

Who Will Care For Us At Home?

There really is no place like home. Without question, older adults everywhere choose to remain at home as long and as safely as possible. Home can be defined in many ways: a senior apartment, an assisted living building, an adult child's home, or your own home.



The good news: the home care industry that provides personal services and/or medical assistance to older adults (and many others) have experienced unprecedented growth, enabling many older adults to remain independent at home!

The “not-so-good” news is that providers of all kinds and levels of quality emerged to meet these escalating demands for home care services. Quality of care became a critical concern.

How Do We Know Who is Providing Quality Home Care?

To ensure that elders and their families enjoy the high quality home care they deserve, a collection of professional home care associations in Illinois collaborated on a statewide legislative initiative that requires licensure of all home care agencies operating in Illinois. In short, all home care providers will be required to comply with a minimum set of standards.

As a result of this landmark legislation, quality standards for home care have been established to address the horror stories that occasionally hinder the difficult decision to seek in-home care for yourself or a loved one: complete lack of information, elder abuse and neglect, and potential fraud and financial exploitation issues.

The education and information that is readily available as a result of this legislation will profoundly benefit older adults and their families as well as all professionals in the fields of aging and healthcare. Everyone will know the guidelines, mandated by state law, that define a licensed home care agency.

How Will This New Law Help:

It will:

- Encourage the use of universal language that will assist consumers and referral sources in understanding the various definitions of home care services.
- Provide a set of uniform standards by which consumers and professionals can benchmark agencies of their own choosing.
- Employ a central location – the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) – for home care provider information.
- Strengthen the overall accountability of referral sources, as well as of the home care agencies themselves.
- Promote a better trained workforce to provide in-home services, due to specific training and supervision requirements contained within the law.

What Consumers Need to Understand:

- All organizations, whether employers or placement agencies, must provide notification to the consumer and the worker regarding rights and responsibilities of each party for payment of wages and taxes for liability and for supervision of the services.
- New law requires all organizations to perform criminal background checks on all home care workers.
- Workers and organizations must report elder abuse, neglect and financial exploitation.

A Brief “First Look” at the Law

Providers may be licensed as one, both, or all three of the following: Home Health, Home Nursing, and Home Services. Placement agencies and registries have to be licensed.

Home Health agencies must:

- Provide skilled nursing and other services under a physician's plan of care.
- Meet licensure standards that address quality.
- Maintain clinical records.
- Conduct a quality improvement program.
- Provide services with licensed and certified personal.

Home Nursing agencies must:

- Establish a written agreement with the client.
- Provide nursing services based on the instructions from the client's physician.
- Identify who is responsible for supervising client care.
- Meet licensure standards that address quality.
- Conduct background checks on agency workers.

Home Services agencies must:

- Establish a written agreement with the client.
- Provide non-nursing services designed to help clients remain safely and comfortably in their own homes.
- Identify who is responsible for supervising client care.
- Conduct background checks on agency care-givers.
- Report instances of elder neglect or abuse and violations of Illinois laws.

Placement Agencies, sometimes known as Registries, that place but do not employ the worker must:

- Notify the client and the worker of their rights and responsibilities.
- Conduct background checks of all workers on the registry.
- Provide training to all workers on the registry prior to placement with a client.

Individuals & Organizations Referring Home Care:

Beginning September 1, 2008, social workers, discharge planners, case managers, nurses and physicians will be able to make referrals and discharge clients to a full array of licensed home care agencies.



DID YOU KNOW?

- By 2030, the older adult (65+) population will more than double to about 71.5 million.
- The 85+ population is projected to dramatically increase from 4.6 million in 2002 to 9.6 million in 2030.
- Most older adults have at least one chronic condition and many have multiple conditions that require in-home assistance.
- The pool of family caregivers is dwindling. As recently as 1990, 11 potential family member caregivers existed for each older adult requiring care. In 2050, that ratio will diminish to just 4:1.

http://www.aoa.gov/press/fact/pdf/ss_stat_profile.doc Chronic Care in America (Institute for Health & Aging, Univ. of CA/SF for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation) 1996



Important Dates Relating to the New Law

- Passed the state legislature: January 1, 2006
- Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH): develop rules and regulations by January 1, 2008.
- License is required: September 1, 2008

Licensure has arrived in Illinois and the process for licensing all home care agencies is underway. We know that consumers, families and health care/social service professionals want to know more about this new law and how it affects citizens throughout the state of Illinois. Education and training opportunities are being offered as the date of licensure requirement approaches - September 1, 2008. Please contact any of the following organizations for questions or comments, and stay tuned to their websites for updated information regarding education opportunities:

Illinois HomeCare Council (IHCC)

www.ilhomecare.org



Life Services Network (LSN)

www.lsn.org



National Private Duty Association (NPDA)

www.privatedutyhomecare.org



It's Coming to Illinois!



What you need to know about the Illinois Home Health, Home Services & Home Nursing Agency Licensing Act

