



*Florida Health Care Association looks forward to working with legislators, the Attorney General and other stakeholders to continue ensuring a safe and secure environment for our state's vulnerable citizens who are cared for in long term care facilities.*

***FHCA supports background screening legislation as long as there is appropriate funding to cover the costs of employee screenings.***

Florida is home to nearly 700 nursing homes that provide skilled nursing and long term care, short-term rehab and other valuable services to almost 80,000 frail elders and citizens with disabilities.

Under current law, nursing home employees who will work directly with residents must complete a Level 1 criminal background screening, which consists of a query of the Florida Department of Law Enforcement statewide database. Facility owners, administrators, financial officers and certain direct care staff must complete a Level 2 background screening, which includes a search of the FDLE statewide database and the Federal Bureau of Investigation via the Agency for Health Care Administration.

- Proposed legislation (HB 7069 by Rep. William Snyder and SB 1520 by Sen. Ronda Storms) increases background screening requirements from a statewide check to a Level 2, nationwide FBI check for all employees who provide personal care or services directly to residents or have access to resident living areas, resident funds or property. **This will result in a more accurate screening system; however, increased costs will be passed on to employers and the Medicaid program.**
- Proposed legislation should ensure that **contractors who provide personal care or services directly to residents must also be screened by their employers prior to entering the nursing home or assisted living facility.**
- Electronic fingerprints provide the most complete and accurate means of background screening. Currently, there are only 25 vendors registered with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement to submit electronic fingerprints. Many direct-care employees working in long term care facilities use the public transit system as a means of getting to and from work. **Legislators must assure that employees have convenient and timely access to the equipment necessary to submit electronic fingerprints to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement.**
- Current legislation proposes that all new employees and contractors hired after July 1, 2010 be subject to the new screening requirements. Additionally, it proposed that individuals be screened and qualified before they can begin employment or start a contract. **Legislators must ensure that the final bill does not cause a workforce shortage or delay employers' access to a workforce that is a vital part of providing quality care to residents.**

***The Florida Health Care Association supports background screening legislation as long as there is appropriate funding to cover the costs of employee screenings.***

For more information background screenings in Florida nursing homes, please contact Peggy Rigsby at FHCA, (850) 224-3907 or [prigsby@fhca.org](mailto:prigsby@fhca.org).

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*Representing the Florida Long Term Care Community*

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