

What's Changing for Health Care Aides in Alberta?

Beginning February 2, 2026, Health Care Aides (HCAs) in Alberta will transition from an unregulated workforce to a fully regulated health profession. This shift brings new expectations, greater accountability, and stronger professional recognition across the province.

Before Regulation

Previously, HCAs did not have a provincial regulatory body overseeing their practice. Prior to the creation of the HCA Directory, there was no requirement for provincial registration, no annual renewal process, and no continuing competence program to ensure ongoing learning. HCAs also did always not need a formal practice permit, and expectations varied widely between employers because there were no standardized provincial practice requirements.

After Regulation

Under regulation, HCAs will now be required to register with the College of Licensed Practical Nurses and Health Care Aides (CLHA) and obtain a practice permit before working. They must renew this registration every year by November 30 and participate in required continuing competence activities to maintain professional competence. HCAs will also follow standardized legal and ethical expectations across Alberta, including carrying mandatory liability insurance. Regulation provides HCAs with greater professional protection, clarity of role, and legitimacy within the health-care system.

Why This Change Benefits Future HCAs

The move to regulation brings significant advantages for students entering the HCA profession. It elevates HCAs to a recognized, accountable health-care role and ensures that employers, clients, and the public understand the standards HCAs must meet.

Regulated status means stronger professional recognition and increased job security, as employers will require HCAs to meet consistent provincial standards. Students can expect clearer scope-of-practice guidelines and access to continuing education opportunities that support long-term career growth. A regulatory college also provides formal support and protection, offering guidance, oversight, and accountability that benefit both the public and the individual HCA.

Important Information for Students

Medicine Hat College is not associated with the CLHA, and any fees connected to the provincial requirements are the responsibility of the student. These include costs related to the provincial HCA exam, registration with the regulatory college, and the purchase of liability insurance. These fees are not included in program tuition and must be paid directly to the CLHA.

Key Resources for Students

Main HCA Information Page (CLHA)

Includes regulation updates, registration info, news, and practice expectations:

<https://www.clpna.com/hca/hcas/>

HCA Knowledge Hub

<https://www.clpna.com/hca/knowledge-hub/>

Includes:

- Governance documents
- Standards of Practice
- Code of Ethics
- Policies
- Practice guidelines
- Continuing Competence Program

HCA Regulation FAQs

A helpful starting point for common questions about HCA regulation, roles, requirements, and expectations:

<https://www.clpna.com/hca/hcas/hca-faqs/>