Home Care Registry (HCR) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

These FAQs respond to questions that are not addressed in other HCR materials posted on the Health Commerce System (HCS), such as Alerts and Dear Administrator Letters (DALs). Please consult these materials in conjunction with the following FAQs, which are updated as needed.

New and significantly modified questions and answers are shown in red.

General Questions

Q1.   Why is the HCR necessary?

A.   The HCR is mandated by Chapter 594 of the Laws of 2008. It is part of an ongoing effort to ensure that the individuals employed by home care agencies to provide home care services have been properly trained and are suitable to provide services to New Yorkers in their homes. The HCR is a tool that the public can use to get more information on potential home care workers.

Q2.   Does the Department of Health guarantee the accuracy of the information in the HCR about personal care and home health aides?

A.   The HCR provides limited information about home care workers who have successfully completed a "state approved" training program in New York State. Information contained in the HCR is entered and updated by third parties. The Department of Health does not guarantee the accuracy of third-party information provided nor endorse any individual listed in the HCR. It is the responsibility of those accessing the HCR to verify the credentials, employability and competency of any individual listed in the HCR.

Q3.   What do I do if the HCR displays incorrect information for my agency or training program?

A.   State Education Department (SED) approved programs should contact Thomas Reimer at treimer2@MAIL.NYSED.GOV

DOH approved programs should contact the Department as follows:
- Licensed Home Care Services Agency (LHCSA) or Home Health Aide Training Program (HHATP), contact your regional office.
- Personal Care Aide Training Program (PCATP), contact the Bureau of Professional Credentialing at 1-518-408-1297 or PCATP@health.state.ny.us.

- Certified Home Health Agency (CHHA), Long Term Home Health Care Program (LTHHCP) or a Hospice, contact the Department at hmhscsurv@health.state.ny.us.

Q4. Does the Home Care Registry have a Help Desk?

A. Yes. The phone number is 1-518-408-1297. Help is also available by e-mail to HCREG@health.state.ny.us.

Q5. How do home care agencies and approved training programs access the HCR to enter the required information?

A. Training programs and home care agencies access the HCR through their HCS accounts.

Q6. What if I do not have an HCS account? Who do I go to?

A. The Commerce Accounts Management Unit (CAMU) can assist you. Their phone number is 1-866-529-1890. You can also phone the Help Desk at 1-518-408-1297.

Q7. How does the public get to the HCR?

A. The public can access the HCR through the DOH public Web site at www.nyhealth.gov.

Q8. If someone doesn't have access to the Internet, can they still access the HCR information?

A. Yes. Individuals without access to the Internet can phone the Help Desk at 1-518-408-1297. Help Desk staff can verify a person's training status and whether an aide is approved for employment.

Q9. I represent a home care agency with an approved Personal Care Aide Training Program (PCATP) and a Home Health Aide Training Program (HHATP). Does the HCR differentiate my organization's multiple functions as an employer and a training program?

A. Yes. The HCR differentiates these two functions through the roles that your HCS Coordinator must assign to your staff to enter and/or change information made to the HCR. The HCS roles for training programs are different from the roles assigned to employers. An email was sent to all HCS coordinators in August 2009 explaining the different roles and provided directions on how to assign the roles. If you have questions

regarding the different HCS responsibilities, please contact the Help Desk at 1-518-408-1297.

Q10. Who is responsible for the information entered into the HCR?

A.   The home care agency is accountable for the information it enters in the HCR. The training program is accountable for the information that it enters in the HCR. The Senior Official who signs the written sworn statement is accountable for the information in the written sworn statement.

Q11. Could an individual have more than one registry number?

A.   Yes. Instances of an aide with more than one registry number are rare and a result of user (i.e., training program or home care agency) data entry error. A registry number is assigned when a user enters an aide or graduates a student. The HCR application does not allow users to enter students and aides prior to searching the registry to ascertain whether the individual has already been entered. Duplicates are created when an individual is already in the registry and has a registry number, but the user fails to choose from the "use selected" list of matches and instead selects "no match." When the user selects "no match," the HCR creates a new record for this individual. When the new record is created a new registry number is assigned. Duplicate records should be reported to the Help Desk at 1-518-408-1297.

Q12. When is a registry number assigned?

A.   For aides who successfully completed training in a class that **started before** September 25, 2009, the registry number is assigned when the employer enters the aide's profile information in the HCR. For aides who successfully completed training in a class that **started on or after** September 25, 2009, the registry number is assigned when the training program certifies the student.

Q13. Does maintaining information in the HCR replace required record keeping for training programs or home care agencies?

A.   No.

Q14. Can the last four (4) digits of the social security number be used without consent?

A.   No.

Q15. Is the field for the last four (4) digits of the social security number a required field?

A.   No.

Q16.   Does DOH have a template we can use to develop HCR policies and procedures?

A.   No. Training programs and home care agencies are encouraged to review Chapter 594 of the Laws of 2008 (Public Health Law § 3613), the regulations and information provided on the HCS.

Q17.   Due to the short timeframes to enter information into the HCR, will home care agencies and training programs be allowed to assign more than one person to data entry functions?

A.   Yes. In fact, you are required to assign at least two different employees to the created HCS data entry and modification roles for the HCR.

Q18.   Can documents be kept in electronic format?

A.   Although HCR documents can be saved and filed electronically, all certificates and certification forms must be printed and signed. Original PCA and HHA certificates and certification forms must be maintained in hard copy files.

Q19.   What are the time frame requirements for data entry?

A.   The chart below may help you.

Which Trainees or Aides?	What Data Must Be Entered?	By When?	Do Training Programs or Home Care Agencies Enter the Data?
1. Trained in a class starting on or after 9/25/09, **not listed in** HCR.	Class information; trainee's name and date of birth.	Within ten (10) days of start of class. Day one (1) is first day of class.	Only the training program can enter training information for this group of trainees.

2. Trained in a class starting on or after 9/25/09, **not listed in** HCR.	All personal information on aide other than name and date of birth.	Within ten (10) business days of successful completion of the training program. Day one (1) is the day the aide successfully completes the training program.	Only the training program can enter training information for this group of aides.
3. Trained in a class starting on or after 9/25/09, **listed in** HCR.	Only employment information. **Aides in this group are already listed in the HCR.** If the aide is **not** listed in the HCR, the training program must enter the aide's personal and training information. The employer **cannot** do it.	Within ten (10) business days of employment. Day one (1) is any day between: (a) the day that the employer determines they will hire the aide, and (b) the first day that the aide works for pay for the employer.	Employer.
4. Trained in a class that started before 9/25/09, employed on 9/25/09, and **not listed in** the HCR.	Personal, training and employment information.	By 9/25/10.	Employer of record on 9/25/09.
5. Trained in a class that started before 9/25/09, **not** employed on 9/25/09, and **not listed in** the HCR.	Personal, training and employment information.	Prior to providing home care services.	First employer on or after 9/26/09.
6. Trained in a class that started before 9/25/09, not employed on 9/25/09, and **listed in** the HCR.	Current employment information.	Within ten (10) business days of employment. See Group 3 for definition of day one (1).	Current employer.

Q20. What are the required timeframes for signing the written sworn statement or certification, printing the aide's certificate and giving the certificate to the aide?

A.   The written sworn statement or certification must be executed (printed, signed and notarized) within ten (10) business days of the trainee's successful completion of the training program. Certificates must be printed, signed and given to aides within ten (10) business days of the day the certification was executed.

Q21. When I log in, I do not see the same screens that are in the Quick Tips. What do I do?

A.   Ensure that you are logged in correctly. If you are planning to make changes or updates, make sure that you are logged in as a training program or Agency Updater for the correct training program or home care agency. If you are logged in correctly and still don't see the screens, call the Help Desk 1-518-408-1297.

Training Program Questions

Q22. Why does the DOH differentiate training entities from training programs? They are the same thing.

A.   This differentiation reflects the distinction between the entity approved by either SED or DOH to provide education and training, and the specific training programs (i.e., subjects) the entity has been approved to offer.

Q23. How will the HCR be structured to accommodate agencies who have both PCA and HHA training programs approved by DOH?

A.   The HCR requires training programs to create classes. As part of creating a class, you will indicate whether it is a PCA or HHA class. You will enter the names of the people enrolled in it. If some of these people withdraw from the class or fail to complete it for any reason, you will indicate this on the HCR. When you print certificates for those in the class that successfully completed it, the certificates will state whether the class was PCA or HHA depending on what you entered into the HCR when you created the class.

Q24. We are a small organization. Do I need to have a different person for Official Agency Designee, Supervising Nurse, Nurse Instructor, etc.?

A.   No.

Q25. What is the "Senior Official" role?

A.   In reference to personal care and home health aide training programs, the HCR statute requires "a ***written sworn statement*** by the ***Senior Official*** of the entity that offers or provides such program, made under penalty of perjury, certifying that each person has in fact successfully completed the identified program, identifying each such person by name, address, date of birth and date on which such program was completed, and describing the nature of the education or training covered in such program; and (ii) proof that such entity has verified the true identity of each person who has successfully completed the identified program."

The Senior Official must be an individual with responsibility for oversight of the training program and must be authorized to execute a legally binding instrument on behalf of the operator of the program. The Senior Official may be the operator.

Q26. Is there any limit on the number of Senior Officials a training program can have?

A.   No. However, each designated Senior Official must meet the criteria set forth in Question 25.

Q27. Can the board of directors of a training program assign authority to any employee to be the Senior Official who signs the written sworn statement?

A.   Each Senior Official designated by a training program must have oversight of the training program and must be authorized to execute a legally binding instrument on behalf of the operator of the program.

Q28. Does a certificate need to be printed for each person who successfully completes the training program?

A.   Yes.

Q29. How long does the training program retain the certification form?

A.   For DOH training programs, records must be retained for six (6) years. For SED programs, records must be retained for seven (7) years.

Q30. How many certificates should be printed?

A.   There is the option of printing two (2) original certificates. You are required to maintain an original signed certificate in your files for six (6) years, unless otherwise directed by the DOH (seven (7) years for SED programs). The other signed certificate should be given to the aide.

Q31. Can a training program charge for duplicate certificates?

A.   Yes, but if the aide does not wish to pay for a duplicate copy of his/her certificate he/she can call the Help Desk at 1-518-408-1297 and ask for a duplicate copy as long as it is Home Care Registry generated.

Q32. Is the aide required to sign the certificate?

A.   No.

Q33. Will the certificate look the same for all HHAs and PCAs?

A.	Yes.

**Q34.	Will the certificate number be the same number on duplicate certificates?**

A.	 Yes.

**Q35.	Can an aide who lost his/her HCR generated certificate obtain a replacement?**

A.	Yes. The aide should request a duplicate certificate from the training program that issued the original certificate. If the training program has closed or refuses to provide a duplicate, the aide may phone the Help Desk at 1-518-408-1297 and receive a free copy as long as it is Home Care Registry generated..

**Q36.	I have both a PCATP and an HHATP. Can I issue PCA certificates to students enrolled in my HHATP who successfully complete only the PCA portion of the training program?**

A.	No. In order to print a PCA certificate for a student, that student has to be enrolled in a PCA class and successfully complete your PCA training program.

**Q37.	Does the individual have to go back to the training entity in which they were originally trained to get a competency evaluation?**

A.	No. Any DOH approved PCATP can administer the Alternative Competency Demonstration to an individual who wishes to work as a personal care aide. Home care agencies that do not have an approved PCATP cannot competency test.

Any DOH approved HHATP can competency test certain individuals (such as certified nurse aides and home health aides whose certification has lapsed) who wish to work as home health aides. Home care agencies that do not have an approved HHATP cannot competency test. Please refer to DAL DHCBC 06-02 (link provided below) issued April 13, 2006 for additional guidance on training requirements for home health aides.

http://www.health.state.ny.us/professionals/home_care/curriculum/docs/dal_06-02.pdf

**Q38.	Will there be a separate authorized person form designated for the registry?**

A.	No. This is not necessary for HCR purposes.

Q39. Can a training program enter employment information on an aide?

A.	No. Training programs may enter only training information for an aide.

Q40. Why do I have to enter date of birth in the Class Roster screen in the HCR?

A.	The date of birth, when combined with the registrant name, provides a unique identifier that assists the system in performing a search to determine if the person is already listed in the HCR.

Home Care Agency (Employer) Questions

Q41. Our agency information will be available to the public in the HCR. Is it possible that we will receive telephone calls about staff listed in the HCR?

A.	Yes. If this happens, follow your agency's policies and procedures for disclosing employee information.

Q42. When the HCR indicates that an aide is "Approved for Employment," what does that mean? What does it mean when the status is "Unknown"?

A.	 Workers who apply for employment with a home care services agency are required to undergo a background investigation that determines an individual's eligibility for employment. If factors that would disqualify a worker from employment are found, that person is deemed "disapproved" for employment. A home care services worker whose home health aide certification has lapsed, or been suspended or revoked, is also "disapproved" for employment. Home care services agencies may not hire any individual who is disapproved for employment. If a background investigation yields no disqualifying factors and the home health aide certification is current, the employee is deemed "approved" for employment and may be hired.

An "unknown" status may mean that an individual has applied for employment with a home care services agency and the background investigation is still pending. It may also mean that the individual has never applied to work with a home care services agency, as these individuals are not required to submit to a background investigation but would still be in the HCR because of their completion of a personal care or home health aide training program.

The Department strongly encourages consumers to make additional reference checks if the person they are considering for employment is listed with an "Unknown" status on the HCR.

NOTE: An eligibility determination is only valid as of the date on which that determination was made. The Department is not provided with updated information about the worker. Therefore the consumer is always encouraged to ask for additional information about everyone who will be coming into the home to deliver services.

Q43. Is the HCR employment information for the worker reliable?

A.   This information is self-reported. The DOH does not guarantee its accuracy.

Q44. Can you please explain the information in the "Convictions/Findings" section of the HCR?

A.   This section contains limited records of convictions or administrative findings involving abuse, mistreatment, neglect or misappropriation of funds by a personal care or home health aide while in a patient care setting. It applies to convictions and determinations in New York State only. Other types of convictions or administrative determinations, if any, and convictions and findings from other states, if any, are not reported. Administrative determinations are available for a limited set of patient care settings only. The information in this section is reported voluntarily by state and local agencies, and may not reflect complete and "up to date" information for the individual listed.

Q45. Are employers required to enter information on convictions and findings?

A.   No. Only DOH staff may enter this information.

Q46. Are Assisted Living Programs (ALPs) subject to HCR requirements?

A.   ALPs combine an adult care facility (ACF) with a home care agency. Home care agencies and the PCAs and HHAs that they employ are subject to HCR requirements. Adult care facilities and their employees are not subject to HCR requirements.

Q47. Are we allowed to hire HHAs and PCAs with certificates issued by training programs that are no longer on the DOH or SED list of approved training programs?

A.   It depends on when the certificate was issued and when and why the training program was closed by the approving state agency. Many approved training programs have conducted appropriate training and testing as per their approved training plan, have issued valid certificates and then have closed. Certificates issued by these programs are valid even after the training program has closed. This has always been the case. The advent of the HCR has not changed this.

Home care agencies will be notified on HCS when a training program is closed. If this information is available to the Department, the communication will state whether all certificates issued by that training program are void or only those issued during a specific timeframe.

If the certificate lists a training program that is not on the HCR list of approved training programs, contact the Help Desk 1-518-408-1297.

Q48.   If an aide employed by my agency on September 25, 2009 leaves after that date, is it my responsibility to add this person to the HCR?

A.   Yes.

Q49.   My agency has to update or change hundreds of staff. Does the HCR provide any way for us to electronically upload aides in batches?

A.   No. Each aide must be updated or changed individually.

Q50.   As a home care agency employer, can certificates be printed for aides once successful completion of a training program has been verified?

A.   No. Only training programs can print certificates and only for the students who successfully complete their training program.

Q51.   If my agency sends aides to the local nursing college, do we certify them?

A.   No. The only organizations that can issue certificates are approved training programs.

Q52.   If an aide presents a questionable certificate, should this be reported?

A.   If you suspect that a certificate was fraudulently issued, you should report it to your region's Medicaid Fraud Control Unit in the New York State Office of the Attorney General and the Office of the Medicaid Inspector

General. After contacting the appropriate authorities, you should also provide the information to the Help Desk at 1-518-408-1297..

Q53. Will an individual's work history be available on the HCR?

A. Yes.

Q54. Does the HCR section on home care employment history include the reason for termination?

A. No.

Q55. Can a home care agency enter training program information for an aide?

A. If the aide successfully completed training in a class that started on or after September 25, 2009, the home care agency may not enter any training information on the aide. The only organization that can do this is the training program that trained the aide and issued the certificate. For this group of aides, the home care agency may enter only employment information.

If the aide successfully completed training in a class that did not start on or after September 25, 2009, the home care agency must enter both training and employment information.

Q56. I am trying to enter aides, but when I try to input their work history, I cannot find the agencies I need. What should I do?

A. Call the Help Desk at 1-518-408-1297.

Q57. What should I do if I need to enter or correct data and the HCR application won't let me do it?

A. Review all of the training materials available on the HCR. If your issue isn't addressed, call the Help Desk at 1-518-408-1297.