National Background Check Program
State of Utah
Department of Health and Human Services

Program Abstract

While current Utah law requires background checks for a wide range of direct care workers, it does not require employees with direct access to our most vulnerable populations - terminal care patients, persons with disabilities, and those requiring long term care - to undergo a background check. While Utah is making significant progress in health information technologies, there is a tremendous opportunity to automate current background check programs.

Expansion of the successful Long Term Care Background Check Pilot program will enable Utah to modify a web-based background check program which has demonstrated its ability to integrate key components demonstrated in the Pilot program as best practice for protecting vulnerable populations, as well as streamlining the process for applicants, facilities and government analysts. The system envisioned will also enable the state to ensure there is a labor force available for these populations, especially in light of the projected increases in States senior population and existing shortages of qualified workers in the health care and related professions. The development of an automated check system will combine and store criminal history information from various national and local data systems.

This system will provide the Bureau of Health Facility Licensing, Certification and Resident Assessment (HFLCRA) staff and covered entities access to real-time criminal history data of Applicants who have requested a background screening check. The background screening checks will be linked to existing registries, the state police and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) fingerprint check system. In addition, covered entities will have access to an on-line tracking system allowing them to verify if an Applicant has been previously cleared or disqualified during the initial hiring process. This process alone will help eliminate multiple background screening checks for Applicants having direct patient access by multiple covered entities.

Development with the Department of Public Safety of a rap back system notifying staff of new disqualifying criminal offenses occurring between an applicants's initial processing and renewal, will improve the current system. Where necessary, legislation will be developed further to protect Utah's most vulnerable populations and the team will work with the State legislature to draft and introduce bills as appropriate.

While Utah has what it believes is a robust appeals process for applicants, integration with the automated system will provide for privacy and security safeguards. The program as a whole will be evaluated for accuracy, validity, consistency, usability, and accessibility.