

DCH Voluntary Long Term Care Background Check Program

In August 2012, the Department of Community Health (DCH) received a grant from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to:

- Help Georgia protect vulnerable populations in long-term care settings;
- Identify efficient, effective and economical procedures for Georgia to conduct State and Federal background checks; and
- Establish a framework for standardized nationwide program for Georgia to conduct fingerprint-based background checks on all prospective *direct patient access employees* of long-term care facilities and providers.

As mandated by Georgia law, DCH currently conducts state and national fingerprint checks of owners and directors of personal care homes and assisted living communities, as well as the owners of private home care providers and community living arrangements. Georgia law also requires that employees of personal care homes, assisted living communities and nursing homes undergo a State background check; however, a national or Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) fingerprint check is not mandated. In order to conduct an FBI fingerprint check of direct access employees at other long-term care facilities such as hospices, and home health agencies, DCH must have legislative authority to conduct these checks.

Until legislation is adopted, DCH is implementing a voluntary background check program that will allow certain long-term care facilities to conduct an FBI background check of their direct access employees.

For more information concerning the Voluntary Long Term Care Background Check Program, visit the Health Care Facility Regulation (HFRD) website at: <https://dch.georgia.gov/voluntary-background-check-program-0>. Further details are addressed in the Frequently Asked Questions about criminal background checks for long-term care employees, which can be found at <https://dch.georgia.gov/voluntary-background-check-program-0>. You can also contact Denise Matthews at 404-463-0115 or Chris Bennett at 404-656-0464 or send email to VoluntaryBackgroundCheck@dch.ga.gov.