

THE HEALTHCARE SERVICES ACT (HCSA)

INFORMATION PACK FOR NURSING HOME LICENSEES

The licensing and regulation of nursing homes (NHs) will be transitioned from the Private Hospitals and Medical Clinics Act (PHMCA) to the Healthcare Services Act (HCSA) on 18 Dec 2023. All existing NHs will have their PHMCA licences in eLIS automatically migrated over to the HCSA NH service (NHS) licence with approval for permanent premises mode of service delivery (MOSD) in the Healthcare Application and Licensing Portal (HALP). HALP is the new e-portal for licensing transactions under HCSA, and licensees may access HALP to check their HCSA e-licences and perform any other licensing transactions from 18 Dec 2023 onwards.

Under HCSA, hospices will continue to hold a NHS licence and need to be approved to provide inpatient hospice as a specified service. Existing hospices will also have their PHMCA licence transitioned seamlessly over to a HCSA NHS licence with approval for inpatient hospice and blood transfusion specified services, where applicable.

A NHS licensee may be required to hold other licences under HCSA if the NHS licensee also provides other licensable services such as outpatient medical service (OMS) licence, outpatient dental service (ODS) licence, emergency ambulance service (EAS) licence and/or medical transport service (MTS) licence.

The rest of this document provides more information on when a NHS licensee is required to hold these other licences under HCSA.

A. I am a NHS licensee – When must I hold an outpatient medical service (OMS) Licence?

NHS licensees must ensure that a doctor is assigned to every resident in the NH and takes overall responsibility for the resident's condition. The NHS licensee must ensure that a doctor assesses all newly admitted residents within 48 hours of admission, and prescribes a medical care plan for the resident. Additionally, the NHS licensee is expected to escalate the care of the resident to a medical practitioner where required. To meet these requirements, the **NHS licensee may either (i) employ its own doctors, or (ii) engage the services of a licensed OMS provider.**

NHS licensee does not need to hold an OMS licence under the following circumstances:

- A. The NHS Licensee employs its own doctor(s), and the doctors provide medical care to the residents staying in the NHS licensee's approved premises **only**;
- B. The NHS licensee engages the services of a licensed OMS provider to provide medical care to its residents; or
- C. The NHS licensee engages a doctor who holds an OMS licence to care for its residents.

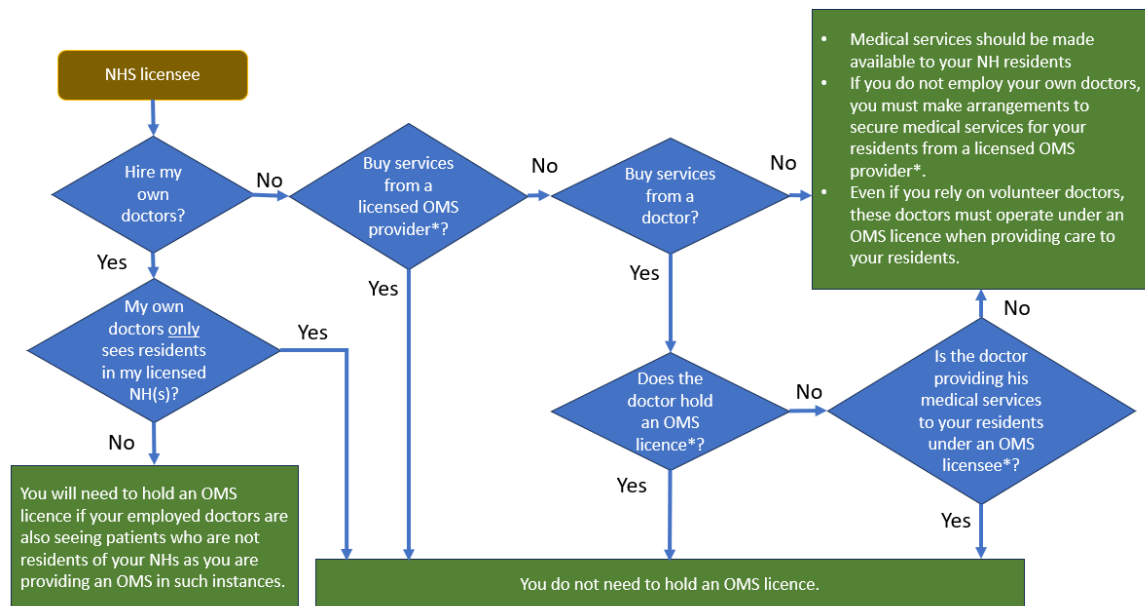
On the other hand, a NHS licensee will need to hold an OMS licence under the following circumstances:

- A. The NHS licensee intends for its employed doctors to provide mobile home medical services, or medical services to NHs licensed to another licensee in addition to serving the NHS licensees' residents; or
- B. The NHS licensee provides OMS to any other patients other than those in the NH, in addition to a NHS.

The principles above are summarised in **Figure 1** below.

Figure 1: Decision guide to when a NHS licensee will be required to hold an OMS licence

I am a NHS Licensee – when must I hold an OMS licence?



**A hospital, medical clinic or doctor may also be a licensed OMS provider. Please check with your medical service provider on their HCSA licence status. Alternatively, you may also visit the "HealthHub Directory" to check if the individual or the organisation is a licensed OMS provider.*

B. I am a NHS licensee – When must I hold an outpatient dental service (ODS) Licence?

NHS licensees are required to ensure oral hygiene for its residents, such as when its nurses or care personnel perform simple flossing and brushing of teeth for its residents. These activities do not require an ODS licence. When performing oral hygiene for residents, care personnel should also observe the oral cavity, and escalate to the nurses to assess if a referral to a dentist is needed, such as swollen gums, oral thrush, loose teeth or obvious decays are observed. Where such referrals are raised, the NHS licensee is required to support the resident's access to appropriate and licensed dental services in a timely manner.

The provision of dental services (other than ensuring oral hygiene through simple flossing and teeth brushing) is not allowed under the NHS licence. Where residents require more complex oral health

and dental services¹ such as tooth extractions and denture work, the NHS licensee is required to support their residents' access to a licensed ODS provider for the dental care required. The NHS licensee may engage dentists operating under an ODS licence to come to the NH premises to provide care for their residents; or arrange the appointment and transport for the resident to go to a licensed ODS clinic for the care required.

A NHS licensee must hold an ODS licence only if the licensee also wants to provide ODS to its residents in addition to its NHS.

C. I am a NHS licensee – When must I hold a medical transport service (MTS) or emergency ambulance service (EAS) Licence?

From time to time, NHS licensees may need to transfer a resident from one place to another. If the resident is medically stable and does not require clinical care or monitoring during the transfer, the NHS licensee may transfer him or her via usual means (e.g. a car, van or bus) and a MTS or EAS is not required.

However, if the patient **requires some form of clinical care or monitoring during the transfer, the resident shall only be transported via a HCSA-licensed MTS or EAS provider.** The decision to convey the resident via MTS or EAS would depend on the acuity and clinical condition of the patient assessed by the clinical team. If the NHS licensee does not hold an MTS or EAS licence, they must engage the services from a licensed provider.

A NHS licensee must hold a MTS or EAS licence only if the licensee also provides MTS or EAS in addition to its NHS.

D. I am a NHS licensee – Do I need to hold any other licences under HCSA if I offer allied health or pharmacy services?

Allied health services are not licensable under HCSA at present, hence, NHS licensees are not required to hold additional licenses to support the allied health care needs of its residents (i.e. physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, dietetic service, podiatry, psychosocial support). However, the NHS licensee must ensure that where professional services are required, these services are provided by qualified personnel or allied health professionals (i.e. registered with AHPC, or holds a relevant professional qualification).

NHS licensees do not require a pharmacy licence from the Health Sciences Authority (HSA) to store, prepare and administer medicines to its residents.

¹ These complex dental services that are within the scope of the ODS licence could include diagnostic/curative procedures such as dental screening, tooth extractions and denture work. For the full list of such services, please refer to the [Healthcare Services \(Outpatient Dental Service\) Regulations 2023](#).

E. Do I need to do anything for the transition of my PHMCA licence to HCSA on 18 Dec 2023?

Your NH licence under the PHMCA will be ported over to the NHS licence under the HCSA automatically. To support the transition, [please submit the form](#) to ensure that your data is populated accurately in our new IT system, HALP, if not yet done so. All NHs are required to submit the form by **13 Nov 2023**.

MOH will also be conducting HALP training sessions in the first quarter of 2024. More details will be shared once ready.

If you need to apply for an additional OMS, ODS, EAS or MTS licence under HCSA:

- Please [apply for your licence and pay the respective fees on HALP](#).
- Should you need technical assistance for HALP, you may [view the e-guides and videos here](#) or email your enquiries to HALP_Helpdesk@moh.gov.sg.
- If you have any other HCSA related enquiries, please email us at HCSA_Enquiries@moh.gov.sg.