

Applies to:	All Long-term Care (LTC) staff working with, or providing support to, Healthcare Support Workers (HCSWs).
Purpose:	To provide answers to the common questions about the HCSW role and responsibilities, and the onboarding and ongoing support required to integrate HCSWs into your care home.

Question	Answer
What is the Healthcare Access Program (HCAP)?	The Ministry of Health created the HCAP to introduce the HCSW role into Long Term Care sites. This is a combined program with time spent in the HCSW role at the site, and time spent at the post-secondary institution completing the Health Care Assistant (HCA) program.
Where can I find out more about the HCAP program and the HCSW position?	Visit the BC Government's <i>Work in the health care sector site</i> to learn more: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/economic-recovery/work-in-health-care
Why is Island Health introducing this position into health care?	The Health Career Access Program (HCAP) provides a path for applicants with no health care experience to get hired and receive on-the-job training. As this program leads to full qualification as a Health Care Assistant, there will be more HCA candidates available to fill vacancies upon completion of the HCAP.
Who is eligible to apply for the HCAP program?	Island Health staff who have not received prior HCA training, and external applicants who completed the Provincial Expression of Interest application.
What are the HCSW roles and responsibilities?	<p>HCSWs are integral members of the healthcare team.</p> <p>Under the guidance of clinical staff, HCSWs provide non-direct/non-clinical healthcare supports to clients/residents and their families.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observe clients/residents in their environments and report unsafe conditions and/or behavioural/physical changes to their supervisor. • Assist with mealtime activities such as set-up, and welcome and transport clients to the dining area. • Assist with social activities. <p>For specific details, please refer to Island Health Limits and Conditions: Health Care Support Workers.</p>
Will new HCSWs be able to bump existing staff for positions (as they will be accruing seniority hours while working at the LTC site)?	Hires are part of the Facilities contract and have the same seniority as fellow union members. HCSWs can apply for vacancies once registered as a Health Care Aide

Health Care Access Program Frequently Asked Questions

<p>Some HCSW duties in the job description may not be part of what an HCA does in their regular routine (e.g., housekeeping). Who determines what tasks they can or cannot do?</p>	<p>The HCSW job description was created by the Ministry of Health at the provincial level, to include all duties that an HCSW may perform in any Long-term Care or Assisted Living site or Community Health Services program in BC. Site-specific duties will align with our site-specific policies.</p> <p>Island Health has developed Island Health Limits and Conditions: Health Care Support Worker, which describes what HCSWs can and cannot do in their role.</p>
<p>Who will the HCSW report to?</p>	<p>The site manager, who may delegate the responsibility to another staff member (e.g., a Clinical Nurse Leader).</p>
<p>Can HCSWs apply what they learn in school as an HCA student, in their HCSW role?</p>	<p>No, participants of the HCAP program have two distinct roles:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Learning at a post-secondary institution to obtain their HCA certification. ii. Work at Island Health as a Health Care Support Worker. <p>The two roles are distinct: HCSWs shall not perform any of the clinical or direct-care duties of an HCA while employed in their HCSW role.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Participants will be able to apply their HCA education during their HCA student practicum and after being employed as an HCA.
<p>What support will be provided to the HCSW at the site?</p>	<p>The Peer Mentors will provide orientation to the site, introduce the HCSWs to the care team, and provide ongoing support.</p>
<p>How are HCSW Peer Mentors selected, and what attributes should they have?</p>	<p>Peer Mentors who support the HCSW role are selected by the Site Manager and have the following attributes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have relevant knowledge and experience, and make a personal commitment to sharing them. • Give feedback, and guide HCSW learning in a positive manner. • Project self-confidence, kindness and patience while providing leadership. • Understand and apply adult learning principles. • Recognize when to provide support, and when to step back. • Cultivate a learning partnership that creates growth for both mentor and mentee.
<p>How can I become a Peer Mentor for HCSWs?</p>	<p>If you are interested in becoming a Peer Mentor supporting the HCSW role, please contact your manager.</p>