

National Background Check Program State of Georgia

Program Abstract

The Georgia Department of Community Health (Agency), Office of Inspector General, is seeking the opportunity to enhance employee background screening for long-term care providers by streamlining processes, creating a background screening computer system, reducing duplicative screenings, and implementing a rap-back program that will provide immediate notification of employee screening status changes to providers as well as potentially reduce the need to conduct costly rescreening of employees.

The Agency, in collaboration with the Georgia Bureau of Investigation will create efficiencies in the transfer of criminal history information between agencies and implement a rap-back (retained prints) program for long-term care providers. The rap-back program will include the ability to maintain retained fingerprint information and automatic notifications in employment status based on information received through the rap-back program.

Through system enhancements, the Agency plans to create interfaces with several databases including the Georgia Bureau of Investigation's Sex Offender Registry, the Georgia Secretary of State's Practitioner Licensing database, the Agency's Certified Nurse Registry, and the federal Medicare Exclusion database to replace manual reviews. An existing secure website will be used by providers to obtain screening results which will include a module for managing employee information indicating that an employee was hired or is no longer employed. This will allow for the proper notification to the provider of any employee eligibility status changes. This system will also be used to manage the appropriate annual fees paid to cover the cost of retaining prints.

The Agency is also seeking to improve communication among state agencies that have overlapping responsibilities. Such overlapping duties can result in multiple screenings of the same long-term care provider staff. For example, a provider offering a wide-array of services may be required to comply with background screening requirements for multiple licenses, and varying state programs, including Medicaid. Coordinating with other state agencies and sharing information and resources would greatly benefit the health care provider community, the state regulatory programs, and the citizens of Georgia by reducing multiple screenings and ultimately saving staff time and money.

Concurrent to grant implementation, the Agency will consider drafting legislation to obtain authority to conduct state and national fingerprint checks of those provider types in which the Agency does not have current authority to conduct. Until legislation is passed, the Agency is planning on voluntary participation from the long-term care provider types outlined in this proposal using the authority in O.C.G.A. 35-3-34.2, National Child Protection Act/Volunteers for Children Act to conduct FBI fingerprint background checks. Further, the Agency is considering amending policy to require job applicants and employees of specific Medicaid long term care providers not covered under current statutory authority or described above to undergo State and FBI fingerprinting. Additionally, the Agency intends to create administrative rules requiring specific long term care providers to conduct checks of various registries prior to employment.