



Home Care Association of Florida
RESOURCES, EDUCATION, ADVOCACY

2024 FLORIDA LEGISLATIVE SESSION POLICY PRIORITIES

Florida's Voice for Home Care Since 1989



The Home Care Association of Florida (HCAF) is the premier trade association for the Florida home care industry. Founded in 1989, HCAF exists to provide representation, communication, and advocacy for the state's more than 2,300 licensed home health agencies, and to give them the education and resources they need to deliver high-quality, cost-effective services to patients/clients in the comfort of their homes.

HCAF's policy roadmap delineates four key pillars crucial to realizing our vision:

1. Proposing lasting solutions to address the health care workforce shortage.
2. Fostering a robust Medicaid home health agency provider network by elevating low and outdated reimbursement rates.
3. Streamlining processes by eliminating costly and unnecessary red tape, thereby empowering home care professionals.
4. Enhancing accountability within the Statewide Medicaid Managed Care (SMMC) program.

The implementation of these policy recommendations is essential. By embracing these measures, the legislature can establish effective, common-sense policies that not only benefit home care providers but also generate widely shared advantages throughout the state. **We respectfully urge your support for these policy priorities to strengthen Florida's home care industry and improve health care services for all.**

For further information, please contact Kyle Simon, HCAF Senior Director of Policy, Advocacy & Communications, at (850) 222-8967 or ksimon@homecarefla.org, or Jimmy Card, Principal of Continental Strategy, at (850) 321-8896 or jcard@continentalstrategy.com.

ECONOMIC PROFILE OF HOME HEALTH



2,372

Number of home health agencies licensed in the state.



76,422

Total home health employees in the workforce.



\$3.75 BILLION

Cumulative wages generated within the home health sector.



\$5.6 BILLION

Overall impact on the state's labor income.



\$745 MILLION

Potential annual savings for the state through home-based care instead of nursing home placement.

1 HOME HEALTH CARE SERVICES – SB 1798 (TRUMBULL) • HB 935 (FRANKLIN II)

► EFFECT OF THE BILL

HCAF supports SB 1798/HB 935. The legislation introduces an innovative strategy to address the health care workforce shortage by authorizing registered nurses (RNs) contracted with a licensed home health agency to provide specified visits and empowering advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) to order Medicaid home health services, aligning with federal law.

► POSITION

HCAF supports SB 1798/HB 935. These proposed amendments to state statutes are crucial to streamline patient care, alleviate scheduling challenges, and utilize contract nurses' expertise to bridge workforce gaps. Supporting this amendment positions the legislature as a champion for accessible and reliable health care, benefiting over 70% of licensed home health agencies.

Additionally, Section 3708 of the federal CARES Act grants permanent authorization for non-physician practitioners, including physician assistants and nurse practitioners, to certify Medicare and Medicaid home health care services. However, the implementation of this federal policy necessitates corresponding modifications at the state level. Granting APRNs the authority to order home health services represents a crucial legislative step in expanding access, particularly in underserved areas with physician shortages, and addressing the diverse needs of the growing elderly population.

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HEALTH CARE – SB 7016 (BURTON) • HB 1549 (GRANT)

► EFFECT OF THE BILL

The legislation, part of the Senate Live Healthy proposal, seeks to grow Florida's health care workforce, remove regulations to increase workforce mobility, and expand access to quality, efficient health care through the following provisions:

- **Medicaid Rate Increases:**

- Appropriates \$29 million for Private Duty Nursing (PDN) services.
- Appropriates \$195 million (Senate) and \$68 million (House) for the Home and Community Based Services (iBudget) Waiver.

- **Workforce Training and Education Funding:**

- Allocates \$5 million to expand the Linking Industry to Nursing Education (LINE) fund for grants to nursing education programs collaborating with health care providers to address workforce needs, including training certified nursing assistants (CNAs) and licensed practical nurses (LPNs).

- **Workforce Shortage and Licensure:**

- Requires Florida to join the audiology and speech-language pathology and the physical therapy interstate licensure compacts.
- Establishes the Mobile Opportunity by Interstate Licensure Endorsement (MOBILE) Act, creating an expedited, standardized process for licensure by endorsement for all health care professions.

- **Acute Hospital Care at Home Program:**

- Mandates the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) to seek federal approval to implement an acute hospital care-at-home program in the Medicaid program to allow hospitals to provide inpatient care to patients in their homes.

► POSITION

HCAF supports SB 7016/HB 1549. The comprehensive legislation addresses crucial aspects and represents significant strides toward accessible and reliable health care, including targeting Florida's last-in-the-nation ranking PDN reimbursement rates — a significant obstacle for medically fragile children to access critical in-home care. Moreover, the legislation innovatively addresses the health care workforce shortage through expediting licensure, initiating interstate compacts, and providing appropriations for nursing and direct care worker training.

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HEALTH CARE INNOVATION – SB 7018 (HARRELL) • HB 1501 (GONZALEZ PITTMAN)

► EFFECT OF THE BILL

The legislation, part of the Senate Live Healthy proposal, establishes the Health Care Innovation Council, a 15-member body within the Department of Health (DOH). The council is responsible for organizing statewide public meetings and leading discussions with innovators, developers, and implementers of health care solutions. The bill directs the council to formulate best practice recommendations and focus areas, aiming to advance health care delivery in Florida. Emphasis is placed on improving efficiency, reducing strain on the workforce, enhancing access, improving outcomes, decreasing unnecessary ER visits, and lowering costs without compromising care quality.

► POSITION

HCAF advocates for an amendment to SB 7018/HB 1501, proposing the dedication of one council seat to a representative from the home- and community-based services (HCBS) sector. This amendment is essential to ensure that HCBS providers and their specific workforce challenges, particularly those related to direct care workers, receive sufficient consideration. It's noteworthy that the total spending on HCBS, exceeding \$18 billion, represents the largest share of health care spending by the state. By including an HCBS representative, the legislation can better address the unique needs and perspectives of this vital sector in Florida's health care landscape.