

HOME HEALTH CARE



By:
Judith S. Parnes
LCSW, CMC
Executive
Director

According to recent research, in this country the majority of older people are cared for by their families. 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. Secondly, think about what tasks a caregiver is needed

to help with: Is assistance needed with such things as bathing, dressing, toileting, walking, cooking, cleaning, and shopping? Does your loved one need help with plant or pet care? Socialization is important so you may want a caregiver to assist in reading aloud, 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 one.

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 aid 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. If you have any questions about the care you are receiving, be sure to have someone follow up.

Judith S. Parnes, L.C.S.W., C.M.C., Gerontologist and Elder Care Consultant is Executive Director of Elder Life Management, Inc., Ocean, NJ. ELM provides quality elder care planning, management and Medicaid application services to older adults and their families. Please visit www.elderlifemanagement.org or call (732) 493-8080 for more information