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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Secretary Dudek's Statement About the Signing of Background Screening Legislation**  
*- HB463/SB674 provides additional safeguards to the existing background screening process -*

**Tallahassee, Fla.**— Agency for Health Care Administration Secretary Elizabeth Dudek released the following statement about the Governor signing HB463/SB674, a bill which makes the employment criminal background screening process more comprehensive than its predecessor and improves the speed and accuracy of employment decisions.

“First and foremost, I want to thank Governor Scott for his support of this important piece of legislation and for his commitment to ensuring that Florida’s background screening process is both thorough and secure,” said Secretary Dudek. “I also want to thank Senator Bean and Representative Reed for taking point on this initiative. Their efforts were instrumental in guiding this bill through the legislative process and affording us the opportunity to implement these additional safeguards moving forward.”

Representative Betty Reed, who championed the bill in the House, shared her support, “This legislation was very important to my constituents. SB 674 eliminates the three-year waiting period to apply for an exemption for those individuals with disqualifying criminal offenses but have fulfilled all monetary sanctions. This allows a number of my constituents to return to work.”

Senator Aaron Bean, the Agency’s legislative sponsor for the bill in the Senate, added, “It is imperative that we continue to strengthen and improve our background screening process. These individuals are responsible for providing care to our friends, family and loved ones on a regular basis. It is important that before they are able to do so, we have processes in place to properly vet them as providers, caretakers, and health care professionals.”

The Agency currently hosts the Care Provider Background Screening Clearinghouse (Clearinghouse), which streamlines criminal background checks for seven health and human services state agencies. The bill makes improvements to the Clearinghouse and the background screening process for employees working with children and other vulnerable persons. The following are key highlights of the new law:

- Adds new disqualifying criminal offenses including additional fraud related crimes.
- Enables several process improvements including identity verification, use of appropriate tax identification numbers, electronic submissions, and use of a new federal background check process that expedites feedback for crimes outside Florida.



- Allows a person to apply for an exemption from disqualification for a criminal offense if all monetary sanctions are paid, shortening the three-year waiting period after payment. Applicants must continue to show evidence of rehabilitation before an exemption is considered.

*The Agency for Health Care Administration is committed to better health care for all Floridians. The Agency administers Florida's Medicaid program, licenses and regulates more than 45,000 health care facilities and 37 health maintenance organizations, and publishes health care data and statistics at [www.FloridaHealthFinder.gov](http://www.FloridaHealthFinder.gov). Additional information about Agency initiatives is available via [Facebook \(AHCAFlorida\)](#), [Twitter \(@AHCA\\_FL\)](#) and [YouTube \(/AHCAFlorida\)](#).*

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