

Ask the Experts...

Dispelling the Myths about Nurse Registries

What is a Nurse Registry, and how does it work?

Two business models have emerged to respond to the demand for private duty home care services. In simple terms, these models can be described as “agency-directed” home care and “consumer-managed” home care. Both models are vital and integral to the appropriate delivery of home care to needy seniors.

The purpose of caregiver registries is to create a market in which seniors and care providers can find each other. The registry acts as a neutral party, or go-between between the client and caregiver. More specifically, for the client the registry is a source for prescreened, pre-credential-verified care providers. For self-employed care providers, it's a source of potential clients.

The role of the registry is to inform care providers about client opportunities for which they are qualified, but the care provider decides whether to pursue the opportunity and the care provider and the client ultimately decide whether to work together. In general, in a caregiver registry business model, the consumer manages his/her own care.

Dispelling the top myths about registries

The easiest way to do that is by playing a game of True or False:

The quality of care providers in a registry model isn't good because they are independent contractors and therefore aren't being properly screened.

False.

Nurse Registries conduct in-person interviews of all care providers before referring them into a Client's home. They also screen for copies of their driver's license, Social Security card and/or green card to verify that they're eligible to work. Finally, as part of their registration process, caregivers submit their paper work and employment history for the past five years, and call those clients or companies to check references. These prescreening activities are all required in the State of Florida.

Registries don't conduct criminal background checks on caregivers.

False.

The State of Florida requires that Registries perform a Florida Department of Law enforcement background screen (FDLE). In addition to the FDLE a National background screen can be conducted through a private agency to ensure that the potential caregiver does not have a criminal background in another state. It is recommended that you ask the agency if they do any screening other than the minimal that the State requires.

Caregivers' required licenses and certifications are not verified.

False.

In Florida, the screening of certified nursing assistants (CNAs) is under AHCA (Agency Health Care Administration), which monitors and regulates their practice. Registries are able to check all CNA Licenses online for verification.

Registries don't screen caregivers for certain health issues.

False.

The State of Florida requires that all caregivers have a statement from their Doctor stating that they are free of communicable disease.

Clients are kept in the dark about their rights and responsibilities in a Consumer-managed arrangement.

False.

Nurse Registries inform all consumers of their rights and responsibilities. Prior to starting services, they provide them with a consumer hotline phone number to call if they have any complaints about their caregivers. That phone number is a direct line to AHCA. Registries also provide clients with a summary of their costs and the name and number of a contact person at the registry if they have any questions.

The clients in a registry model are taking on all the liability of having a caregiver in their home.

False.

Registries carry General and Professional liability Insurance. Each caregiver signs a contract with the registry (its is important that you ask the registry if they do this) stating that they understand that they are responsible for their own work related injury and wave any right to seek compensation from client. The client is no more exposed by using a registry than they would be if they used a home care agency. Even though

a home care agency carries workers compensation the client can still be sued by either the caregiver and/or the workers compensation.

Caregivers in a registry model get away with not paying employment taxes.

False.

At the end of the year, Registries give all the caregivers in our pool a 1099 tax form, which they can use — as independent contractors — to report their earnings to the IRS. Ultimately it's the caregiver's responsibility to file and pay their taxes not the client's responsibility. My experience is that people who work for themselves understand that responsibility and pay their taxes.

Registries are against licensing.

False.

Registries are not against the establishment of industry standards and regulations, as long as they don't change our classification as a registry. In the State of Florida registries go through the same licensing process as the Home Care agencies and have the same continuous oversight that they do. Nurse Registries go through an audit every two years just like the Home Care agencies.

If you would like more information on nurse registries or are considering obtaining some type of home care please contact Russell Betz, RN at Partners Home Care. www.partnershomecare.com
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