

DHMH Seeks Public Comment on Regulation of Health Care Staff Agencies

The Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) is seeking informal public comment as it prepares to adopt regulations that set standards for the licensure of health care staff agencies in Maryland.

In July 2012, a radiographer employed through a number of interstate temporary health care staff agencies was arrested on federal charges relating to stealing narcotics and spreading Hepatitis C to patients through contaminated syringes. From 2008 and 2010, the radiographer was employed at four hospitals in Maryland. More than 1,700 patients in Maryland were tested for potential exposure and to date seven patients have tested positive.

In response, a multidisciplinary team at DHMH examined potential vulnerabilities in the health care system in an effort to prevent similar outbreaks in the future. DHMH discovered multiple deficiencies in the system, creating risks for patients. DHMH found that interstate staffing agencies that place allied health professionals are largely unregulated nationwide. As a result, the Maryland General Assembly enacted [Senate Bill 1057 \(2013\)](#) providing for stricter oversight of health care staff agencies by extending State regulation beyond nursing staff agencies to include health care staff agencies that place specified allied health professionals. SB 1057 (2013) requires a health care staff agency to be licensed by DHMH's Office of Health Care Quality (OHCQ) before referring certain allied health care professionals to a health care facility to render temporary health services at the health care facility in this State.

DHMH welcomes informal public comments on the [proposed regulations](#) and is especially interested in comments that address which allied health professionals should be included in the scope of these regulations. Comments will be accepted through November 21, 2013 by Frank Johnson, Director, Office of Policy and Administration at OHCQ. Please submit comments via email to frank.johnson@maryland.gov or via postal mail to Frank Johnson, DHMH Office of Health Care Quality, Spring Grove Hospital Center, Bland Bryant Building, 55 Wade Avenue, Catonsville, MD 21228.