



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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State licensure program guards against unqualified Home Care Agencies

New Department of Health rules effective August 10

HONOLULU – Beginning Aug. 10, 2018, the Hawai'i Department of Health will require all Home Care Agencies to apply for licensure by the state. Many Hawai'i seniors prefer to live in their own homes and age in place but may need some assistance with daily activities to do so. Home Care Agencies provide personal care, homemaker assistance, or respite care for seniors and others to maintain their personal lifestyle in their own home and avoid requiring care in a more expensive residential facility.

"Home Care Agencies play a major role in supporting our kupuna and other individuals in need of assistance with daily living activities in their own home," said Keith Ridley, chief of the Office of Health Care Assurance. "With new state rules approved by Governor Ige, licensing of these agencies will provide the public with greater protection and safe levels of care."

What counts as a "Home Care Agency"?

Home Care Agency means a public or proprietary agency, a private, nonprofit organization, or a subdivision of an agency or organization, engaged in providing home care services to clients in their residence. The term Home Care Agency does not apply to an individual, including an individual who is incorporated as a business or is a volunteer.

Home care services may include: (1) Personal care, including assistance with dressing, feeding, and personal hygiene to facilitate self-care; (2) Homemaker assistance, including housekeeping, shopping, meal planning and preparation; and (3) Respite care and assistance and support provided to the family.

How do agencies apply for a license?

Under the new state rules, all Home Care Agencies are advised to apply for their state license beginning Aug. 10 and may continue to operate during the license application process. Instructions are available at:

health.hawaii.gov/ohca/state-licensing-section/hcal/. All licensed Home Care Agencies are subject to unannounced inspections to ensure safe levels of care in the recipient's home. The Department may take enforcement action against any agency which does not apply for a license by Nov. 10. Hawai'i Revised Statutes, Chapter 321, Section 14.8 established the authority of the Department to license Home Care Agencies and issue and enforce administrative rules.

How can I verify if a Home Care Agency is licensed by the state?

While it may take several weeks to process license applications for the estimated 150 Home Care Agencies in Hawai'i, the list of licensed agencies will be posted as information becomes available at: <http://health.hawaii.gov/ohca/state-licensing-section/hcal/agencies>. The public is also encouraged to report any unlicensed Home Care Agency by going to <http://health.hawaii.gov/ohca/files/2018/07/HCA-Complaint-Form-072018.pdf> to download a complaint form. Completed forms may be submitted at the address on the form or by email. Public complaints about home care services are investigated by the state.

More information on state regulations for Home Care Agencies is available at the Office of Health Care Assurance website at <http://health.hawaii.gov/ohca/state-licensing-section/hcal/>. The Office of Health Care Assurance performs all state licensing activities on healthcare facilities, agencies and organizations in Hawai'i. This includes conducting all on-site state licensing surveys or inspections and Medicare certification surveys or inspections on behalf of the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.

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