

Hiring Qualified Nurses for Home Healthcare

Home healthcare nurses provide clinical services and support that help patients remain safely in their homes. These providers may take care of older adults with disabilities, provide hospice/palliative care, or care for patients recently discharged from hospitals.¹

A variety of entities employ home health nurses, including hospice and home care organizations, community facilities, and hospitals. These nurses carry out the treatment prescribed by physicians and advanced practice providers, and they may supervise certified nursing assistants or home health aides. Additionally, they may work with other care providers, such as physical, occupational, or speech therapists; social workers or

hospice/palliative care professionals; and behavioral health specialists.

Hiring qualified staff for home nursing positions should include formal recruiting, interviewing, and hiring processes that are consistently applied to all applicants. The hiring organizations' policies on hiring, discipline, termination, and other human resource issues must conform to applicable federal, state, and local laws and requirements. Improper or inadequate hiring practices can pose risks to patients and family members.²

Following are various aspects of the hiring process to consider in your organization's efforts to hire qualified home health nurses and reduce liability exposure.³

1

Verify applicants' education, licensure, and certifications directly when possible.*
Require the applicants to produce original documents rather than photocopies.
Be sure to follow state and federal laws in doing so.

* Licensure can be verified online whereas basic life support certification may require a card. However, many licensing groups are providing these documents online to download and print in lieu of issuing a card.

2

Verify applicants' prior employment and references from previous employers or supervisors. Make sure applicants account for and clarify any gaps in employment.

3

Review applicants' prior on-the-job training and professional duties, including obtaining separate confirmation of the applicant's capabilities, to verify clinical competence.

4

Conduct state and federal criminal background checks on all applicants, including felony activity. Additionally, search sexual offender, abuse, and neglect registries. Require all applicants to be fingerprinted.

5

Be sure that your organization meets state requirements for obtaining criminal background information and requirements to report misconduct or other actions to licensing boards.

6

Check whether applicants have been excluded from federal healthcare programs by using the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Inspector General's [exclusions database](#).

7

Screen applicants for a history or red flags related to substance abuse. If consistent with state law and organizational policy, require pre-employment drug testing for all applicants as well as policies related to random drug testing (if applicable).

8

Verify applicants' U.S. citizenship or confirm their compliance with federal immigration laws.

9

Ask applicants if they have personal liability insurance coverage. If so, retain a copy of the policy in their human resources file.

10

Check applicants' motor vehicle driving records and proof of insurance prior to employment and periodically thereafter.

11

Conduct a general internet search and social media screening (to unofficially identify potential red flags).

Endnotes

¹ Nurse Journal. (2023, September 21). *Home health nurse career overview*. Retrieved from <https://nursejournal.org/careers/home-healthcare-nurse/>

² ECRI. (2017, January 1 [Last Updated]). Home care: Staff-related risks. *Aging Services Risk Management*. Retrieved from www.ecri.org/components/CCRM/Pages/QualRisk5_1.aspx

³ The risk tips in this publication are adapted from the following resources: ECRI, Home care: Staff-related risks; MedPro Group. (2024). Checklist: Due diligence in hiring healthcare employees. Retrieved from www.medpro.com/documents/10502/2899801/Checklist_Due+Diligence+in+Hiring+Healthcare+Employees_MedPro+Group.pdf

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