

License to Care?

California Home Care Providers Need License

By Kathy Janz



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All Home Care agencies in California must be licensed or cease operating as a home care agency pursuant to a California law, the Home Care Services Consumer Protection Act of 2013.

The state did not have the process in place until the fall of 2015 so Home Care Agencies submitted application packets from mid-November 2015 through June of 2016.

As of September 2016, some 1,200 agencies in the state have been licensed and have HCO numbers. To be licensed, home care agencies must employ all their caregivers and provide workers compensation; provide both documented orientation and annual training and insure that their aides are TB tested

at time of hire and at specified times thereafter. All caregivers must be registered by the state and affiliated to the agency.

All agency caregivers must to be registered and listed as “affiliated” aides to the specific agencies they work with. They can be “affiliated” to several agencies at the same time and also work as an “independent” registered caregiver for private clients. So far over 80,000 caregivers have been registered.

The state has denied some caregivers their “registration” because of criminal actions including elder and child abuse, theft, etc. Aides barred from registration most likely will seek work with private clients so families in particular should be very careful to make sure that they are

only hiring “Department of Social Services Home Care Services Bureau registered aides” whether they be listed as “affiliated” to home care agencies or as “independent aides.”

Anyone can check an aide status by going on the Caregiver Background Check Bureau at www.cclcd.ca.gov/PG399.htm.

There are still many unlicensed agencies in the state so demand to see HCO licensed numbers and you can check the DSS website as well. Note that home health agencies, hospices and assisted living communities that have “home care” components are not licensed but their parent organization license makes them accountable to the state. And agencies that provide extensive services to Developmentally Delayed clients are also waived the licensure requirement.

Private consumers who are hiring independent caregivers should take extra precautions in vetting their aides since caregivers who are not able to get their DSS Home Care registration will most likely be searching for private jobs.

You should ask that they register themselves and get fingerprinted authorization through the DSS online registration process. If there is a problem, they will not be assigned a registered caregiver number and you will be forewarned.

Kathy Janz is the owner of Matched CareGivers, a licensed home care organization in Menlo Park, CA. For more information, call 650.839.2273. matchedcaregivers.com