



## How to Choose a Home Health Care Agency

Not all home health care agencies are created equal. That is why it is important to research several providers in your area to ensure that you or your loved one receive the highest quality care.

As you do your due diligence, here are a few things to consider before selecting a home health agency.

### Medicare/Medicaid Certification

Medicare and Medicaid will cover home health care expenses for eligible patients – as long as the agency is certified by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). Certification is a sign that the agency meets certain state and federal requirements for quality patient care. If the agency you select is not certified, you could end up having to foot the bill.

#### Questions to Ask:

- Is your agency certified by CMS?
- How long has your agency been certified by CMS?

### 24/7 Availability, On Call Home Health Aid

When choosing a home health care agency, find out if staff are on-call 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This includes nights, weekends, and holidays. Around-the-clock availability can help you avoid unnecessary hospitalizations and improves access to care in an emergency.

#### Questions to Ask:

- Do you have staff available 24 hours, 7 days a week?
- Who is on-call?
- What is your average response time?

### Specialized Home Health Programs

Home health care agencies offer a range of services, including skilled nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, and more. But some providers have specialty programs, too. For example, a home health agency may offer specialized programs for various conditions like stroke or COPD. Be sure the home health care agency you choose provides the services you or your loved one will need.

#### Questions to Ask:

- What specialty home health care services do you provide?
- Will you make arrangements for all necessary medical equipment?

### Personalized Care Plan

Your home health care plan should be tailored to your specific needs, with input from your doctor, caregiver, and home health team. Personalized care plans ensure that you will get the right care at the right time.

#### Questions to Ask:



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- Do you provide personalized care plans?
- How often is the plan updated?
- Who is involved in updating the plan of care?

### Telehealth Options

Technology allows home health clinicians to monitor and care for their patients virtually, if necessary. In light of COVID-19, it is important to ask potential home health agencies about the availability of telehealth.

#### Questions to Ask:

- Do you have telehealth options or other patient monitoring technologies available?
- Is the technology easy to use and understand?
- Will someone show me or my loved one how to utilize telehealth technology?

### Staff Credentials & Screening

Your home health team should include professionals with the appropriate licenses and certifications. Because the agency's staff will care for you in your own home, ask how they screen their employees. You may also want to inquire about what kind of training each member of your care team undergoes. This helps ensure your safety and the quality of your care.

#### Questions to Ask:

- Does each care team member have the appropriate licenses and certifications?
- What is the screening process for your employees?
- Do you provide ongoing training for your clinicians?

### Reputation & History in the Community

A solid reputation and extensive history in the community can be key factors when choosing a home health care agency. A personal recommendation from a friend, family member, or healthcare provider is a terrific place to start.

#### Questions to Ask:

- How long have you provided home health services?
- Are you inspected by an outside organization? If so, when was the last inspection?
- Are there patients, caregivers, or healthcare professionals who recommend your home health agency?

### Quality & Patient Satisfaction Scores

CMS monitors and reports on the quality of home health agencies. Quality scores can be a great indicator that you are choosing a home health care agency you can trust. They also measure the experiences of patients receiving home health care. These ratings are based on the Home Health Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HHCAHPS) Survey, which looks at



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communication, safety, and other measures. Choosing a home health care agency with strong patient satisfaction scores helps ensure you will have a positive experience.

#### Questions to Ask:

- How do you measure quality?
- What are your quality scores, and how do they compare to the national and state average?
- How do patients and families rate your home health services?
- What happens if I have an issue or concern?

#### Smooth Care Transitions

If you are leaving a hospital or skilled nursing facility, you will need an agency that helps make the transition home as smooth as possible. Assistance with managing medications, obtaining the supplies and equipment you need, and performing daily activities like bathing and dressing will help you stay safe at home.

#### Questions to Ask:

- How quickly after discharge can home health services begin?
- What is the admissions process like?
- How often can I expect home health visits to occur?

***Asking these questions will help you differentiate between providers and choose a home health care agency that meets your unique needs. Find out if Intrepid USA Healthcare at Home is right for you.***

**Contact us today at (888) 800-5311 or by filling out [our Contact Form here](#).**