

Choosing a Home Care Provider

Once you have acquired the names of several home care providers, the following questions may help to determine which one is best for you or your loved one.

About the provider

- How long has this provider been serving the community?
- Is the provider licensed by the state as a home care provider? If so, how long has it been licensed?
- Is there a state requirement for caregivers to be licensed, and if so, are they?
- Are the provider and its employees bonded?
- Are services available 24 hours/7 days a week? Does the provider have staff available 24/7 for emergencies?
- Will the home care provider provide a list of references?

About the initial evaluation visitation

- Does the provider have a nurse evaluate the home care needs? If so, what does this entail?
- Is a written plan of care developed for each client? Is the client and his or her family involved in developing the plan of care?
- Is a contract signed with the home care provider?
- Does the provider assign a supervisor to oversee the quality of care which the client is receiving in the home? How often are these visits made?
- How long does it take for service to be initiated?

About the employees

- How are employees selected and trained? Who interviews and screens the caregivers? If the provider uses independent contractors, how are they selected?
- Will the caregiver be experienced in caring for someone with my relative's specific needs?
- Is there an extra charge if the client and/or family wishes to meet the potential caregiver before employment is confirmed?
- Does the provider provide its employees with written personnel policies, benefit packages, and liability insurance?

About financial procedures

- What are the financial procedures of the provider? Does the provider provide literature explaining its services and fees? How frequently are invoices rendered and what are the payment terms?
- Are there deposits, fees, or extra costs paid to the provider? Are there extra charges for service on the weekends, nights, or holidays?
- What procedures are in place to address questions, concerns, or complaints? What happens if there is a problem during non-business hours?
- If service is cancelled, is there a fee? How much notice is required to terminate services?

About caregiver scheduling

- If transportation is needed, does the caregiver drive? Who is responsible for verification of the caregiver's license status and driving history? Do the caregivers have their own car? Does the home care provider permit the caregiver to drive the client's car?
- Will the same caregiver come each time or will there be different caregivers?
- What is the procedure for making changes in the caregiver's schedule?
- What is the procedure if the caregiver doesn't show up?
- What is the procedure if the client wishes to make a change in caregivers?
- What procedures are in place to handle emergencies?
- What are the obligations of the client and family members to the home care provider and the caregiver? For example, is the client expected to provide meals at the client's home? What about outside the home?