

## KNOW WHO YOU'RE TRUSTING

# Vet Your Care Before You Trust It

A due-diligence checklist for checking a provider's license, credentials, and record before your first visit. Plain-English, from the team at Healthvocate.

## Public

licenses & disciplinary records are searchable

## Free

to verify a provider's credentials

## Minutes

to run the checks below

Before you trust someone with your health, it's worth a few minutes of due diligence. A provider's license, board certification, and disciplinary record are public — and easy to check once you know where to look. Here's how to vet a doctor, specialist, or facility before you book.

## Your provider due-diligence checklist

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- 1 Confirm the license is active.**  
Look the provider up on your state medical, nursing, or dental board. Confirm the license is current and in the right state.
- 2 Check for disciplinary actions.**  
The same board lists suspensions, restrictions, and disciplinary history. A clean record is reassuring; any flags deserve a closer look.
- 3 Verify board certification.**  
Certification shows specialty training. Verify it free with the ABMS at [certificationmatters.org](https://www.certificationmatters.org) — don't just take a website's word.
- 4 Check federal exclusions.**  
The HHS OIG's exclusion list (LEIE) flags providers barred from Medicare and Medicaid. Search it free at [oig.hhs.gov](https://oig.hhs.gov).
- 5 Match the specialty to your need.**  
Confirm the provider actually treats your condition and has relevant experience — the right specialist matters more than the nearest one.
- 6 Review facility quality.**  
Where do they admit or operate? Check the hospital or facility's safety and quality ratings, such as Medicare's Care Compare.
- 7 Weigh reviews — then confirm your network.**  
Patient reviews add color but aren't proof; look for patterns, not one-offs. Then confirm the provider is in your insurance network before you book.

## Where to verify a provider — free

| Check                           | What it tells you                          | Where to look  |
|---------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>License &amp; discipline</b> | Active license and any sanctions.          | Your state medical board.  |
| <b>Board certification</b>      | Trained in the specialty.                  | ABMS — <a href="https://www.certificationmatters.org">certificationmatters.org</a> . |
| <b>Federal exclusions</b>       | Barred from Medicare/Medicaid.             | OIG LEIE — <a href="https://oig.hhs.gov">oig.hhs.gov</a> .                           |
| <b>Identity (NPI)</b>           | Confirms the provider's identity and type. | NPPES NPI Registry.  |
| <b>Facility quality</b>         | Hospital or facility safety ratings.       | Medicare Care Compare.   |
| <b>Network status</b>           | Whether your plan covers them.             | Your insurer's directory, then the office.   |

### Red flags to weigh

A lapsed, restricted, or out-of-state license.  
 Disciplinary actions or federal exclusions.  
 Certification you can't verify with ABMS.  
 Pressure to pay cash up front or skip insurance.  
 Patterns — not one-offs — in serious reviews.

### Common mistakes

- Choosing a provider on convenience alone.
- Assuming a polished website means verified.
- Skipping the license and exclusion checks.
- Trusting a single review, good or bad.
- Booking before confirming network status.

## Know who you're trusting.

Healthvocate helps you vet a provider before your first visit — pulling together license, certification, exclusion, and quality checks and flagging what to look at — so you choose care with eyes open. Start free at [HealthVocate.com](https://HealthVocate.com).

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