



Report to the General Assembly Public Health Committee

Home Health Care Agency and Home Health Aide Agency
Instances of Staff Abuse Perpetrated by an Agency Client

Manisha Juthani, MD, Commissioner

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State of Connecticut
Department of Public Health
410 Capitol Avenue
P.O. Box 340308
Hartford, CT 06134-0308

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Executive Summary

Home health care agencies and home health aide agencies provide a critical element of skilled nursing services under the direction of a physician in the health care sector. These agencies provide both medical and personal care to support individuals residing in community settings. Without this level of support many individuals would need to rely on institutional health care settings.

Patient profiles vary greatly from diagnoses, socioeconomic status, age, stability/instability of housing, and the indicators for service.

The home health care team is multidisciplinary and comprised in part, of nurses, home health aides, medical social workers, spiritual care, and other allied health members, such as physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech and language pathologists, and registered dietitians. They are most often unaccompanied during their community visits and provide services in a variety of settings that include but are not limited to private residences, group homes, nursing homes, managed residential communities, and homeless shelters. Care is delivered on an intermittent and noncontinuous basis. Health care workers employed by home health care and home health aide agencies are mission critical to the service delivery.

In 2023, Connecticut experienced two tragedies that resulted in the loss of life for two home health care agency employees. During the 2024 legislative session, there was a significant amount of review and discussion of healthcare worker safety that culminated with the passage of Public Act (PA) 24-19, An Act Concerning the Health and Safety of Connecticut Residents, codified in Connecticut General Statutes (Conn. Gen. Stat.) § 19a-491h. This report will identify the incidents of staff abuse as defined in the public act and the actions taken across the home health care sector.

Introduction

Conn. Gen. Stat. § [19a-491h](#) requires each home health care agency and home health aide agency to report to the Department of Public Health (DPH) on each instance of abuse that is perceived as a threat or danger by a staff member of such agency, which includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, or any other abuse by an agency client against a staff member of such agency and the actions taken by the agency to ensure the safety of the staff member, effective October 1, 2024. Additionally, section 2(b) of the statute requires DPH to submit a report on the number of reports of abuse received and the actions taken to ensure the safety of the staff member about whom the report was made.

DPH developed and maintains an electronic portal for licensed institutions to report information on reportable events, adverse events, and instances of abuse related to specific providers. Pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. 19-491h, DPH expanded the portal to facilitate home health care and home health aide agency reporting as directed by the public act.

Discussion

In accordance with Conn. Gen. Stat. § 19a-490r, health care employers have been required to report annually to DPH detailed incidents of workplace violence. DPH has been collecting this information since 2016. Conn. Gen. Stat. §19-491h expanded on the reporting requirements for home health care and home health aide agencies and directed/included instances of abuse which includes verbal, physical and sexual abuse and actions taken by the agency pursuant to the incident. In November 2024, DPH released guidance and updated instructions for the workplace violence report. [Blast Fax 2014-17](#) provided detailed instructions on completing the report.

On December 31, 2024, eighty-eight (88) home health care agencies were licensed with DPH. Two (2) home health care agencies met the hospice exemption requirement resulting in eight six (86) home care agencies required to report.

Total number of licensed home health care agencies required to report*	Reported	Non-reporters
86	82 (95%)	4 (5%)

*This number reflects the two agencies that are exempt from reporting in the law.

Fourteen (14) of the eight-six (86) agencies reported staff incidents of abuse by a client and/or a family member. The following table summarizes the incidents.

Type of abuse	No. of agencies that reported incident of abuse	Total number of incidents
Verbal	10	35
Physical	8	15
Sexual	3	6
Other	4	6
Total	25	62

For those that reported incidents of abuse, actions taken included:

- Staff offered safety re-education and training
- Client emergency discharge from agency services
- Staff offered employee assistance program
- Revisions to the client treatment plan
- Supervised and/or escorted visits on subsequent client visits

- Law enforcement notification
- Client/Patient transfer to hospital

Conclusion

Eighty-six (86) home health care agencies in the state of Connecticut were required to submit a workplace violence yearly report to DPH's Facility Licensing and Investigations Section (FLIS) web-based submission. Ninety-five percent (95%) reported in accordance with the law with five percent (5%) non-reporters. Fourteen (14) of the eight-six (86) agencies who were required to report reported sixty-two (62) incidents of abuse by a client and/or a family member, as well as the required actions taken in response to these incidents. Seventy-two (72) of the eighty-two (82) reporting entities reported no incidents of abuse.