



Home Care Association of Florida
RESOURCES • EDUCATION • ADVOCACY

YEAR IN REVIEW

ADVANCING FLORIDA HOME CARE

STATE OF **YOUR** ASSOCIATION



HomeCareFLA.org



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ABOUT US



The Home Care Association of Florida (HCAF) has been Florida's voice for the home care provider community for over 35 years. HCAF exists to provide representation, communication, and advocacy for home care providers, and to give them the education and resources they need to deliver high-quality, cost-effective services to patients and clients at home.



VISION

To be the foremost resource and advocate for Florida's home care industry and the patients it serves.



MISSION

As the voice for home care, our mission is to advance the interests and meet the needs of our members, enabling them to provide the highest quality and most cost-effective services throughout Florida.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES & VALUES

- Member-focused
- Excellence and best practices
- Integrity and ethics
- Unified industry

OUR TEAM

At HCAF, we are proud to be guided by a passionate and experienced team dedicated to supporting Florida's home care provider community. Whether advocating in the halls of the Capitol in Tallahassee or Washington, D.C., developing timely education and resources, or responding to member inquiries, our staff works tirelessly behind the scenes — and on the front lines — to ensure your voice is heard and your needs are met.

Every member of our team brings a unique set of skills, experiences, and perspectives to help advance our mission: to empower home care providers and promote high-quality, accessible care across the state.

Take a moment to get to know the professionals who are working for you each day. If you have questions, need assistance, or want to learn more about getting involved, we're just a phone call or email away. Your success is our priority — and we're here to help.



Denise Bellville
Executive Director



Jennifer Campbell
Member & Program Associate



Jessica Devine
Director of Membership
Growth & Retention



Patti Heid
Senior Director of Best
Practices & Compliance



Kyle Simon
Senior Director of Policy,
Advocacy & Communications



Adara Sloane
Associate Director of
Events & Operations



Monica Smith
Deputy Director



Julia Thompson
Director of
Membership Services

FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Denise Bellville, RN, BS, COS-C



Dear Members,

As we reflect on 2024 and look forward to 2025, Florida's home care provider community finds itself navigating both remarkable opportunities and pressing challenges. The growth in demand for home-based care — driven by our aging population, health care innovations, and patient preferences — is undeniable. But so too are the workforce shortages, financial pressures, and regulatory complexities that continue to test our resilience.

Over the past year, we've witnessed profound demographic shifts. More than 1,200 people move to Florida every day, many of whom are retirees seeking care in the comfort of their homes. At the same time, our caregiver workforce — so vital to our mission — has faced unprecedented strain. High turnover, limited benefits, and rising living costs continue to impact recruitment and retention across the sector.

Despite significant headwinds, 2024 was a year of meaningful progress. With the steadfast support of our members, HCAF successfully advocated for legislation authorizing advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) to order home care services for Medicaid recipients. We also championed key provisions of SB 7016 ("Live Healthy"), including Florida's participation in the speech-language pathology and audiology compact and the physical therapy licensure Compact.

The legislation further allocated \$19 million to the Linking Industry to Nursing Education (LINE) program and an additional \$5 million to expand access to private nursing schools — targeted investments aimed at increasing the supply of licensed practical nurses (LPNs) and certified nursing assistants (CNAs) through education grants.



HOME CARE CHAMPION HONORED

President Cindy Lavoie and Executive Director Denise Bellville present Senator Jay Trumbull (R-Panama City) with the Home Care Legislative Advocate Award at the Florida State Capitol in recognition of his leadership in passing HB 935 (2024) — a landmark law that expands access to Medicaid-funded home health services statewide.

HCAF also secured a \$29 million Medicaid reimbursement rate increase for private duty nursing (PDN) services to support recruitment and retention of skilled clinicians serving medically complex patients. In addition, we obtained a \$195.8 million appropriation to implement a uniform rate increase for all iBudget waiver providers, strengthening services for individuals with developmental disabilities. Finally, we welcomed the Agency for Health Care Administration's (AHCA) proposal of a Workforce Sustainability Waiver, which could inject up to \$1.4 billion into Florida's health care workforce over the next five years.

As we stepped into 2025, HCAF set their course on passing regulatory hurdles that affect all home care providers. With only 12% of bills passed during this legislative session HCAF is proud to have passed HB 1353, a major regulatory modernization allowing one administrator to oversee up to five commonly owned home health agencies, regardless of geographic service area — removing the outdated, arbitrary contiguous-county restriction. The bill also eliminates the requirement that admission, evaluation, and discharge visits be performed only by direct employees, enabling providers to use qualified contracted professionals to improve flexibility and access. It further revamps the Excellence in Home Health Program by requiring AHCA to distinguish award criteria between "skilled" and "non-skilled" agencies, streamline the application process, and ensure the designation is accessible and achievable — addressing why no provider has earned the award since its 2023 implementation.

HB 391 that passed in 2023 needed to have a glitch bill this session and HCAF worked tirelessly with stakeholders and sponsors of the bill to finally have this bill SB 1156 pass, strengthening the Home Health Aide for Medically Fragile Children Program ("Family Home Health Aide") by enhancing training standards, expanding provider eligibility, and exempting caregiver wages from Medicaid eligibility calculations.

SB 1490 passed, directing AHCA to develop a comprehensive redesign plan for the Medicaid Model Waiver for children receiving PDN, with tiered service options and required input from families, providers, and Medicaid plans. This waiver will give the families some flexibility in the care provided versus their needs as a family for respite care and introducing home modification options.

We've embraced the digital transformation shaping our field. Telehealth, remote monitoring, and hospital-at-home models are evolving rapidly. HCAF continues to work alongside providers, state leaders, and healthcare partners to ensure these innovations elevate — rather than replace — the essential human element of care.

Looking ahead, our mission remains clear: to protect, strengthen, and advance home care in Florida. That means:

- Championing workforce development through training, fair compensation, and career growth.
- Advocating for sound policies and sustainable reimbursement structures.
- Driving collaboration across the care continuum — to lead the focus to care at home.
- And embracing the technologies that enable safer, more efficient, and more personalized care.
- Providing creative, targeted education to meet the ever changing regulatory hurdles.

As Executive Director of HCAF, I am proud of the strength and unity of our home care community. Your commitment, compassion, and professionalism define what is best about our industry. Together, we are building a future where every Floridian can age with dignity and receive care where it matters most — at home.

With deep appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Denise Bellville". The script is elegant and cursive, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and larger than the rest of the letters.

A YEAR IN REVIEW

HCAF is proud to present this report, reflecting the progress, impact, and challenges of Florida's home care industry throughout 2024. As the state's leading voice for providers, HCAF remained committed to advancing policy priorities, strengthening the workforce, expanding access to high-quality care, and equipping providers with the tools they need to succeed in a rapidly evolving environment.

This report highlights key achievements in membership growth, professional development, public policy, emergency response, and resource development. In 2024, we expanded our statewide and national presence, successfully advocated for landmark legislation and critical funding increases, and delivered meaningful education to thousands of professionals across Florida.

We also navigated persistent workforce shortages, rising regulatory pressures, and the continued need for systemwide innovation. Despite these challenges, our members served hundreds of thousands of Floridians — seniors, medically fragile children, individuals with disabilities — with dedication, compassion, and resilience.

Through collective action, collaboration with state and federal partners, and ongoing support from our members, we continue to elevate the role of home care in Florida's health care system. This report captures the scope of our efforts and outlines our continued commitment to advancing high-quality, cost-effective care in the home setting as we move into 2025 and beyond.

MEMBERSHIP OVERVIEW

Florida is home to 6,056 in-home care providers, including:

- 2,305 home health agencies (1,154 licensed-only and 1,151 Medicare/Medicaid-certified)
- 1,197 nurse registries
- 2,554 homemaker companion service providers

As of the close of 2024, HCAF represented 640 provider members, reflecting steady growth across all sectors. Notable membership gains included:

- An increase of 19 certified agency members
- 28 new Private Duty members
- 32 new Associate members, including electronic medical record vendors, consultants, wound care suppliers, and educational platforms
- Three new combination members, representing agencies that provide both Certified and Private Duty services

Collectively, Florida providers served an estimated 457,080 individuals under Medicare and Medicaid in 2024 — excluding those served through private pay, veterans programs, and commercial insurance plans.

HCAF members are also leading the way in adopting innovative care models, including Hospital-at-Home, the Guiding an Improved Dementia Experience (GUIDE) Model, and preparing to participate in the Transforming Episode Accountability Model (TEAM).

We are especially proud to recognize our members' achievements on the national stage. In 2024, Ralph Laughton received a prestigious Excellence and Innovation Award, and Greg Fraser was appointed to the state Health Care Innovation Council, which will direct \$50 million annually toward workforce development, technology adoption, and reducing avoidable emergency room use.

EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In 2024, HCAF expanded access to high-quality education, peer networking, and professional growth opportunities across Florida and beyond:

- Hosted the 10th Annual Home Care Warm Up in Palm Beach with 132 Medicare-certified provider attendees.
- Hosted the HomeCareCon 35th Annual HomeCareCon in Orlando, attracting 663 attendees for pre-conference and main programming — reinforcing its status as the nation's leading home care conference.
- Convened the 7th Annual Private Care Symposium in Deerfield Beach for two days of targeted education and strategy for private care leaders.
- Offered 82 live webinars on clinical, operational, and regulatory topics, drawing 2,987 participants.
- Added over 90 new modules to our on-demand platform, HomeCareLearn.com, with 1,645 course completions.
- Launched the inaugural Private Duty 101 Workshop in Deerfield Beach, led by staff members Jessica Devine and Patti Heid, with 68 attendees.
- Partnered with Simply Healthcare Plans to create the required Family Home Health Aide (FHHA) training, with scholarships for caregivers identified by the plan.
- Formed a strategic partnership with MissionCare Collective to pursue workforce training grants and expand the caregiver pipeline.
- Licensed educational content to 10 state home care associations, extending Florida's national leadership in home care training.
- Held 17 in-person Home Care Connection events across Florida, offering timely updates and networking.
- Facilitated Blueprint for OASIS-E1 Accuracy workshops and certification exams in Fort Lauderdale and Clearwater, drawing students from as far as California.
- Launched Home Care Huddle, a monthly podcast hosted by Patti Heid featuring expert insights and policy updates for Florida providers.

ADVOCACY & LEGISLATIVE ACHIEVEMENTS

HCAF's advocacy efforts gained unprecedented momentum in 2024:

- The Home Care Political Action Committee (PAC) raised a record \$68,502 — its highest total in 30 years — and contributed \$63,179 to state candidates, all of whom were successfully elected or reelected.
- During Home Care Day at the Capitol, members met with dozens of legislators serving on key health care committees.
- In Washington, D.C., HCAF met with 21 members of Florida's congressional delegation. Following those meetings, Rep. Kat Cammack (R-Gainesville) introduced H.R.8114 to block the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' (CMS) 80/20 provision in the *Ensuring Access to Medicaid Services* final rule.

Key legislative victories during the 2024 Florida Legislative Session included:

- Passage of HB 935, which authorizes non-physician practitioners to order Medicaid home health services and was implemented in July 2024.
- A \$29 million increase in Medicaid reimbursement for PDN services (approximately 7%).
- A \$195.8 million rate increase for Home and Community-Based Services waiver providers under the iBudget program.
- A \$5 million expansion of the LINE fund, supporting training for LPNs and CNAs.

ADVOCACY & LEGISLATIVE ACHIEVEMENTS (CONTINUED)

Additional advocacy work included:

- Attendance at quarterly in-person meetings AHCA leaders to address issues including background screening reform, emergency response integration, provider enrollment clarification, and Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) compliance.
- Engagement with Palmetto GBA (Medicare Administrative Contractor), the Accreditation Commission for Health Care (ACHC), the Community Health Accreditation Partner (CHAP), and The Joint Commission to address regulatory barriers and promote provider success.
- Participating in national meetings hosted by the National Association for Home Care and Hospice (NAHC) and its successor organization, the National Alliance for Care at Home.
- Launching the Home Care Hall of Fame, honoring the distinguished contributions of industry pioneers, including former HCAF Executive Director Bobby Lolley, former NAHC President Bill Dombi, HCAF founding member and past Board member Glenda Burke, former HCAF President Terri Santangelo, and HCAF founding member and first Executive Director Gene Tischer.

RESOURCES & DISASTER RESPONSE

In 2024, Florida endured three hurricanes, resulting in 420 fatalities and over \$232 billion in damages. HCAF provided extensive support to affected members, including:

- Coordinating fuel access and sharing AHCA-issued emergency guidance.
- Distributing emergency supplies and facilitating referrals to partner organizations such as Florida Baptist and Samaritan's Purse for food, clothing, housing, and transportation assistance.
- Offering direct staff support for clean-up efforts at homes affected by water and sand damage.

Key resources released this year included:

- The updated *Florida Home Care Salary & Benefits Report*, with data from 166 providers.
- A revised *Non-Skilled Agency Policies and Procedures Manual*, now available through a year-round subscription service.
- Two issues of *Florida at Home* magazine and the *Florida Home Care Services Directory & Referral Guide*, distributed state-wide to members and hospital discharge planners.

HCAF also developed an internal emergency operations plan, and completed an independent audit of its financials.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2025

As we look forward to the year ahead, our 2025 goals reflect our commitment to advancing education, advocacy, and innovation in Florida's home care sector:

- Launching monthly Thrive Thursday Provider Town Halls focused on Medicare, Medicaid, private pay, and palliative care sectors.
- Expanding palliative care education, including an A-to-Z webinar series on delivering in-home palliative services.
- Hosting the 11th Annual Home Care Warm Up and the debut of Home Health Fundamentals, held January 27-28 in Palm Beach Gardens.
- Delivering spring and fall statewide Home Care Connection events in May and November to provide timely education, regulatory updates, and valuable networking.
- Hosting the HomeCareCon 36th Annual Conference & Trade Show on July 22-25 in Orlando.
- Launching the first annual, virtual AI symposium, *Bringing the Future Home: AI Innovations in Health Care*.
- Hosting a 10-part comprehensive training program on the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS®) in September 2025.
- Offering the Blueprint for OASIS-E1 Accuracy Workshop and certification exam in September in Altamonte Springs.
- Hosting the 8th Annual Private Care Symposium on October 13-14 in Coral Springs.
- Growing the Private Duty Lunch Chat and Private Duty 101 Workshop series across all regions.
- Continuing the monthly Home Health Hot Topic webinar series for Medicare-certified providers.
- Finalizing the FHHA training and policies and procedures toolkit to help providers achieve and maintain compliance.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2025 (CONTINUED)

- Enhancing workforce development through grant-seeking partnerships.
- Leading advocacy during the 2025 legislative session, with anticipated legislation to:
 - Revise the Family Home Health Aide program.
 - Improve the dormant Excellence in Home Health Award program.
 - Authorize contract nurses to complete admissions and recertifications.
 - Eliminate geographic restrictions for agency administrators.

Additionally, we will continue to attend quarterly regulatory meetings, conduct member site visits, launch new benefits, and advocate at the federal level for flexibilities related to face-to-face documentation and the Hospital-at-Home model.

CLOSING REMARKS

The Board of Directors and staff extend our deepest gratitude to our members for their continued trust and engagement; to elected officials and policymakers for their leadership and collaboration; to our contract lobbying team at Continental Strategy for their strategic guidance and tireless advocacy; and to our valued partners at the state and national levels who strengthen our collective impact.

Together, we are advancing the future of in-home care in Florida. We look forward to continuing this vital work with unity, determination, and a shared commitment to ensuring every Floridian has access to high-quality care in the place they call home.



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