# "Needs and Capacity of Certified Nursing Assistants in Long-term Care: A Tennessee Workforce Assessment"

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**THA Workforce Strategies Webinar - Retention of Assistive Personnel: Research, Training, and Pathways**
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# Purpose & Aims

Relevant workforce information at the state level about the direct and indirect needs impacting CNAs ability to perform the CNA role is essential for planning, training, recruiting, and retaining CNAs.

The aims were:

- Identify the direct and indirect needs of CNAs in Tennessee working in LTC facilities to perform the role of a CNA.

- Examine factors influencing capacity (ability) of CNA's employed in LTC facilities in Tennessee to perform their role.

- Identify enhancements to CNA training and certification in Tennessee to improve recruitment to and retention in the CNA role.

- Funding for this was study provided through a Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) Internal Grant Opportunity (MT-IGO).

# Methodology

Two phase study:

**Phase One: January 2022 – November 2022**

- THCA, NHC, and AHC Leadership contacted to enlist support for the project
- Data collection spring and summer 2022
- Focus group interviews with a volunteer sample of CNAs (N=18)
- Key informant interviews with administrators (N=10)
- Participants compensated for their participation
- East, Middle, and West regions represented
- Phase One data informed development of a 17-item online survey used in Phase Two.

# Methodology

- LTC facilities identified through the THCA website and administrator names & emails confirmed with THCA.
- Administrators in 120 LTC facilities across the state of were contacted by email and asked to share information about the survey with their CNAs.
- Copies of the recruitment flyer were mailed to each facility to post in areas frequented by the CNAs
- An incentive of a $250 Amazon gift card was used to encourage participation.

# Phase One Demographic Data

## 10 Key Informants

- 5 females; 5 males
- 9 White; 1 Black/African American
- 3 DON; 6 Administrators; 1 CNA Instructor
- Years of Experience 5 yr or < = 4;  16 - > 25 yr = 5
- Years at facility  < 5 yr = 6
- Middle TN = 5
- East TN = 3
- West TN = 2

## 18 CNAs

- All female
- 9 White; 9 Black/African American
- 1 also a Med Tech
- Years of Experience < 1 yr - > 25 yr
- Years at Facility  < 8 yr = 16
- Middle TN = 11
- East TN = 3
- West TN = 4

| Phase Two Demographic Data | | | | | Prefer Not to Say | Total N = 72 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Q 1 *Age | Range: 18 – 65 yr | Mean: 35.9 yr | | | | n = 61 |
| Q 2  Gender | Female: 60 | Male: 4 | Other: 1 | | 1 | n = 66 |
| Q 3  Race | White: 42 | Black: 20 | Hispanic: 2 | | 2 | n = 66 |
| Q 4  Marital status | M: 26 | Div/Sep: 8 | Never: 29 | Widowed: 2 | 1 | n = 66 |
| Q 5  Level of education | College Degree: 4 | Some college: 27 | H.S. Diploma: 29 | No H.S. Dip: 5 | 1 | n = 66 |
| Q 6  Hours worked per week | FT-36 hr or >: 57 | PT-35 hr or <:  8 | | | | n = 65 |
| Q 7  *Time as a CNA | Yrs Range:1 – 40 yr <br><br> Mo.Range:1 – 11 mo. | Mean: 11.38 yr <br><br> Mean: 5.29 mo. | | | | n = 58 <br><br> n = 7 <br><br> (total =65) |
| Q 8  *Time at facility | Yrs Range: 1 – 23 yr <br><br> Mo.Range:1 – 11 mo. | Mean: 5.74 yr <br><br> Mean: 5.28 mo. | | | | n = 42 <br><br> n = 21 <br><br> (total = 63) |
| Q 9  Geographic location | East = 24 | Middle = 32 | West = 9 | | | n = 65 |
| Q 17  Agency? | No = 54 | Yes = 8 | | | 10 | n = 72 |

# Phase One Data Themes

| Key Informants | CNAs |
|---|---|
| Generational differences.<br>Lack knowledge about what a CNA does; workload too hard/stressful, not what they expected (physically and emotionally) | Acknowledge and appreciate the CNA role. The work is hard, stressful and physically and emotionally demanding.<br>Do not feel seen or respected for what they do. |
| Competition with other facilities and industries, scheduling, not enough workers.<br>Redesign and repackage the role to make it more attractive. | Desire opportunities to advance; other roles such as med tech, peer leader, preceptor. |
| Consistent staffing, manageable workload, flexible hours, consistent scheduling. | Adequate staffing & supplies, good communication and teamwork make their job easier. |
| Welcoming work environment, spend time to train, clear expectations. | They stay because of the relationships with residents and co-workers. |
| Desire a fulfilling job; desire to be a caregiver and help others | Value helping people and love to give good care. |
| More training regarding respecting older adults' dignity, meeting physical needs; increase knowledge of anatomy and medical terminology. | Additional training would be helpful related to death & grief, dealing with dementias and behavioral issues. |
| Competitive pay, bonuses, tuition and scholarships | Pay is an issue; agency staff paid at a higher rate. |

# CNA Survey Findings: Recruitment

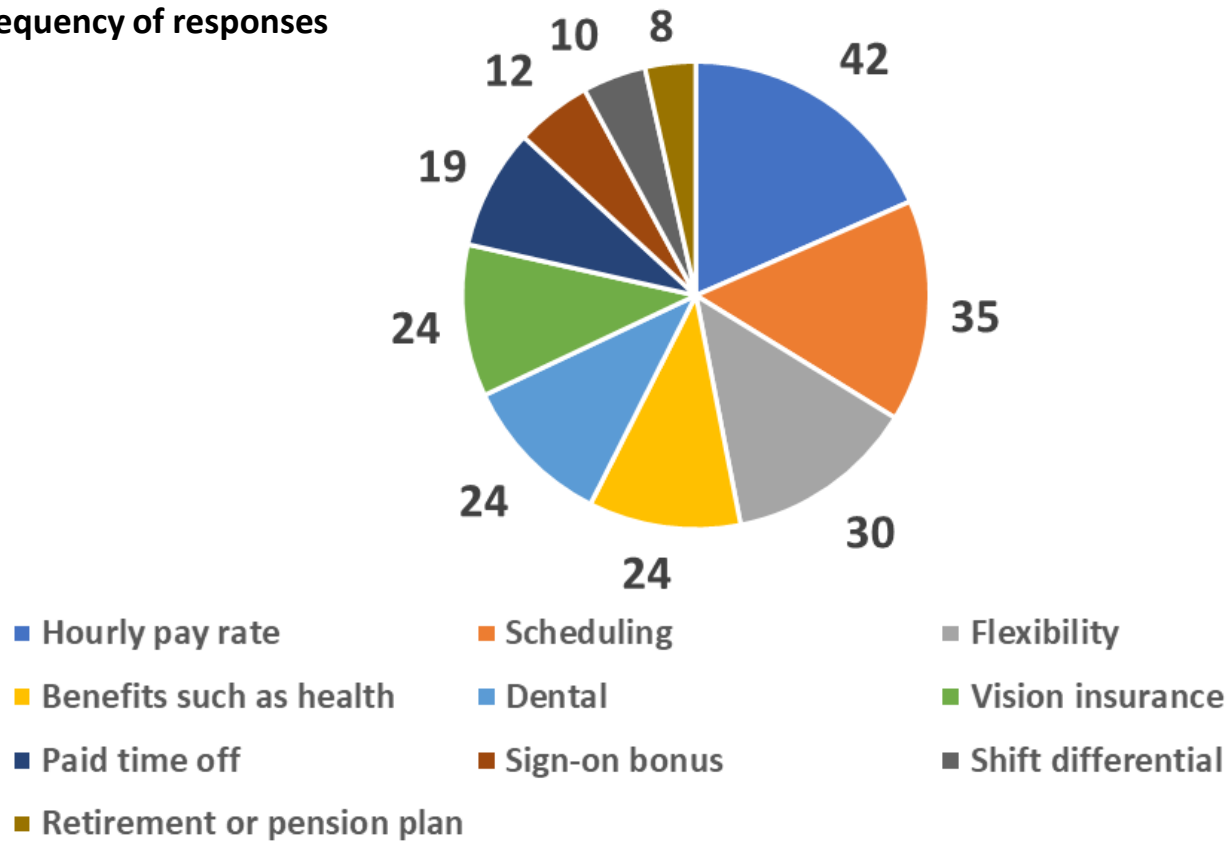Q 10 – How did you find your current position?



**Frequency of responses**

Pie chart values: 3, 10, 22, 11, 11, 12
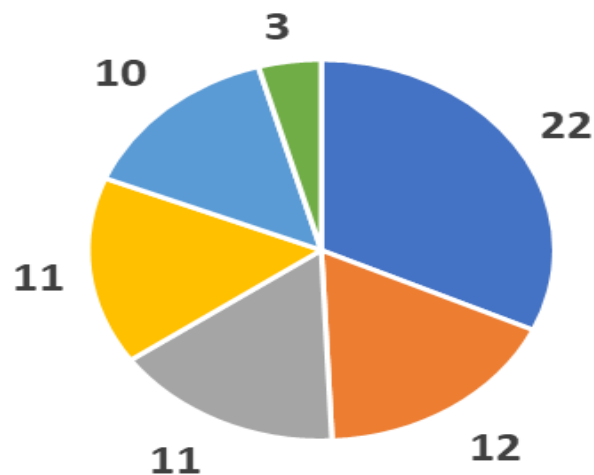
- ■ Knew someone who worked here
- ■ Online advertisement or job posting (e.g. Indeed)
- ■ CNA training program
- ■ Other (please specify)
- ■ Family member or friend
- ■ Social media (e.g. Facebook, Instagram)

# CNA Survey Findings: Recruitment

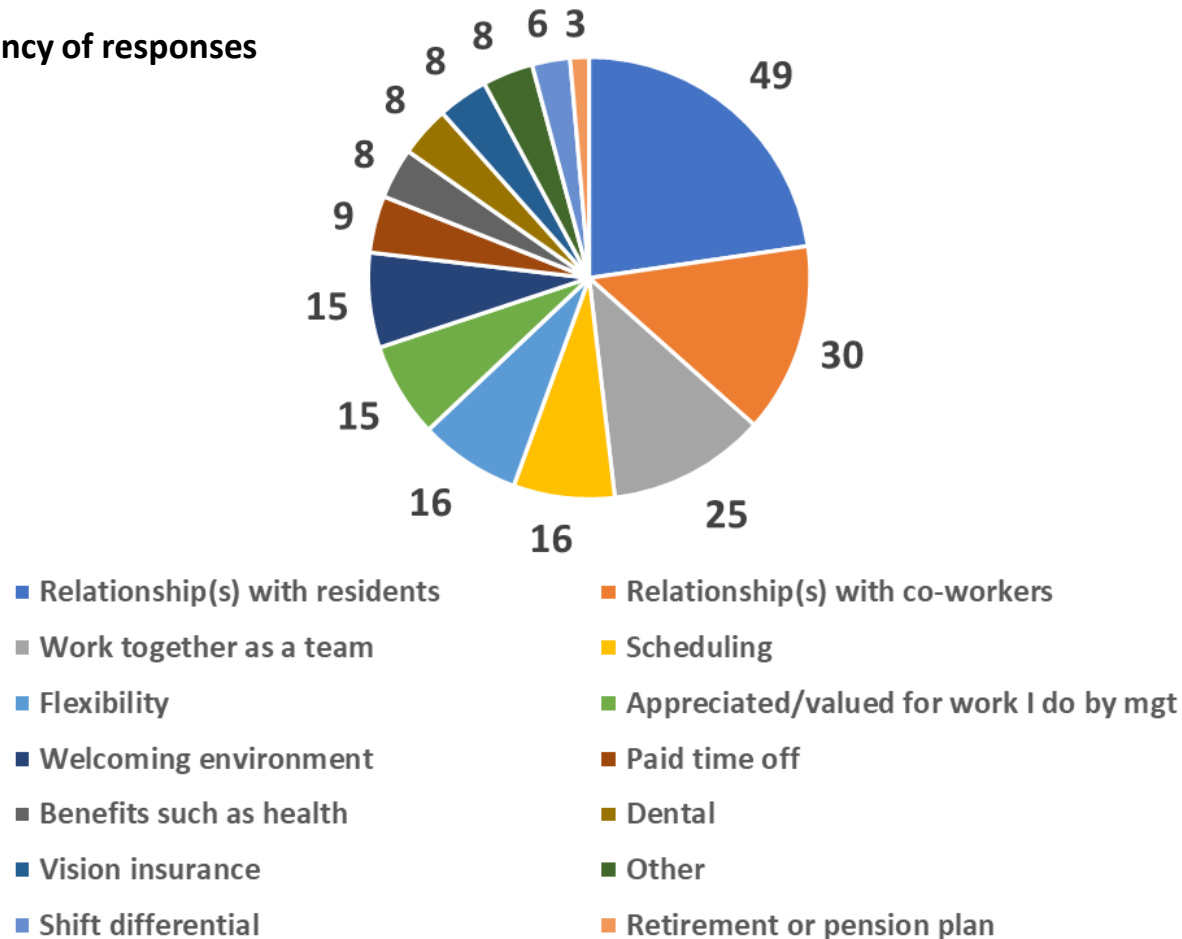Q 11 – What is most important to you in selecting a job?

**Frequency of responses**



- ■ Hourly pay rate
- ■ Benefits such as health
- ■ Paid time off
- ■ Retirement or pension plan

- ■ Scheduling
- ■ Dental
- ■ Sign-on bonus

- ■ Flexibility
- ■ Vision insurance
- ■ Shift differential

# CNA Survey Findings: Retention

## Q 12 – What keeps you working in the CNA Role?

**Frequency of responses**



- Relationship(s) with residents
- Relationship(s) with co-workers
- Work together as a team
- Scheduling
- Flexibility
- Appreciated/valued for work I do by mgt
- Welcoming environment
- Paid time off
- Benefits such as health
- Dental
- Vision insurance
- Other
- Shift differential
- Retirement or pension plan

# CNA Survey Findings: Retention

Q 13 – What benefits are important to you?

**Frequency of responses**



12

37

19

30

32

- Health insurance
- Dental insurance
- Vision insurance
- Tuition reimbursement
- Other
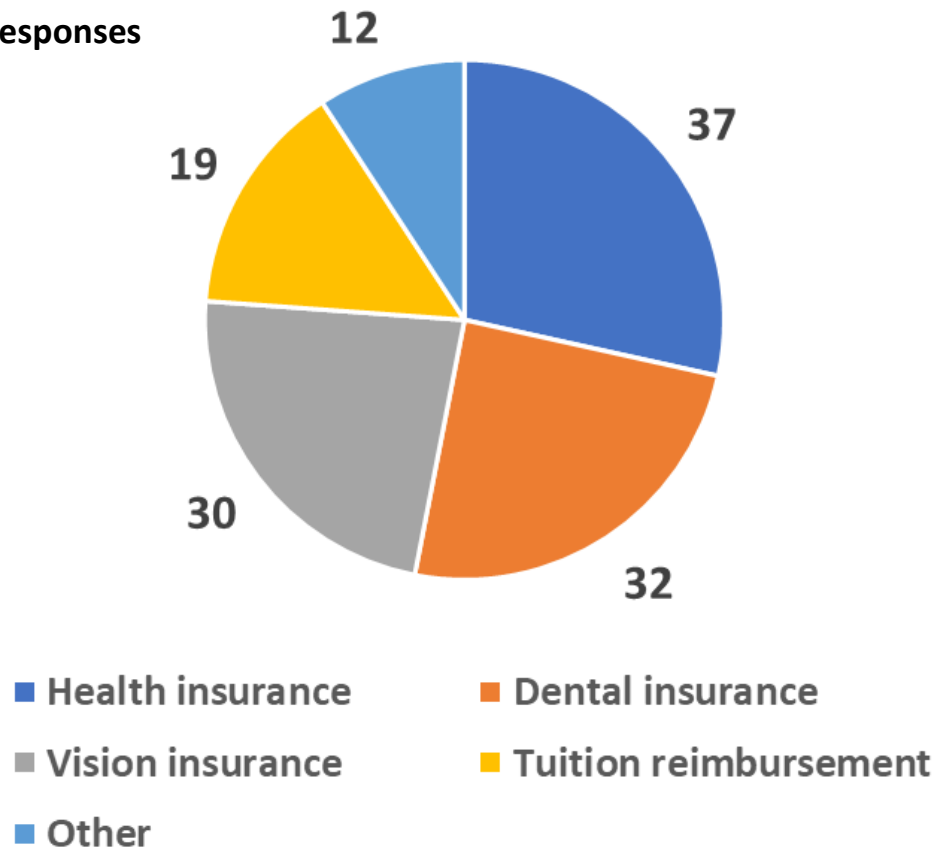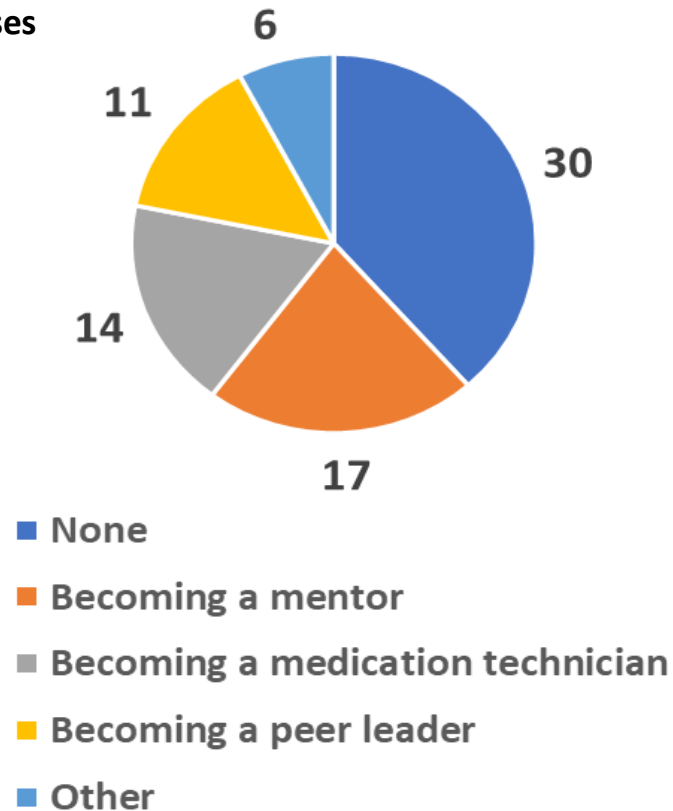
# CNA Survey Findings: Retention

Q 14 – What advancement opportunities are available to you?

**Frequency of responses**



- ■ None
- ■ Becoming a mentor
- ■ Becoming a medication technician
- ■ Becoming a peer leader
- ■ Other

# CNA Survey Findings: Retention

Q 16 – What factors would contribute to your satisfaction and likelihood to continue working as a CNA?

**Frequency of responses**



- ■ Higher pay
- ■ Feeling respected and valued for the knowledge I have
- ■ Fewer residents to care for each shift
- ■ Better benefits
- ■ More training or education
- ■ Other
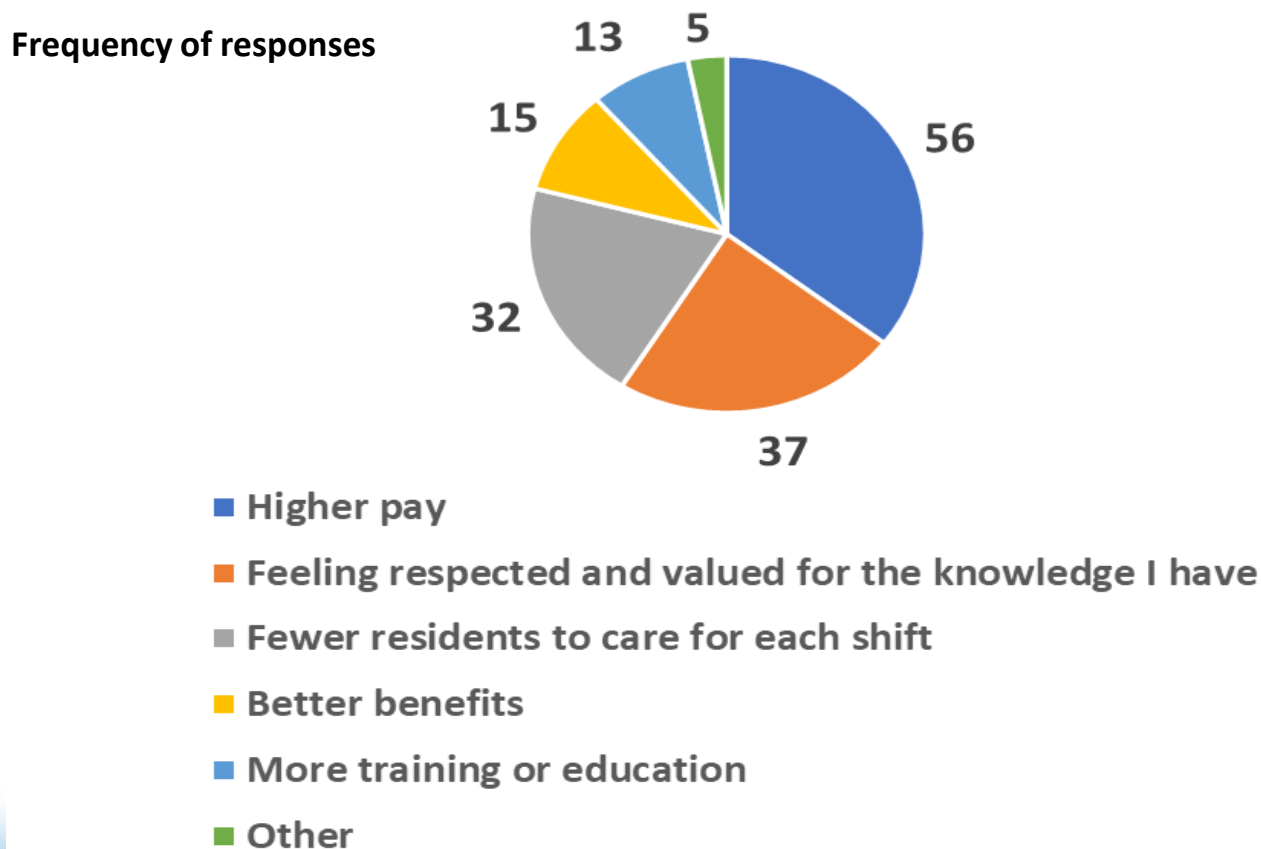
# CNA Survey Findings: Training

Q 15 – If you could have additional training, which would benefit you the most in your role as a CNA?

**Frequency of responses**
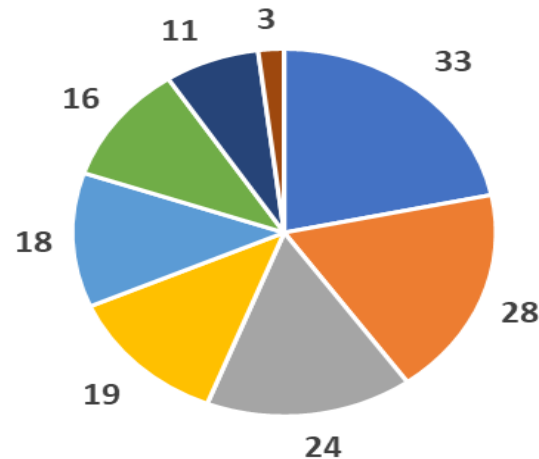


- Ways to manage stress
- Managing challenging patients
- Caring for residents with mental health/cognitive issues
- Feelings/grief when resident's die
- Caring for residents from different cultures
- Skills to communicate with residents and family members
- Infection control
- Other

# Discussion

Enhancing Recruitment:
- Referral incentive
- Shadow experience
- Flexible scheduling
- Same scheduling
- CNA training program pipeline

A DAY IN THE LIFE
OF A NURSING ASSISTANT

# Discussion

==Enhancing Retention:==

- Advancement opportunities possible in your organization?
- Formal mentor/mentee relationship
- Organizational culture check
- Acknowledge & trust CNAs knowledge and expertise



Defining Organizational Culture

# Discussion

Enhancing Training:

- Opportunities to debrief
- Stress management
- How to de-escalate behaviors

# Limitations

- Small sample size made it difficult for statistical analyses
- Not all participants answered all questions
- Unable to generalize to all CNAs (i.e. those who work in areas other than LTC)

# Lessons Learned

- No direct access to CNAs ( i.e. work email; CNA certification registry)
    - Dependent on LTC administrators to share survey information with CNAs
- Importance of communicating with LTC leadership about the study:
    - Purpose
    - Legitimacy/veracity
    - How the data would be used
- Importance of communicating with CNAs about the study:
    - Purpose
    - Confidentiality

# Questions ?



THANK YOU!

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