

Who will care for me?

HOME HEALTH CARE- PART II

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According to recent research, in the United States most elderly people are cared for by some one in the family. Family members provide either direct care, or are responsible for pursuing other alternatives. When the caregiver can no longer do it all, there is often little time to find a home health care provider. Cost alone is not the only variable needing consideration.

When a caregiver is needed, it is important to identify the needs and habits of your loved one and your family. The first need to identify is the hours and days you would like the caregiver to be available to work. A brief list of other things to consider would include

assistance with such things as bathing, dressing, toileting, walking, cooking, cleaning, and shopping. Other concerns would include the need for plant or pet care and socialization with things like being read to, playing board games or simply holding conversations.

Quality of care can differ among home health agencies. To help sort through your options, ask questions to help evaluate the services. There are several facets to home care, so asking the right questions up front can help you choose the best agency for your loved ones needs. Listed below are some suggestions to ask agencies when arranging home health care services:

RATE (per hour)

Weekday _____

Weekend _____

Live-In _____

SUPERVISION?

qualifications of supervisor, visits to clients by supervisor, if yes, how often, ratio of supervisors to health aide staff, replacement available when aide calls out, pager system in place?

TRAINING OF AIDES?

number of training hours, number of aides certified, number of aides uncertified.

AGENCY INFORMATION?

bonded, current license and type, accreditation and by whom, written personnel policies, references.

After you have found a home health care provider, it is imperative that you continue to monitor the quality of the care you or your loved one receives. Having a detailed, written care plan or utilizing the services of a professional geriatric care manager can help.