeking direction from industry to update the Curriculum Standards and Certification.

CCA Curriculum Standards

The CCA Curriculum Standards are the blueprint for education development; it outlines the delivery structure and education requirements. The standards identify such things as the program rationale, entrance requirements, CCA philosophy, program outcomes, delivery requirements, learning outcomes and objectives, teaching resources, and measurement tools.

The CCA Program is revising the Curriculum Standards to reflect new and emerging needs of the health care system for the role of the Certified CCAs. A key goal of this curriculum standards revision is to foster greater consistency in the education. To accomplish the goal, the revision is aligning the CCA Competency Framework with the curriculum standards, creating and inserting new learning outcomes where required, and incorporating standardized teaching resources and assessment tools, where appropriate.

The CCA Program Revision team includes:

- Carol Anne Cowan, Nova Scotia Community College
- Pamela Fancey, Nova Scotia Centre on Aging
- Janice Keefe, Nova Scotia Centre on Aging
- Rowen McKenzie, Nova Scotia Centre on Aging
- Lucy McKnight, Nova Scotia Centre on Aging
- Cailleagh Sharples, CCA Program
- Pam Shipley, CCA Program

The revision project is scheduled to span a nine-month period, January to September 2019. The revision work for the past year focused on aligning the CCA Competency Framework with the curriculum standards, examining the collection of consultation documents and conducting additional consultations to determine the revision recommendations, and identify appropriate teaching and assessment resources. Over the next few months, recommendations for revision will be finalized; the focus will then shift to incorporating the revision recommendations and developing an implementation plan for the new curriculum standards.

Evaluation of Placement Structure

As part of the curriculum revision, the CCA Program will incorporate the results from the placement structure review, started last year. To complete the recommendations, the CCA Competency Framework and any additional recommendations resulting from the curriculum revision will be incorporated. The LTC Expert Panel recommendation[2] has also triggered a re-examination of the placement structure recommendations to assess the opportunity available for CCA students to gain a realistic experience in the LTC environment as well as other placement environments. Over the next months, the CCA Program will reengage the CCA Placement Standards Working Group to compare work completed with the revision recommendations and framework project.
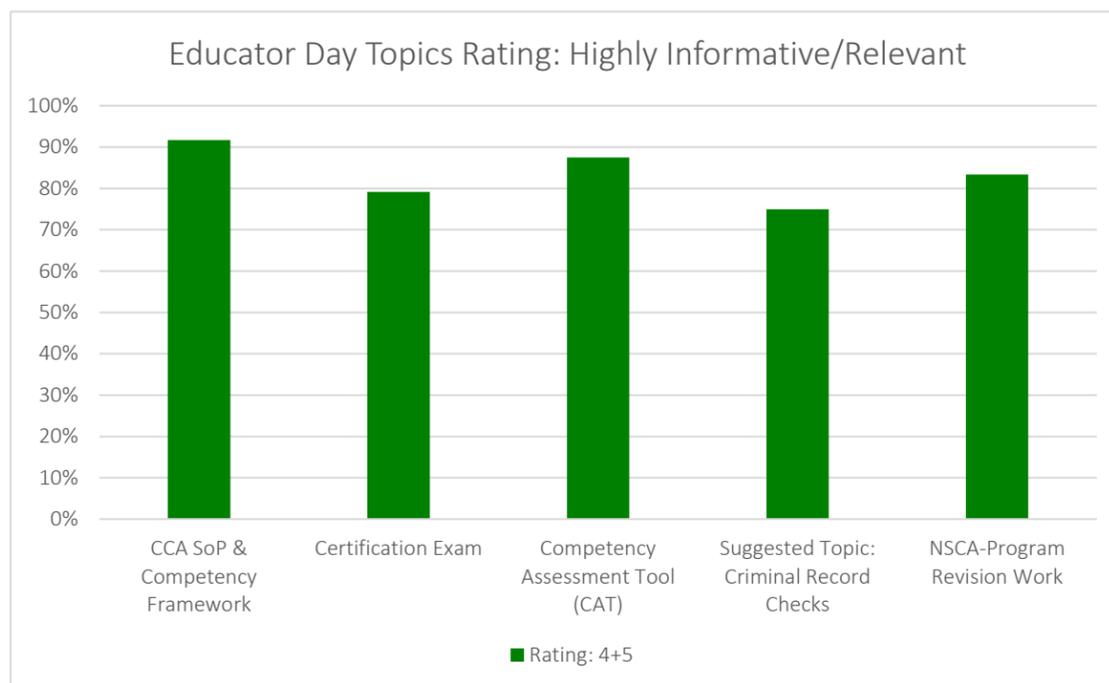
Educator Day

The CCA Educator Day provides an opportunity for the primary instructors to discuss the teaching and assessment tools of the program. It is also an opportunity for the CCA Program to solicit feedback from primary instructors to help guide development and clarification of the education delivery.

As with past years, the day was a success; 29 people attended (25 in person and 4 through Skype) representing the majority of educators. The day started with recognition of the value of the CCA Competency Framework in promoting standardized education and expectations. From there, the Competency Assessment Tool revised to align with the Framework was examined for feedback and further development. After break, the exam process review was discussed as well as unique criminal record search results encountered during the admission process.

The afternoon was spent discussing the curriculum standards revision with the Nova Scotia Centre on Aging. Feedback was gathered on various topics, such as, professionalism, embedding foundational competencies within the curriculum standards, documentation, and electronic communications. During the two-hour session, participants discussed teaching strategies, challenges, gaps, and suggestions for improvement. General feedback on teaching resources and strategies was also collected.

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[2] LTC Expert Panel recommendation 2.3. Examine the methods of CCA education and curriculum, specifically with reference to LTC environments and hands-on experience.

Educators reported the day provided useful information, was a good use of their time, and their opinions were valued. As illustrated in the chart below, educators indicated[3] the day's topics were highly informative and relevant.

Educator Day Topics Rating: Highly Informative/Relevant

Bars (Rating: 4+5): CCA SoP & Competency Framework ~91%; Certification Exam ~79%; Competency Assessment Tool (CAT) ~87%; Suggested Topic: Criminal Record Checks ~75%; NSCA-Program Revision Work ~83%

Standards Compliance Assessment

A goal of the Standards Compliance Assessment (SCA) process is to promote and enhance consistent delivery of the education across the province. The process promotes consistency in several ways including routine monitoring, curriculum reviews, and campus visits.

The SCA process was established in 2009 as a collaborative endeavor to measure compliance with the CCA Program standards and increase consistency of delivery across Nova Scotia. Education Providers readily adopted the process and participated in the evolution of the process with the 2013 revision. With another curriculum revision pending, we will adjust the process to improve measurements, reflect the revised standards, and align with the framework's review/revalidation process. Once the revised Curriculum Standards are implemented, we will also focus on strengthening the mechanisms to gather feedback from placement partners.

Over the past year, the CCA Program issued 17 CCA educator licenses; of which 8 were employer/educator partnership deliveries[4]. The zone distribution for the partnerships were as follows:

Zone	Fiscal 2018/19 Partnerships
Zone 1 (Western)	0
Zone 2 (Northern)	1
Zone 3 (Eastern)	2
Zone 4 (Central)	5

Employer/educator partnerships assist in recruitment and retention of CCAs, allowing an employer to showcase their organization while strategically meeting their CCA recruitment needs. Partnerships are a collaborative approach to delivering the CCA Program requiring committment from the educator, employer, employees, and students. Successful partnerships separate the education from employment, allowing the student to learn and develop in a supported real-life environment.

Recognizing Prior Learning (RPL)

CCA RPL Program supports eligible individuals with previous health care education and/or experience gain CCA Certification. The evolution of this program has afforded many opportunities to collaborate with others in the RPL community and learn from their experiences as well as our own.

Collaborating with the RPL community helps the CCA RPL Program remain an example of excellence as it continues to evolve. In fostering collaboration, the CCA RPL Program has become an active member of Canadian Association of Prior Learning Assessment (CAPLA). CAPLA is committed to advancing the awareness, acceptance, and quality practice of prior learning assessment and recognition in Canada and internationally. In November, Cailleagh Sharples, CCA Certification Coordinator, was elected to the CAPLA Executive Board in a 3-year term position.

Also, in November, the CCA RPL Program was presented at the CAPLA's annual conference. This was the third invitation to present at the conference over the past 10 years. The conference theme was continuous improvement of RPL in Canada, highlighting tools, systems, policies, assessment processes, and advising/career counselling. The CCA RPL Program presentation discussed the importance of supports provided by DHW and industry, showcased the RPL process and tools, and discussed the role of the RPL process in supporting human resource hiring requirements.

Over the past year, interest from employers in the RPL Program as a human resource (HR) tool has tripled (13 inquiries). The RPL Program welcomes this interest and we are excited to support employers in meeting their HR needs. Employers are expressing

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[3] 5 point Likert scale
[4] Partnerships are agreements between employer(s) and the educator to deliver the CCA Program initiated by the employer and usually do not occur on campus.

interest in hiring experienced individuals through the DHW's *CCA Education Entry to Practice Policy*[5] conditional hire clause. RPL supports individuals to gain CCA Certification with a range of experience, from no formal credentials to individuals with CCAPAC recognized credentials[6].

The *Education Entry to Practice Policy* allows for eligible individuals to be hired with the condition they gain CCA Certification within a maximum 2-year timeframe. In collaboration with the conditionally hired individual, the employer must develop a learning plan to gain CCA Certification; RPL can assist with the development of a learning plan.

The RPL Program (PLAR and Course Recognition) develops a learning path which is monitored during Phase II. The learning path can easily be translated to the conditional hire learning plan requirements, thereby assisting employers to meet the policy requirements. The learning path identifies the remaining components to complete the CCA education requirements and become eligible to register for the CCA Certification Exam.

In continuing to improve success rates, an RPL Disengagement Survey was sent in February 2019 to RPL participants who left the program over the past 5 years. To date, the survey has a 14% response rate (38 responses). Participants were asked to indicate the top three reasons they did not complete the program. The preliminary results indicate health as the top reason participants disengage. Followed by other reasons impacting disengagement, such as cost of program, family considerations, not seeing certification as a priority, difficulty with self-directed learning, and participants needing more time. We will analyse the results in comparison with the feedback gathered from successful RPL individuals with the aim to improve the program.

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[5] Source: https://novascotia.ca/dhw/ccs/policies/CCA_Entry_Practice_Policy.pdf
[6] CCAPAC recognized credentials: there is a Course Recognition learning path developed by a PAC delegate for the education diploma, certificate, or degree.
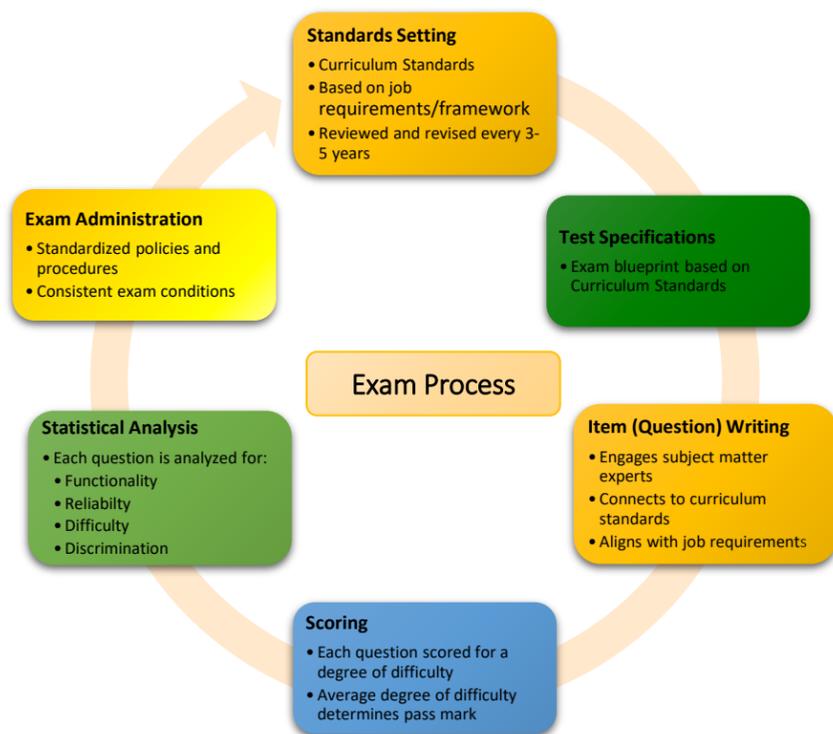
Certification Exam

The goal of the CCA Program is to ensure newly Certified CCAs possess the competencies required to practice safely and effectively in the role, at entry level. Producing a reliable, defensible, fair, and valid exam involves a complex process with six key steps for continuous improvement.

As a first phase in an exam process review, last year we engaged Yardstick Testing and Training Experts (formerly Assessment Strategies Inc.) to complete a Differential Item Functioning (DIF) analysis. A DIF analysis is a key component in the evaluation of potential item (question) bias and validity of certification examinations. DIF refers to a statistical characteristic (numeric value) wherein a test item might be measuring different abilities for members of separate groups (e.g., protected groups). Exam items that have different success rates for two or more groups with the same ability level display DIF which could indicate potential bias. If a exam item measures the same ability, in the same manner across groups (excluding random variations), the success rate will not differ irrespective of the group characteristic; the item will not display DIF.

Yardstick analysed exam items for DIF in two categories English vs other languages and minority vs non-minority. The analysis included results from 874 exam candidates across four exam sittings totaling 600 items with 66 of the items used multiple times across the four exams. For the four CCA exams, language DIF (English versus other language) and minority versus non-minority DIF were explored using the Mantel-Haenszel method (exact statistics).

The results of Yardstick's DIF analysis identified overall the CCA Certification Exam did not differentiate across groups, finding the majority of the items as not displaying DIF. However, results revealed areas for improvement with a small number of items. Across the four exams, language DIF was identified for 12 items requiring closer examination of the items. The items were examined individually and rewritten to remove bias and/or deleted from the exam item bank.

In addition, Yardstick provided some general tips for reviewing and revising items overall. This phase of the project also included a preliminary review and update of our Item Writing Workshop process and tools.

Standards Setting
- Curriculum Standards
- Based on job requirements/framework
- Reviewed and revised every 3-5 years

Test Specifications
- Exam blueprint based on Curriculum Standards

Exam Administration
- Standardized policies and procedures
- Consistent exam conditions

Exam Process

Item (Question) Writing
- Engages subject matter experts
- Connects to curriculum standards
- Aligns with job requirements

Statistical Analysis
- Each question is analyzed for:
  - Functionality
  - Reliabilty
  - Difficulty
  - Discrimination

Scoring
- Each question scored for a degree of difficulty
- Average degree of difficulty determines pass mark

With the completion of the first step as noted in the exam process image, Standards Setting, we will proceed with an examiniation of the remaining steps required for a reliable and defensible certification process. The exam process uses standards allied with the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* and the *Standards for the Accreditation of Certification Programs*; standards used by many regulatory bodies.

CCA Exam Committee
- Carol Anne Cowan, NSCC

Annapolis Valley
- Jody MacDonald, Harbourstone Enhanced Care
- Vanda Newton, CCA Program
- Pam Shipley, CCA Program

Thanks to outgoing members:

- Callie Kerr, Island Career Academy

Welcome to new members:

- Stacey Boutilier, RC MacGillivray Guest Home
- Karen Comeau, Digby/Clare Home Support
- Christel MacAloney, Futureworx Society
- Goretti Romeo, NSCC Marconi

CCA Registry

The CCA Registry is a list of Certified CCAs/counterparts in Nova Scotia. The goal of the CCA Registry is to build a stronger workforce for quality client care and CCA quality of work life. To achieve this goal, the Registry gathers:

- Input from members to influence positive change in the role of the CCA
- Data for human resource planning

The Registry presents an opportunity for members (CCAs) to participate in evolving the CCA role. Membership is free; the Registry is fully funded by Department of Health and Wellness (DHW). The stronger (larger) the membership, the more valuable the data will be in providing evidence to guide decisions for health human resource planning and the role of the CCA workplace.

> Membership is free; the Registry is fully funded by Department of Health and Wellness (DHW).

As of March 31, 2019, the CCA Registry had 966 active members. To maintain current data, members are required to renew their membership annually. Although our active membership renewal period is between September 1 and October 31, we accept renewals and new members throughout the year.

The below chart displays CCA Registry Members by Zone and Organization Type. Home Support and Nursing Home Organizations make up the largest portion of Employer Type while Zone 3 and 4 have the highest population of registered members.

CCA Registry Members by Zone and Organization Type
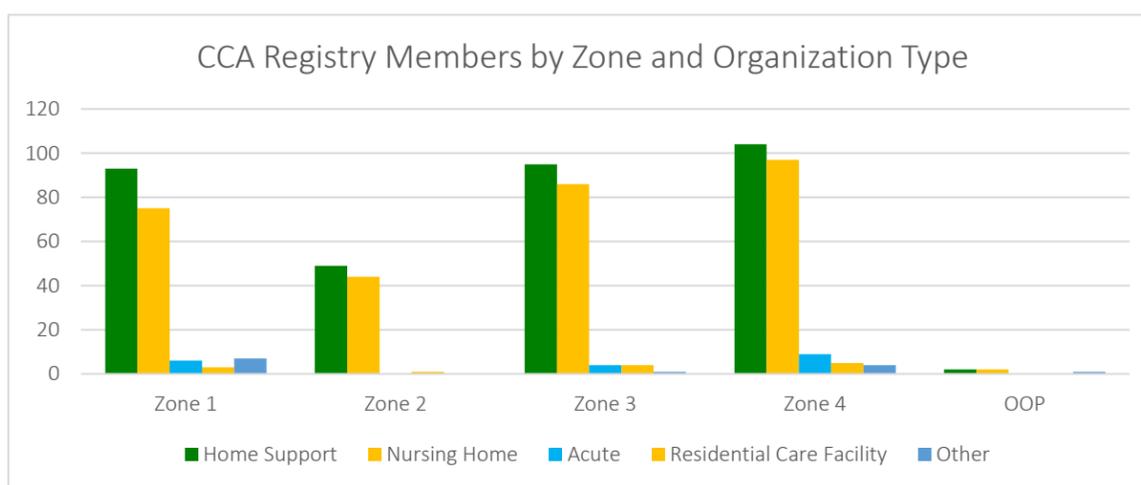
Each year the CCA Registry engages in a number of promotional activities, including promoting registration at the exam sittings, employer communications, renewal notifications, Facebook postings, email reminders, and distributing to members the "Caring Matters" newsletter. This year the Registry also presented on "The Importance of Registration" at the Home Support Worker Conference hosted by the Home Care Network Group. The conference presented a valuable opportunity for CCA's to provide their feedback and renew their registry memberships on site.

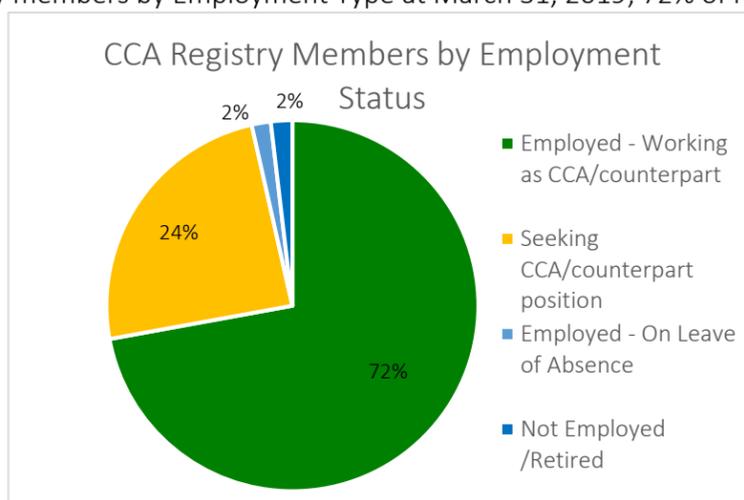> The stronger (larger) the membership, the more valuable the data.

This year, we held a contest to increase membership with a $100 gift card as the prize. The contest was designed to promote the registration period (Sep 1/Oct 31); congratulations to Jeenu Kandathil!

In order to reach inactive members who have not renewed, the Registry dispersed over 3500 "Come Back to the Registry" reminders via email and mail. To increase the response, we are holding a random draw with a $100 gift card draw chosen from those who renew before May 1, 2019. Results will be posted in the "Caring Matters" newsletter.

The aggregate data collected from members can identify trends in the current workforce which can be used by employers and government for human resource planning.

Over the past several years, we distributed Registry reports to employers when five or more of their employees were members of the Registry. Reports can be generated to meet the employer's needs and can include basic employee information, a breakdown of employee data with statistics on age, credentials (includes certificates and education), expected retirement date, and position type.

The pie chart to the right shows registry members by Employment Type at March 31, 2019; 72% of members are currently employed as a CCA while 24% are currently seeking employment as a CCA.
Of the 24% seeking employment, 81% are new graduates.

CCA Program

CCA Registry Members by Employment Status

- Employed - Working as CCA/counterpart — 72%
- Seeking CCA/counterpart position — 24%
- Employed - On Leave of Absence — 2%
- Not Employed/Retired — 2%

Enrollments/Certification

Promoting the CCA Role

The CCA Program participated, as a member of the advisory committee, in the Health Care Human Resource Sector Council (HRSC) project to design the Health Career Exploration Tool.
HRSC has designed Career Profile Tools for CCAs, as part of a larger career tool kit for continuing and community care.

The tool kit is at the testing phase and will have an official launch this year; however, it can be accessed on the CCA Career Profile site: https://hcsc.ca/careers/. CCAs appear first in the list of careers.   You can download a CCA brochure or order printed versions directly from Health Care Sector Council, Catherine Martin: admin@hcsc.ca.

Also on the career resource page (https://hcsc.ca/careers/), by clicking on the Continuing Care Assistant link will navigate to a career description page. At the end of the profile there are two videos of a Day in the Life of a CCA; one in home support and one facility based.

Current Enrollments by Zone[7]

As of March 31, 2019, the CCA Program has 40 classroom course deliveries in progress across the province. The course deliveries are at different stages of progress; the majority are nearing completion and a few are just starting. Currently there are 652 participants in the 40 active courses. Based on an estimated 18% attrition rate for total enrollments, 535 (82%) of the enrollments will become exam candidates. Of the 536 exam candidates, if we estimate 96% will become Certified CCAs, we can forecast at least 513 Certified CCAs will be ready to enter the workforce from the current course enrollments with the majority by June 30, 2019. The following table breaks down the enrollments by Zones. Course enrollment numbers fluctuate continuously and the table represents a snapshot in time at March 31, 2019.

CCA Program Current Enrollments at March 31, 2019

Zone	1	2	3	4

[7] Zone 1: South Shore, Zone 2: Northern, Zone 3: Cape Breton, Zone 4: Central

Enrollment	169	111	177	195
Estimated Certification from Enrollments				
Exam Candidates (82%)	139	91	145	160
Total Certified (96%)	133	87	139	154

As enrollments for the RPL Program are recorded based on individual participant enrollments vs course enrollments, RPL participants are not included in the above table. There are 223 active RPL participants as of March 31, 2019 of which 194 are current, 12 are in the registration process, and 17 exam candidates. As with traditional classroom, enrollments fluctuate continuously; therefore, the noted numbers represent a snapshot at March 31, 2019.

Certified CCAs by Fiscal Year

As identified in the chart below, the fiscal year 2018/19 produced 564 Certified CCAs across the province of Nova Scotia. As enrollments have declined this fiscal year (2018/19), we are estimating a decline in certifications in 2019/20 from traditional enrollments.

Certifications from the RPL program have been significant the last 2 years at 13% of total certifications. With 223 participants in the RPL program, we are predicting this trend to continue next year for the RPL Program.

Certified CCAs as of March 31, 2019

2000-2019	Provincial	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4
Total	11,226	2688	2508	3083	2947
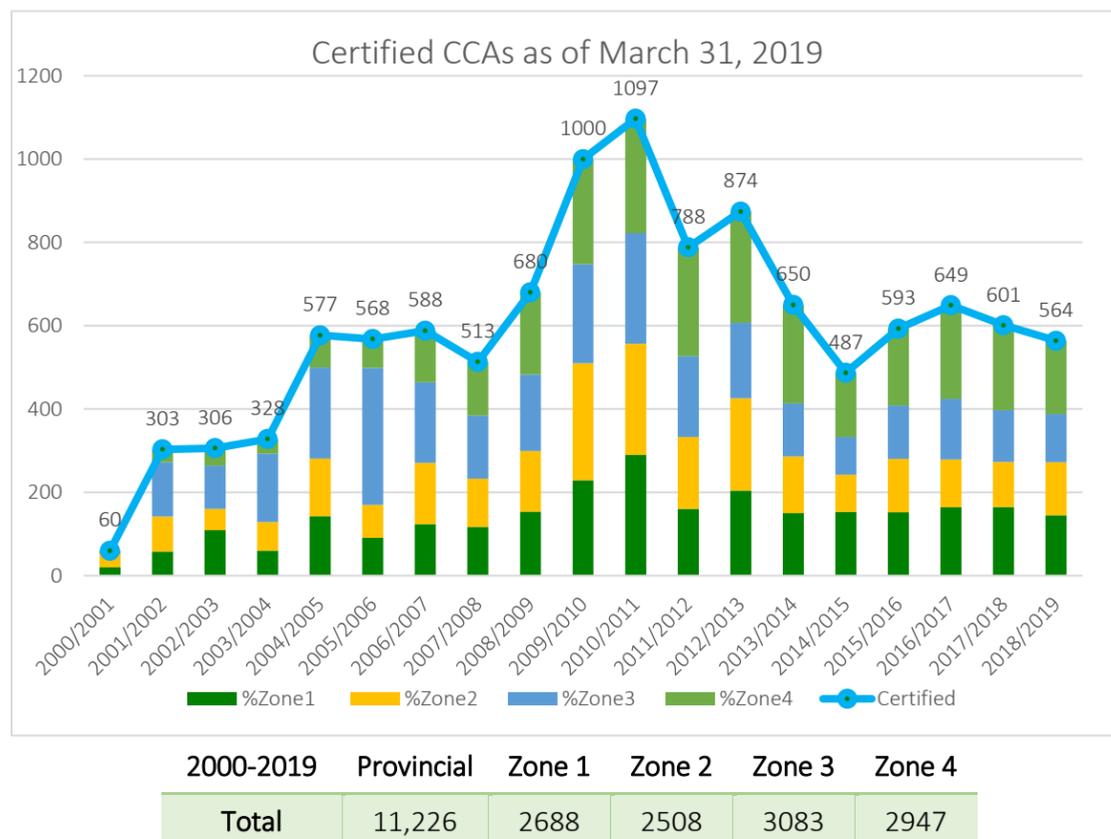
CCA Program Advisory Committee

CCA Program Advisory Committee

- Paula Langille, Department of Health and Wellness, Chair
- Debbie Burris, Nova Scotia Health Authority
- Eric Doucette, Seaview Manor
- Stephen Gillis, Inverary Manor
- Michele Hidgon, Nova Scotia Health Authority
- Christel MacAloney, Futureworx Society
- Angela MacEachern, Inverness County Home Support
- Trent MacIsaac, College of Registered Nurses of Nova Scotia
- Ann McInnis, Nova Scotia Community College, School of Health and Human Services
- Audrey Oliver, VON Annapolis Valley
- Sharon Preston, Windsor Elms
- Jylene Simmons, College of Licensed Practical Nurses of Nova Scotia

Welcome to our new members:

- Stacey Boutilier, RC MacGillivray Guest Home
- Karen Comeau, Digby/Clare Home Support
- Rebecca Dorey, Department of Health and Wellness, Continuing Care
- Angela Doucette, Hants Community Hospital
- Kayla Smith, VON Annapolis Valley

Thank you to our outgoing members:

- Tammy Jeffers, RJF Healthcare
- Jody MacDonald, Harbourstone Enhanced Care
- Brandy McIntosh, Department of Health and Wellness, Continuing Care
- Vanessa Quigley, Nova Scotia Health Authority

CCA Program Administration:

- Pam Shipley, Manager
- Cailleagh Sharples, Certification Coordinator
- Vanda Newton, Administrative Assistant
- Barb Salkin, Administrative Assistant

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Copies of the 2018-2019 Annual Report are available from:

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