

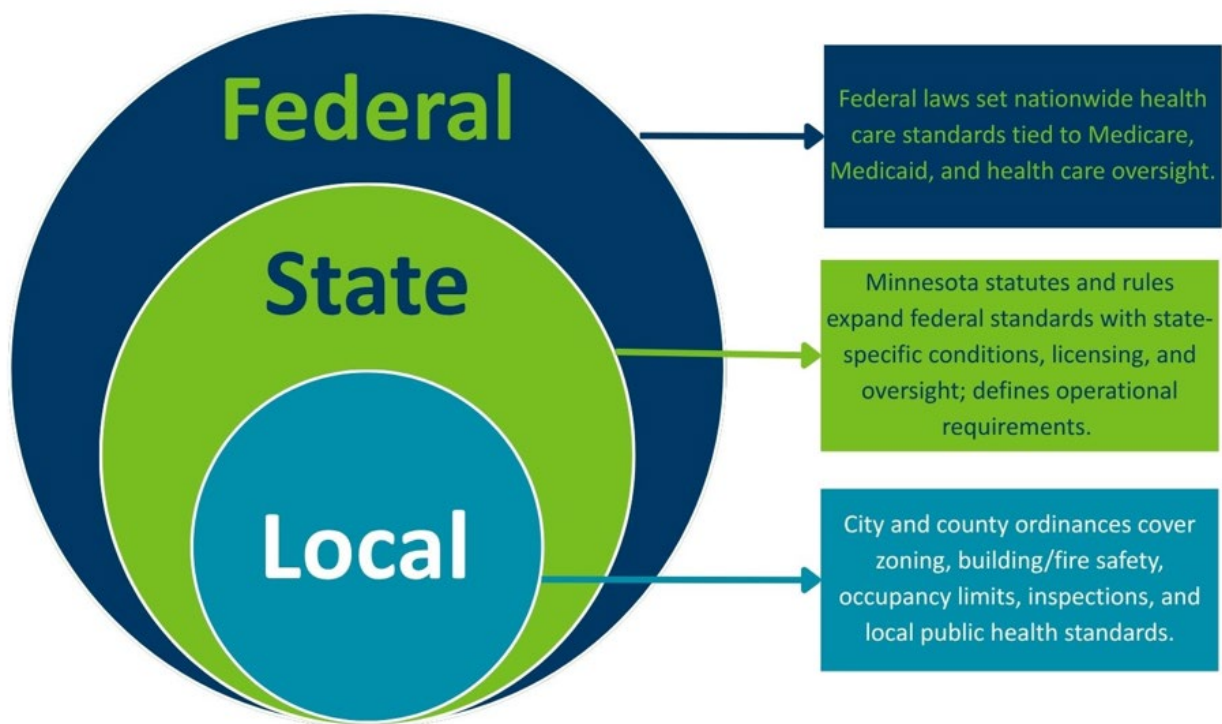
Overview of Health Care Regulations and Oversight

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Minnesota Provider Guide to Federal, State, and Local Rules

Regulations, laws, and rules are legal requirements that protect health care providers and the people they serve. In the United States, health care is overseen by federal, state, and local governments, and each level is responsible for different parts of the system. Because of this layered structure, it is important for providers to understand who creates each requirement. Knowing which authority sets a regulation helps providers follow the right standards, avoid compliance problems or penalties, stay updated when regulations change, understand their responsibilities, and maintain safe, high-quality care for the people served.

Providers must comply with federal, state, and local requirements at the same time. This diagram illustrates how these layers of law interact.



Federal Level

Federal laws set nationwide standards for health care, many of which are tied to federal funding. Most federal health care regulations come from agencies within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), which guide national health policies and programs. Federal requirements apply when an agency works with, supports, or provides services connected to Medicare or Medicaid. They may also govern areas such as data privacy, medical equipment, health records, and controlled substances.

- [Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services](#) (CMS): Operates Medicare and Medicaid programs and sets quality and safety standards for providers. Applies to any agency that works with, supports, or provides services related to Medicare or Medicaid.
- [Food and Drug Administration](#) (FDA): Regulates drugs, medical devices, vaccines, and other medical products.
- [Office for Civil Rights](#) (OCR): Enforces health information privacy and security rules.
- [Office of Inspector General](#) (OIG): Investigates fraud, waste, and abuse in health care programs.
- [Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology](#) (ONC): Creates rules for electronic health record (EHR) standards.

- [Occupational Safety and Health Administration](#) (OSHA): Establishes and enforces workplace safety and health standards, including protections for health care workers such as infection control, hazard communication, and safe working conditions.

State Level

States license health care providers and regulate how care is delivered, using state laws and regulations to guide operations and ensure safety and quality. These requirements shape licensing, daily operations, staffing, training, and the rights of individuals served. In Minnesota, this oversight includes establishing licensing standards and operational expectations that ensure providers deliver safe, high-quality care. Ongoing communication with state agencies is an important part of maintaining compliance and ensuring providers remain informed of regulatory expectations.

- [Minnesota Department of Health](#) (MDH): Licenses and regulates assisted living facilities, home care agencies, and nursing homes. MDH establishes statewide health and safety standards and conducts surveys, inspections, and enforcement activities to ensure compliance. Providers are expected to maintain ongoing compliance and communicate with MDH regarding questions, changes in operations, and regulatory requirements.
- [Minnesota Department of Human Services](#) (DHS): Administers programs and services that support older adults and people with disabilities, sets certain care standards for providers serving people in DHS-funded programs, and manages program enrollment, background studies, and service requirements.
- [Professional Licensing Boards](#) (e.g., Board of Nursing, Board of Medical Practice): Regulates individual health care professionals through credentialing, standards of practice, and ongoing competency requirements.

Local Level: County, Tribal, and City Rules

Local governments can create rules that influence how and where providers operate. Local rules can affect zoning, building safety, and certain public health requirements. Local rules may involve:

- Zoning and building use.
- Public health ordinances.
- County inspections.
- Emergency medical services.
- Local public health response (e.g., outbreaks, environmental health).