

July - September 2025

# QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT 1

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH, DIVISION OF MEDICAL  
QUALITY ASSURANCE

Florida  
HEALTH

RON DESANTIS  
GOVERNOR

JOSEPH A. LADAPO, MD, PhD  
STATE SURGEON GENERAL



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# Safeguarding Floridians Through Health Care Regulation

## Purpose of this Report

The Florida Department of Health's **Division of Medical Quality Assurance (MQA)** upholds regulatory efficiency and public protection by licensing and regulating over 1.5 million health care practitioners and facilities across 22 regulatory boards and four councils.

Section 456.005, Florida Statutes, mandates that MQA produce quarterly management reports to state medical boards in order to facilitate **efficient** and **cost-effective** regulation.

This report fulfills that requirement by documenting MQA's **activities, outcomes, and use of resources**. Its purpose is to equip stakeholders with clear, data-driven insights into the efficiency and effectiveness of MQA's activities. In doing so, this report supports the ability of key decision-makers to uphold professional standards, protect the public, and guide policy decisions.





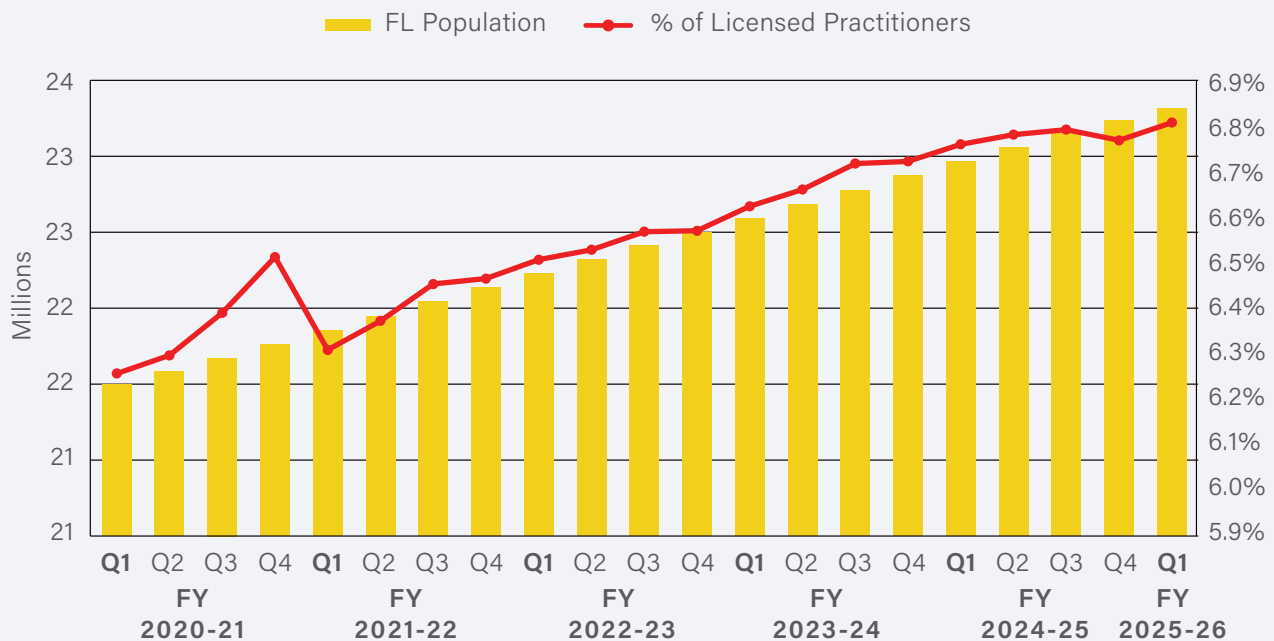


# Licensing Florida's Health Care Workforce

## Performance Statistics for FY2025-26 Q1

In keeping with its mission to protect the people of Florida and ensure safe, high-quality health care, MQA reports quarterly data on licensure and enforcement activities to **evaluate performance** and **measure progress** toward the MQA's strategic goals.

### Keeping Pace with a Growing State



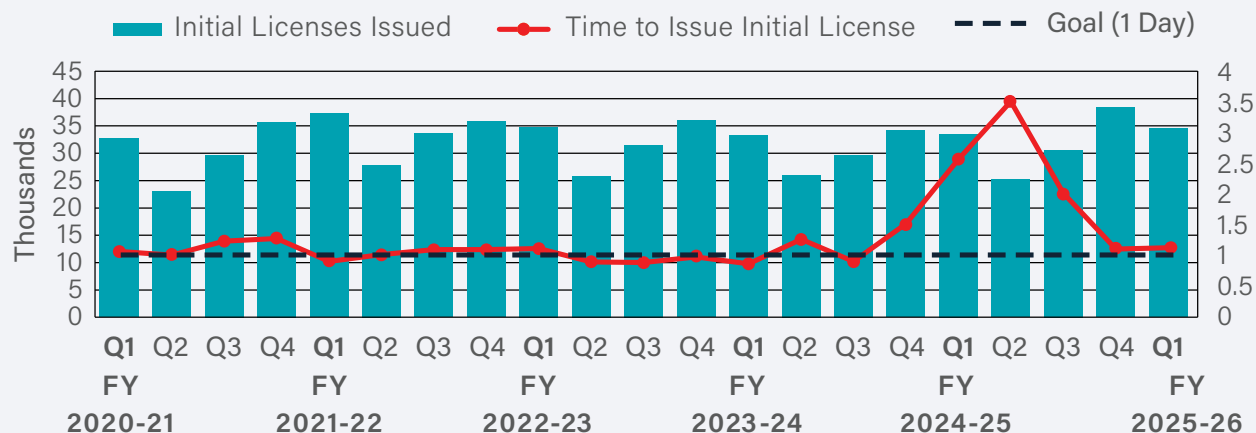
▪ Source: Florida Office of Economic & Demographic Research

Florida's health care workforce continues to grow steadily, keeping pace with the state's expanding population. As of the end of this quarter, there were 1,587,234 licensed health care practitioners in the state. This means that 6.8% of Florida's population are licensed practitioners—an increase from 6.3% in FY2020-21 Quarter One. This growth equates to 6,807 licensed practitioners per 100,000 residents, meaning that approximately 1 in every 15 Floridians is a licensed health care practitioner. This shows that Florida is building a strong, well-prepared workforce to meet the health needs of its communities.



## Accelerating the Path to Practice

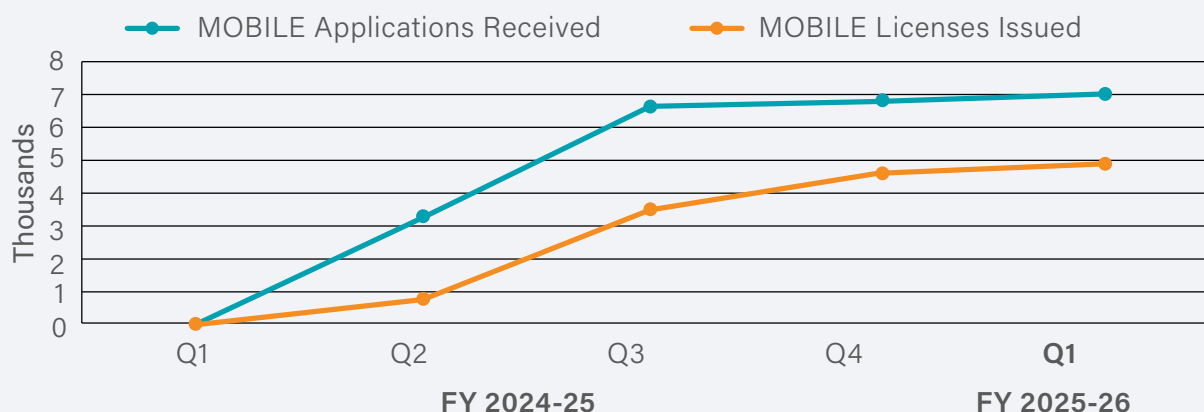
### Initial Licensure



During Quarter One, MQA received 39,102 initial applications from prospective health care practitioners—a 1.8% increase compared to the same quarter in the previous fiscal year. Notably, 73% of these applications were submitted online through the MQA Online Services Portal, reflecting a continued shift toward digital access. After review, 34,605 initial licenses were issued to qualified applicants, with an average processing time of just 1.1 days.

- **Initial Licenses Issued** includes the total number of licenses issued to first-time applicants.
- **Time to Issue Initial License** refers to the average number of business days between the day the application is deemed qualified (complete and meets requirements) and the day the initial license is issued.

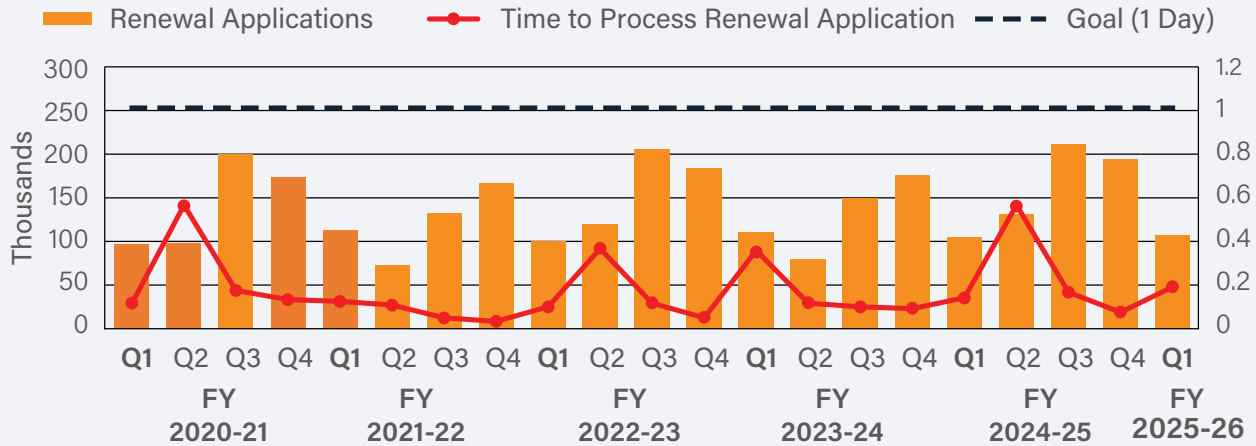
### Licensure Through MOBILE Endorsement



On July 1, 2024, MQA expanded the MOBILE Endorsement licensure pathway under the MOBILE Act. In response to increasing demand for MOBILE licensure, MQA received 7,016 applications and issued 4,895 licenses during Quarter One (see Figure 5). Of these, registered nurses accounted for 1,806 licenses (36.9%), followed by medical doctors (892) and certified nursing assistants (325).

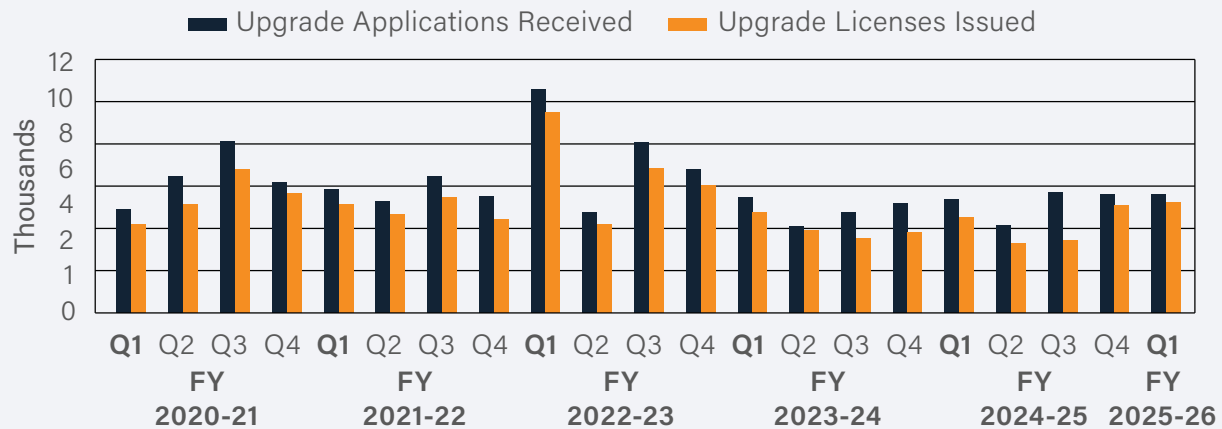
- The **MOBILE Endorsement** licensure pathway streamlines licensure for health care practitioners licensed in another U.S. state.

## Renewal Applications



- **Renewal Applications Processed** includes the total number of applications received by renewing applicants.
- **Time to Process Renewal Applications** refers to the average number of calendar days between the day the application fee is paid and the day the application is approved.

## License Upgrades



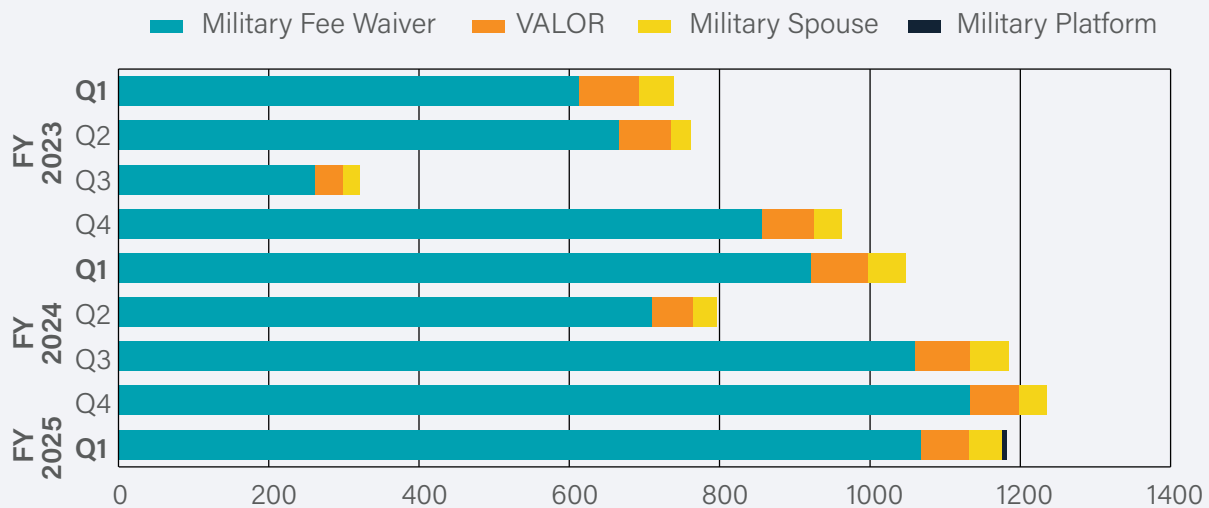
In Quarter One, MQA received 5,619 upgrade applications and issued 5,222 upgrade licenses—marking a 2.4% increase from the previous quarter. This upward trend highlights sustained demand for licensure upgrades, driven in part by evolving health care roles and legislative changes. Notably, 2,326 Multistate Licenses (MSLs) were issued to registered nurses and licensed practical nurses, accounting for 44.5% of all upgrade licenses—a significant proportion that underscores the growing reliance on multistate mobility within the nursing workforce.

- Florida licensed practitioners seek **license upgrades** for professional advancement and to qualify for multistate practice in compact states.



## Expediting Licensure for Florida Military Members

By offering expedited licensure pathways and fee waivers, the Office of Veteran Licensure Services (OVLS) helps reduce administrative and financial barriers for active-duty service members, veterans, and their spouses. The program's collaborative partnerships with organizations like Veterans Florida and Florida Commerce further amplify its impact by connecting licensees with training, education, and employment opportunities.



### Military Fee Waiver

**1,068**

74% ▲ from first year

This pathway waives application, initial licensure, and unlicensed activity fees for eligible military personnel and veterans. It helps reduce the financial burden of entering the health care workforce in Florida.

### VALOR

**64**

20% ▼ from first year

The Veterans Application for Licensure Online Response (VALOR) pathway provides expedited licensure processing for honorably discharged veterans and active-duty service members. It also includes fee waivers if the application is submitted within 60 months of discharge.

### Military Spouse

**44**

4% ▼ from first year

Spouses of active-duty service members stationed in Florida are eligible for expedited licensure and fee waivers. This allows them to continue their health care careers without unnecessary delays due to relocation.

### Military Platform

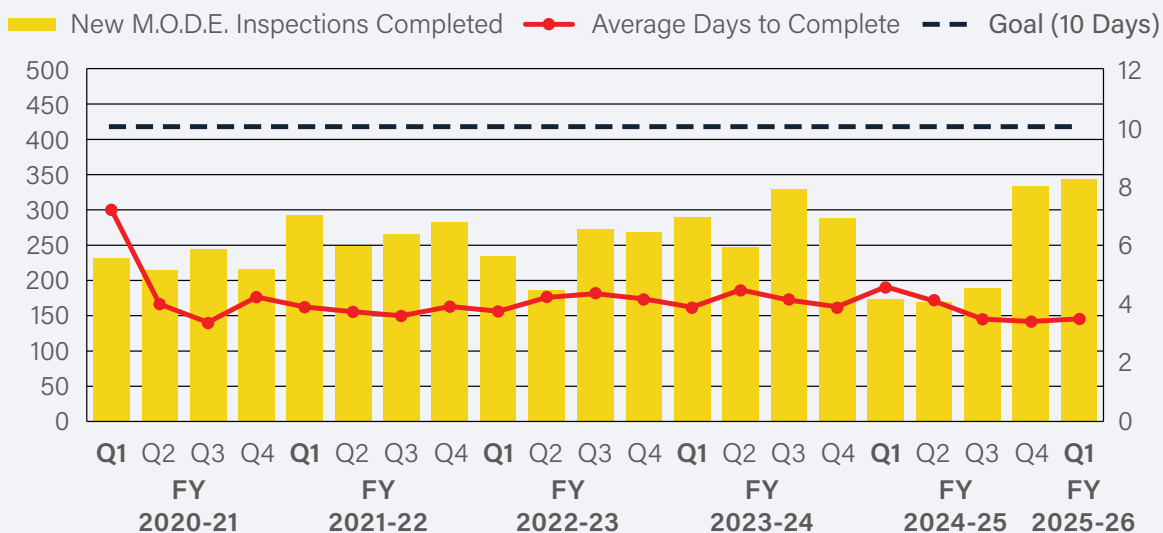
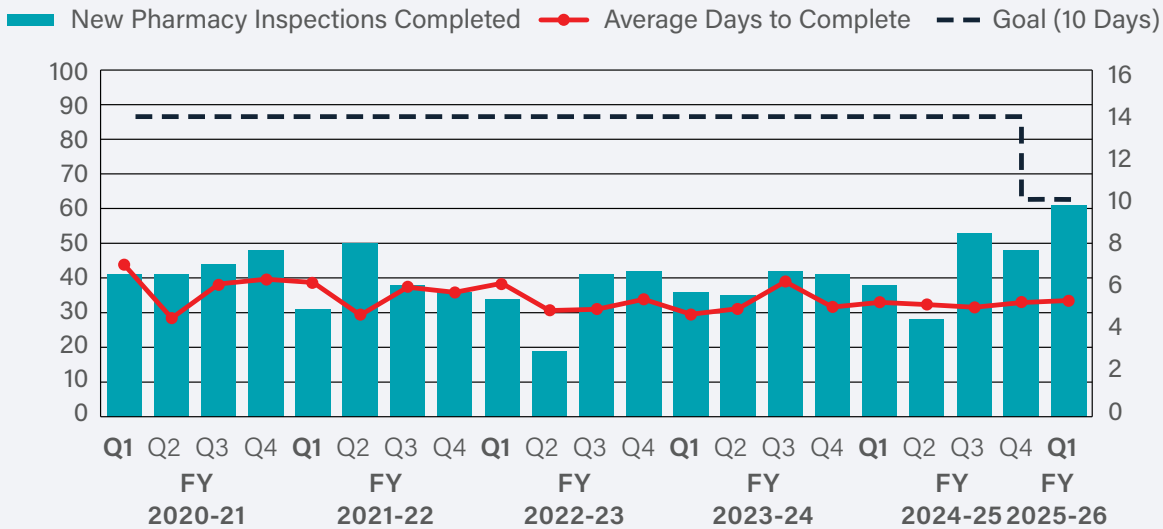
**6**

▲ 6 from first year

This allows active-duty military health care practitioners to practice in Florida through agreements between military and nonmilitary health care practitioners. It is designed to meet the needs of the U.S. Armed Forces while ensuring continuity of care.

# Enforcing Compliance to Protect the Public

## Driving Timely Facility Inspections



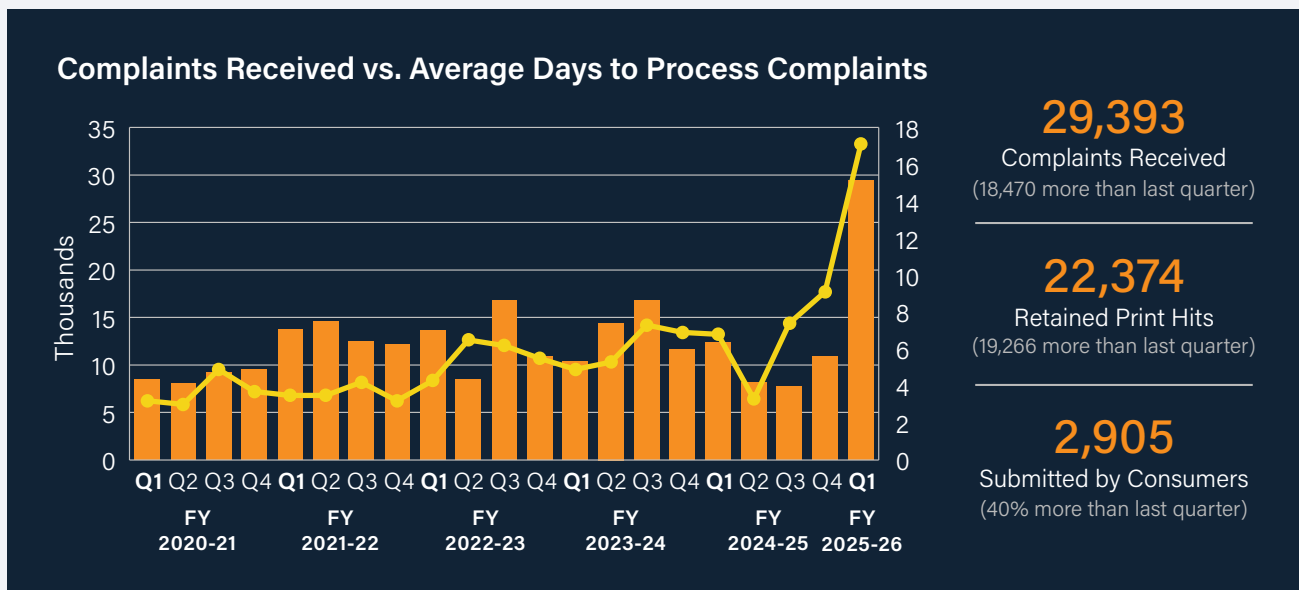
When a MODE facility (Massage Establishment, Optical Establishment, Dental Laboratory, Electrolysis Facility) opens for the first time, relocates, or changes ownership, MQA is responsible for inspecting the facility to verify compliance with Florida’s health and safety standards. Timely inspections ensure that licensed practitioners can begin serving patients as soon as possible.



## Meeting New Demands Under Recent Legislation

House Bill 975, which requires health care practitioners to comply with background screening requirements when applying for initial licensure or renewing their license, went into effect on July 1, 2025.

As part of the screening process, many practitioners' fingerprints have returned 'retained print hits'—notifications from the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) indicating a match in the criminal database. These notifications are automatically logged as complaints for review, resulting in a significant increase in complaint volume.



The recent surge in complaints reflects MQA's improved ability to identify practitioners with criminal histories through FDLE's retained print hits. Many of these alerts involve massage therapists and would not have been captured under previous reporting systems. In response, House Bill 197 strengthens the Department of Health's enforcement authority over the massage profession.

Under the new law, DOH is now required to immediately suspend the license of a massage therapist or massage establishment if any employee is arrested for certain serious crimes, including prostitution, human trafficking, or sexual misconduct. The bill also introduces stricter operational standards for dress codes, signage, recordkeeping, and reporting to better track violations. These changes allow MQA to act more swiftly and comprehensively in response to background screening alerts, enhancing public protection and regulatory efficiency.

## Legally Sufficient Cases

|                                 |              |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Probable Cause Found            | 435<br>36% ▼ |
| No Probable Causes Found        | 780<br>36% ▼ |
| Administrative Complaints Filed | 399<br>36% ▼ |

MQA reviews complaints against health care practitioners and facility owners to determine whether sufficient evidence exists to suggest a violation of law or rule. A finding of **no probable cause** means the investigation did not uncover enough evidence to support the allegation, and the case is closed with no disciplinary action. A finding of **probable cause** means there is reasonable belief that a violation occurred, allowing the Department to proceed with formal charges. Once probable cause is found and charges are filed, the case becomes an **administrative complaint**, which outlines the alleged violations and begins the formal disciplinary process before the appropriate board or authority.

## Summary of Disciplinary Outcomes

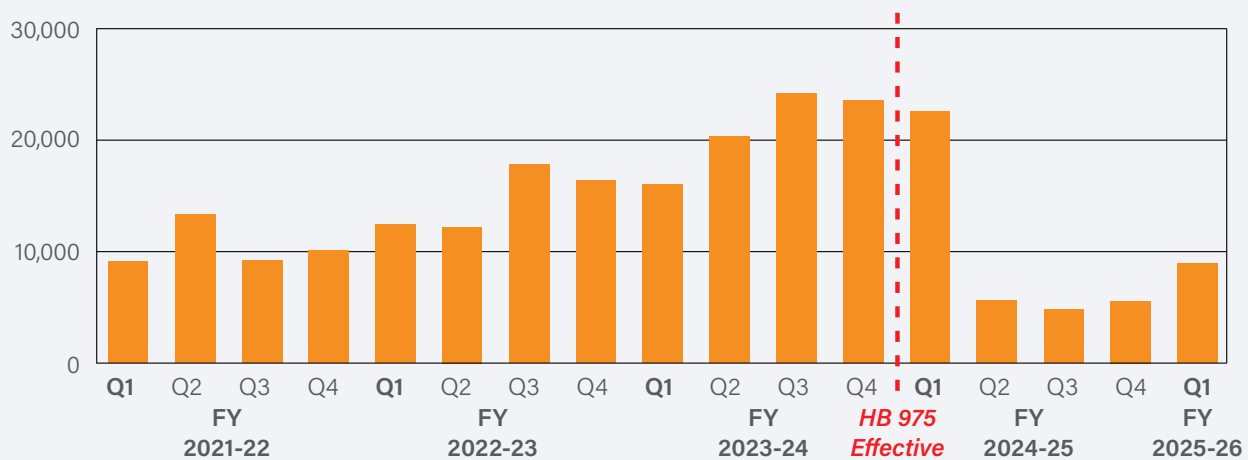
|                 |              |                      |   |
|-----------------|--------------|----------------------|---|
| Very Severe     | 95<br>1% ▼   | Revocations          | Permanent cancellation of license; bars the individual from practicing in Florida.  |
|                 | 42<br>54% ▼  | Suspensions          | Temporary withdrawal of license until board-ordered time period ends or required conditions are satisfied.                          |
|                 | 276<br>16% ▼ | Final Orders         | The legally binding document rendering the disciplinary action official and enforceable.  |
| Somewhat Severe | 11<br>35% ▼  | Probations           | Continued practice in Florida allowed only under board-ordered terms such as suspension, reporting, or random drug testing.         |
|                 | 55<br>35% ▼  | Obligations          | Specific corrective measures imposed by a board as part of discipline.  |
|                 | 71<br>37% ▼  | Fines                | Monetary penalties assessed by a board and payable to the Department.   |
| Less Severe     | 1<br>86% ▼   | Citations            | Administrative citations issued by the Department for minor violations, typically with a set fine and no full hearing.              |
|                 | 32<br>36% ▼  | Reprimands           | Formal written warning entered into the licensee's permanent disciplinary record.   |
|                 | 51<br>4% ▲   | Dismissals           | Closure of a case by a probable cause panel or board with no discipline or further action.  |
|                 | 73<br>55% ▲  | Voluntary Surrenders | Agreement by practitioner to surrender license and waive right to appeal or contest findings for time period determined by a board. |





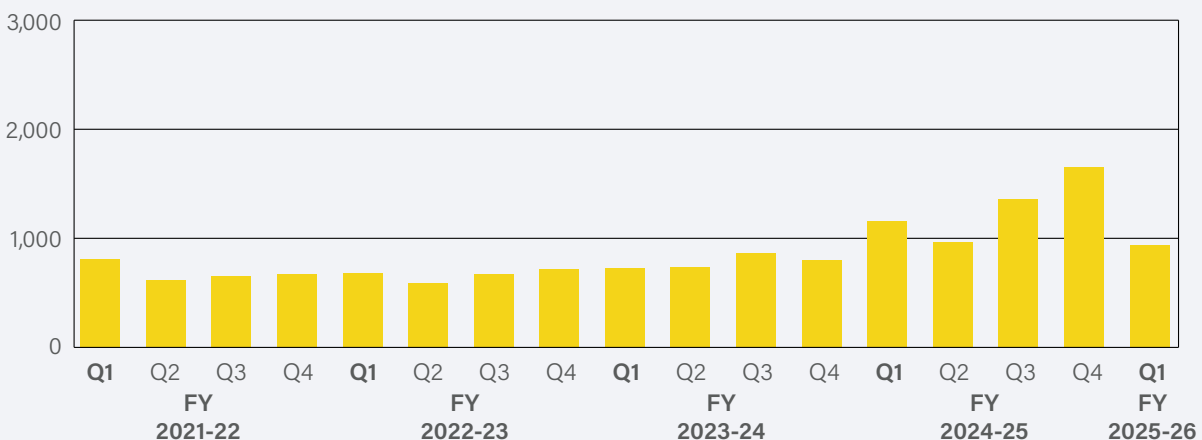
# Guiding Open Cases from Review to Resolution

## CSU Open Cases: Complaints under initial review

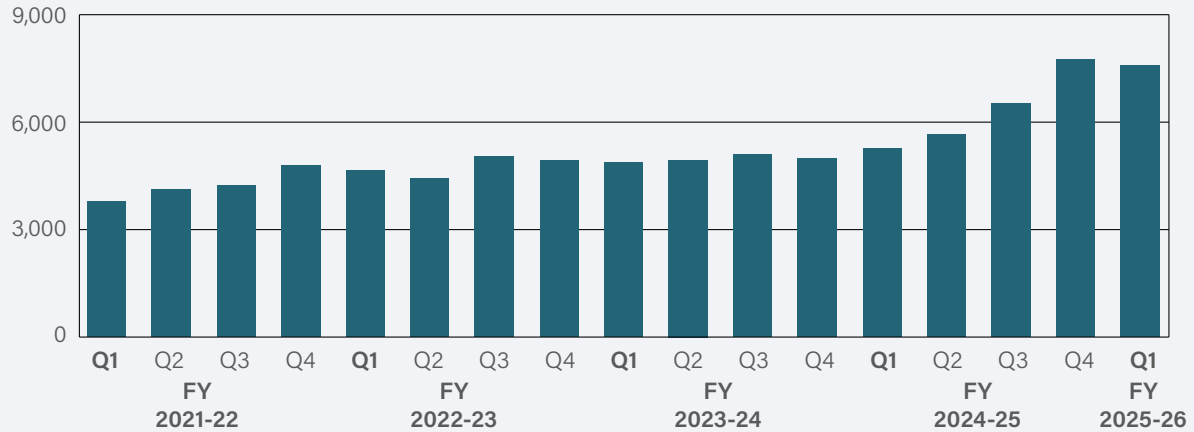


- Effective July 1, 2025, House Bill 975 requires fingerprint retention for all licensed health care practitioners. Previously, disciplinary cases could remain open when practitioners failed to retain fingerprints, delaying resolution. With mandatory retention now in place, such cases close promptly, contributing to the observed decrease in cases under initial review

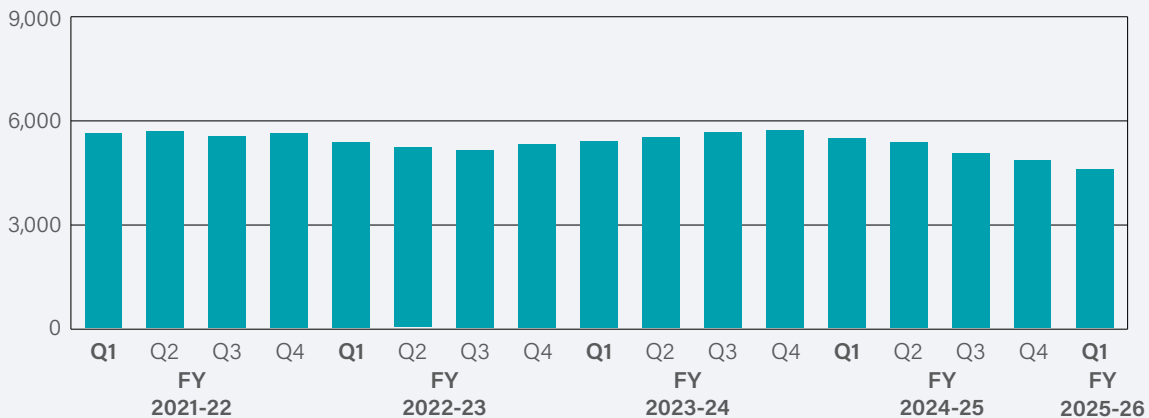
## ISU Open Cases: Cases actively under investigation



**PSU Open Cases:** Cases under legal review or litigation



**CMU Open Cases:** Cases where licensees are being monitored for compliance



- An open case refers to a case that remains active and has not been closed by the end of a given quarter. These figures represent the total number of open cases at the end of the quarter—including those that are being monitored for compliance or are awaiting further information—and should not be interpreted as a number of new cases received during that quarter that remain unresolved.
- Data on open cases assigned to CMU has only been collected since FY2021-22; therefore, figures for FY2020-21 are not available.







## Protecting the Public from Unlicensed Practice

MQA's Unlicensed Activity (ULA) Program helps the public understand the risks of receiving health care from unlicensed individuals. According to section 456.072, Florida Statutes, providing health care without a license can result in fines, penalties, and even jail time.

The ULA Program works with law enforcement and state attorneys to investigate and take legal action against unlicensed individuals, which helps protect the public and uphold professional standards.

**325** ▼ 6% from last quarter **Complaints Received**  
(Unlicensed Activity)

**153** ▼ 13% from last quarter **Cease and Desist Orders Issued**

**358** ▼ 8% from last quarter **Complaints Referred for Investigation**

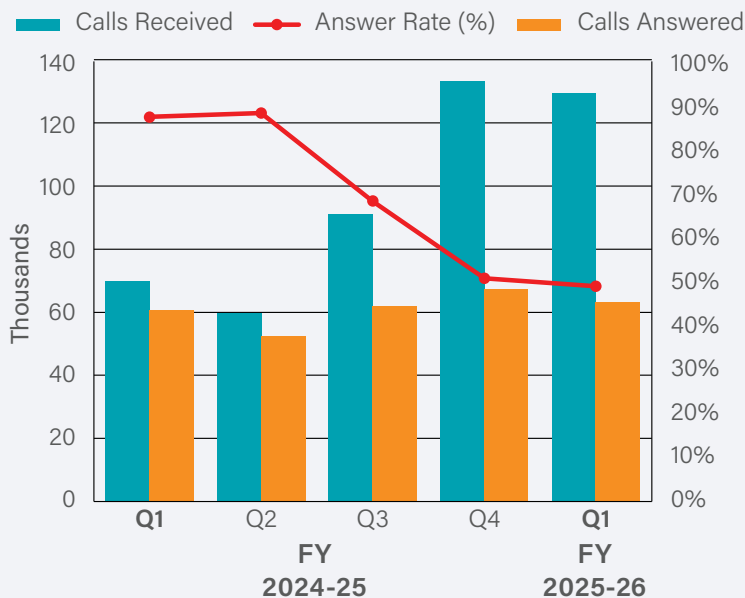
**182** ▼ 2% from last quarter **Cases Referred to Law Enforcement**

**436** ▲ 13% from last quarter **Investigations Completed**

# Connecting Practitioners to Trusted Information

The Customer Contact Center is a key part of MQA's efforts to support Florida's health care practitioners. It provides assistance to applicants and licensees by answering questions about licensure, renewals, background screenings, and other regulatory processes. By helping individuals navigate these requirements, the Contact Center contributes to a more informed and efficient health care workforce.

**Calls to Customer Contact Center**



**129,570** Calls Received

**63,089** Calls Answered

**48.7%** Answer Rate

**5:20** Average Talk Time

**42:15** Average Wait Time

This quarter, MQA's Customer Contact Center experienced an increase in call volume, along with a rise in voice interactions handled by MQA's Virtual Agent, ELI. At the same time, the Customer Contact Center's answer rate declined, likely due to a surge in inquiries following the commencement of HB 975 (2024). A significant number of practitioners have requested guidance on fingerprinting requirements, as 34% of ELI's voice calls this quarter related to background screening. To support timely compliance, the Cleared to Care campaign was launched. Internal efforts are now underway to develop targeted solutions addressing the challenges identified—more details are available on page 21.



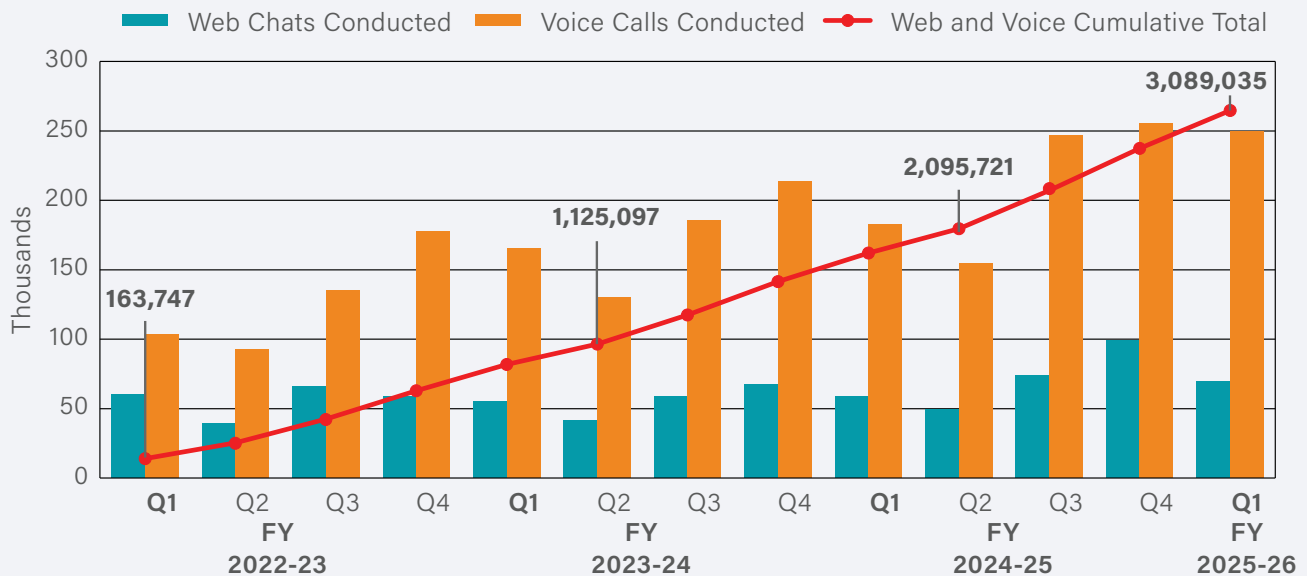
## MQA's Virtual Agent, ELI

ELI is designed to help practitioners and applicants get quick answers about health care in Florida. It's available 24/7 and can answer questions about how to apply for a license, check an application status, renew a license, pay fees, request public records, and more.



To chat with ELI, scan the QR code or visit:  
[FLHealthSource.gov/ELI](https://FLHealthSource.gov/ELI)

### ELI Conversation Trends



During Quarter One, ELI saw a noticeable rise in customer interactions, largely due to increased interest in background screening requirements and nursing-related queries. This growth was influenced by recent policy changes, including the implementation of HB 975. Activity peaked in July, when a new web chat agent was added to FLHealthSource.gov, allowing ELI to assist more users with both general and board-specific questions. ELI's around-the-clock availability also played a role, with many users reaching out outside of standard business hours. The Board of Nursing continues to generate the highest volume of interactions, reflecting ongoing demand for support in that area.

# Driving Performance Through Responsible Stewardship



Beginning Cash Balance

**\$40,421,159**

**Licensed:** \$38,124,652 (94%)

**Unlicensed:** \$2,296,507 (6%)



Ending Cash Balance

**\$37,093,536**

**Licensed:** \$34,308,001 (92%)

**Unlicensed:** \$2,785,535 (8%)



Under the guidelines of section 456.025(9), Florida Statutes, MQA funds its operations through the collection of **licensing fees** and **fines from enforcement actions**. These revenues are allocated across the 22 regulatory boards and four councils responsible for overseeing daily licensing and enforcement tasks.

Practitioner application fees include a dedicated \$5 contribution toward enforcement efforts, with disciplinary action fines also augmenting this fund. These contributions are deposited into the MQA Trust Fund, which supports the regulation of practitioners and facilities. Regular quarterly financial reports on the fund's revenues and expenditures serve as a gauge for MQA's regulatory efficiency by comparing the cost of regulation against the current renewal fees



#### Total Revenues

**\$21,227,326**

**Licensed:** \$20,523,278 (97%)

**Unlicensed:** \$704,048 (3%)



#### Total Expenditures

**\$24,554,949**

**Licensed:** \$24,339,930 (99%)

**Unlicensed:** \$215,019 (1%)



# Turning Insights into Action

## Q1 Highlights

### ★ **New Board Websites**

The redesigned board websites have made it significantly easier for consumers, applicants, and practitioners to access critical information. Clear organization, simple navigation, and improved search features help visitors quickly locate details about licensing, renewals, and enforcement, creating a smoother and more transparent experience for the public.

### ★ **New Feature Notifies Prescribing Practitioners of Critical Patient History**

In April 2025, Florida's Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) introduced a new feature to their E-FORCE® PDMP report called Overdose Insights (OD Insights). With this feature, practitioners are now notified immediately upon review of patient records when a patient's history includes a reported non-fatal overdose event. This groundbreaking update equips practitioners to make informed decisions about whether to prescribe opioids to a patient. Since its deployment, the OD Insights feature has protected over 5,000 at-risk patients in the state of Florida.

### ★ **OVLS Improves Renewal Process for Temporary Certificate Holders**

MQA's Office of Veteran Licensure Services (OVLS) refreshed its Temporary Certificate renewal application this quarter to improve efficiency and user experience for active-duty military health care practitioners. OVLS discovered that licensees were mistakenly using the wrong application type to renew their temporary certificates, causing unnecessary delays and administrative burdens. With the revised renewal application now concise and accessible online, veterans can renew their credentials with clarity and ease so they can continue to focus on serving Florida communities.



## Performance Management Initiatives

MQA is committed to continuous improvement in licensure, enforcement, and customer service. Each quarter, MQA reports on the progress of current initiatives and introduces new strategies aimed at improving efficiency and transparency.

### In-Progress Initiatives

#### New Licensing Database

MQA is modernizing its Licensure, Enforcement, and Information Database System (LEIDS), which serves as the operational backbone for licensure, renewal, enforcement, and compliance. With Florida's population having grown by 25% since the system was first implemented, the ability to rely on a secure, scalable, and integrated network of systems has become critical to MQA's ability to meet customer demands. The new system, called HELIX, will be secure, scalable, and integrated—designed to automate workflows, improve case and document management, and support evolving regulatory needs. This effort will help MQA better manage the full lifecycle of health care practitioner licenses and enhance service to the public.



#### Cleared to Care Campaign

In 2024, the Florida Legislature enacted House Bill 975, significantly expanding background screening requirements for health care practitioners. As of July 1, 2025, all health care practitioners must comply with new background screening requirements when applying for initial licensure or renewing their license. Staying compliant with the new law is mandatory to maintain licensure.

The background screening process takes time due to multiple required steps and processing. Waiting too long will result in licensing delays or expiration. Don't delay, get screened today!

To ensure that the new requirements are communicated to all practitioners effectively and in a timely manner, MQA has attended five conferences and seven board meetings.

**July:** 12 Outreach Activities  
**August:** 13 Outreach Activities  
**September:** 4 Outreach Activities

# Celebrating Excellence and Raising Awareness

## Nursing Education Leader Honored with Trailblazer Award

The Department's own Dr. Sherri Sutton-Johnson was recently awarded the [2025 Trailblazer Award by The Nurse's Magazine](#) in recognition of her groundbreaking leadership in nursing education and regulation. As Education Unit Director for the Florida Board of Nursing since 2012, she has played a pivotal role in shaping nursing standards and advancing public health education across the state. The award was presented during a national celebration that brought together nurses, health care professionals, and supporters from across the country for a night of inspiration and recognition. This annual event spotlighted the unwavering dedication, compassion, and impact of nurses who are shaping the future of health care through patient care, education, leadership, and entrepreneurship. With over 33 years as a licensed nurse and nearly 37 years of service to the state of Florida, Dr. Sutton-Johnson continues to be a driving force in regulatory excellence and the mentorship of future nurse leaders.

## Website Redesign Earns National Recognition for User-Centered Innovation

The Florida Board of Psychology was recognized by the Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards (ASPPB) as one of 10 jurisdictions leading in accessible and intuitive licensure websites. Featured in ASPPB's "[Best Practices Board Spotlights](#)," the redesign reflects MQA's dedication to modernizing regulatory tools and improving public access to essential health care information.

## Florida Board of Nursing Project Wins Excellence in Technology Award

The Florida Board of Nursing, in collaboration with the Division of Medical Quality Assurance and the Office of Information Technology, was recognized at the Florida Digital Summit with the Excellence in Technology Award. Honored under the category of "Best Application Serving the Public," the Nursing Program Portal was acknowledged for streamlining the licensure process by allowing nursing programs to electronically submit graduation data.



## Senior Dentist Leads Military Oath Ceremony at UF

In September, retired Air Force colonel and one of MQA's senior dentists, Dr. Francisco Granda, DMD, MS, MD, served as the Oath Giver for three newly-commissioned Air Force dentists at the University of Florida College of Dentistry. His participation in this milestone event reflects MQA's values of leadership, mentorship, and dedication to public service within the health care professions.



## Building Partnerships Through Outreach

Outreach remains a cornerstone of the Unlicensed Activity (ULA) Program's mission to protect the public from the dangers of unlicensed health care. These efforts aim to raise awareness about the risks of unlicensed activity and foster collaboration with partners.

Each of MQA's 11 ULA field offices throughout the state are responsible for conducting an outreach event with at least one local law enforcement or community organization per quarter. During these events, investigators distribute educational materials and promotional items to inform and empower the public.

### **This quarter, ULA Program investigators connected with the following agencies:**

- Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office
- Crestview Police Department
- DOH Bureau of Environmental Public Health
- Santa Rosa Sheriff's Office
- University of Central Florida Police Department
- Orange County Sheriff's Office – Missing Persons Unit
- West Palm Beach Police Department
- Cocoa Police Department
- North Palm Beach Police Department
- Miami-Dade Sheriff's Office – Medical Crimes Task Force
- U.S. Attorney's Office



The ULA Program will soon launch a new outreach campaign in partnership with a recently onboarded marketing vendor. The focus of this campaign will be on building trust and engagement within tight-knit populations in South Florida that have historically been difficult to reach due to longstanding mistrust of public service agencies. Unlike previous campaigns that primarily targeted illicit massage establishments, this effort will spotlight the dangers and consequences of unlicensed medical services—particularly within cosmetic surgeries and dental services. As part of the campaign, the program will also feature a redesigned landing page to offer a more cohesive and accessible experience for the public.



ULA investigators work closely with law enforcement to identify and stop individuals providing health care services without a license. In Quarter 1, the program conducted 18 field operations across multiple professions, including:

- **Massage Therapy** – Tampa, Orlando, Fort Lauderdale, Jacksonville, St. Petersburg, Tallahassee
- **Pharmacy** – Fort Lauderdale
- **Medicine** – Orlando
- **Dentistry** – Orlando, Fort Lauderdale

**These operations were made possible through collaboration with the following partners:**

- |   |                                     |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| ▪ Metropolitan Bureau of Investigations | ▪ Federal Bureau of Investigation   |
| ▪ U.S. Homeland Security                | ▪ Palm Bay Police Department        |
| ▪ Broward Sheriff's Office              | ▪ Polk County Sheriff's Office      |
| ▪ Oakland Park Code Enforcement         | ▪ Seminole County Sheriff's Office  |
| ▪ Jacksonville Sheriff's Office         | ▪ U.S. Food and Drug Administration |
| ▪ Clay County Sheriff's Office          | ▪ Boca Raton Police Department      |
| ▪ Florida Department of Law Enforcement | ▪ Leon County Sheriff's Office      |

Together, these efforts underscore the Department's commitment to safeguarding Florida's residents and visitors from the risks of unlicensed health care.

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- Osteopathic Medicine
- Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology

**Mission:**

To protect, promote, and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county, and community efforts.

**Vision:**

To be the **healthiest state** in the nation.

**Values:**

**Innovation:** We search for creative solutions and manage resources wisely.

**Collaboration:** We use teamwork to achieve common goals and solve problems.

**Accountability:** We perform with integrity and respect.

**Responsiveness:** We achieve our mission by serving our customers and engaging our partners.

**Excellence:** We promote quality outcomes through learning and continuous performance improvement.



**Florida Department of Health**

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