

CONTACT INFORMATION

RESPIRATORY CARE PRACTITIONER LICENSE VERIFICATION

Respiratory Care Board of California
(916) 323-9983 Toll-free (866) 375-0386
www.rcb.ca.gov*

REGISTERED NURSE LICENSE VERIFICATION

Board of Registered Nursing
(916) 322-3350 Toll-free (800) 838-6828
www.rn.ca.gov*

HOME MEDICAL DEVICE RETAIL FACILITY LICENSE VERIFICATION

Department of Health Services
(916) 650-6518
www.dhs.ca.gov
E-mail: fdbinfo@dhs.ca.gov (24-hour response)

HOME HEALTH AGENCY LICENSE VERIFICATION

Department of Health Services
(916) 552-8700 Toll-free (800) 236-9747
www.dhs.ca.gov

ACCREDITATION VERIFICATION

Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO)

(630) 792-5771
www.jcaho.org*

Community Health Accreditation Program (CHAP)

(800) 656-9656
www.chapinc.org*

Accreditation Commission for Health Care, Inc.

(919) 785-1214
www.achc.org*

* Verification available through Website

The Respiratory Care Board is mandated to protect the public from the unauthorized and unqualified practice of respiratory care and from unprofessional conduct by persons licensed to practice respiratory care. It is further mandated that "protection of the public shall be the highest priority for the Respiratory Care Board of California in exercising its licensing, regulatory, and disciplinary functions."



Photographs courtesy of the American Association for Respiratory Care (except cover)

A consumer safety guide for respiratory care provided in your home

Home Care

What you should know about your respiratory home care provider



Respiratory Care Board of California
Department of Consumer Affairs





As advancements in health care delivery and efforts to control healthcare costs continue, more patients are being cared for at home. Many of these patients depend upon the use of respiratory equipment and supplies such as:

- oxygen delivery systems and supplies
- positive airway pressure (i.e., CPAP, BiPAP) devices and supplies
- intermittent positive pressure breathing (IPPB) devices and supplies
- ventilatory devices and supplies
- nasotracheal or tracheal suctioning devices and supplies
- apnea monitors, alarms, and supplies
- tracheostomy care devices & supplies, and
- respiratory diagnostic testing devices and supplies (i.e., pulse oximetry, CO₂ monitoring, and spirometry).

Patient care provided through the use of respiratory care devices is governed by the Respiratory Care Practice Act and requires licensure as a respiratory care practitioner, other qualified licensed personnel, or by a person exempted from the Act. Self-care by the patient or gratuitous care by a friend or member of the family is one of those exemptions.

Some consumers employ home health agencies (HHAs) to provide care and/or use durable medical equipment provided by home medical device retail facilities (HMDRFs). Both HHAs and HMDRFs are required by law to be licensed with the Department of Health Services.

While HHAs are regulated to provide patient care, HMDRFs are regulated to deliver, install, maintain, replace or instruct in the use of home medical devices, not provide patient care. Regulatory inspections of HMDRFs stop at the instruction in the use of equipment from a mechanical perspective. Inspections do not include the review of whether an HMDRF provides patient care or whether personnel are qualified to provide patient care, however, some HMDRFs employ licensed respiratory care practitioners to provide an extra measure of care, although this is not required for licensure as a HMDRF.

Unlicensed Personnel should NEVER give clinical advice



Approximately one in four HMDRFs also seek voluntary accreditation by one of three nationally recognized accreditation agencies. While accreditation is costly and rigorous, many HMDRFs seek accreditation to validate their business practices. Part of the accrediting process reviews whether patient care is provided and, if it is, that it is provided in accordance with recognized standards and state laws. In response to concerns with the HMDRF industry, Federal legislation recently enacted will require all HMDRFs to be accredited in the near future (i.e., 2007-2012).

Personnel entering homes in support of the home care patient include respiratory care practitioners, registered nurses, vocational nurses, and non-licensed personnel including equipment delivery personnel. There is a vast range of education and experience among these personnel, from people having some familiarity with patient care and/or medical equipment to those that have been educated, trained, and competency tested in patient care and sophisticated respiratory equipment.

Respiratory care practitioners, often referred to as respiratory therapists, are one of the three licensed health care professionals who most often work at patients' bedsides, with the other two being physicians and registered nurses. Respiratory therapists specialize in providing evaluation of and treatment to patients with breathing disorders or difficulties as a result of heart and lung disorders, and also provide diagnostic, educational, and rehabilitative services.

CONSUMER CHECKLIST

If you, or someone you know, suffer from a respiratory ailment and receive care in the home setting, be an informed consumer:

- ✓ Know the professional status of any person providing patient care and verifying the license status with the appropriate licensing agency; and
- ✓ Check the license status of any HHA or HMDRF (if employed).

While not required by state law, verification of whether an HHA or HMDRF holds voluntary accreditation can be helpful when making healthcare provider decisions.