

HOME CARE 101

There are many different types of Home care that you should familiarize yourself with so you can know which options will be appropriate for you.

Certified Home Health Agency: (CHHA)

Certified Home care Agencies provide part-time, intermittent health care and support services to those who need intermediate and skilled health care. They are often reimbursed by primary insurance. Services can include Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech therapy, Home Health Aide and Social Work. They are limited and short term. Services can be ordered by your primary care Physician in the community. If you are in a hospital or rehab a discharge planner typically will inform you if you are eligible for these services. They will make a referral for you if you wish. Rehabs and Hospitals often have CHHA's that they have contracts with but you can choose any Agency. A Registered Nurse or Social Worker will come to the hospital or rehab to meet you and evaluate your needs. They can give you an ESTIMATE about what services you will receive. Once you go home a RN will come to your house typically within 24 hours and do an assessment. This is where you will be informed about what services, and their frequency, that you will receive.

For some people they will only need CHHA services after they are discharged. Often people need more services than what a CHHA offers them, at least initially. Therefore understanding the other types of Home care is very important!

Licensed Home Health Agency:

Licensed agencies often pick up where the CHHA leaves off. Typically the discharge planner in the hospital or rehab will give you an amount of hours, that is being recommended by the team, to have some sort of help while you are recuperating. Since CHHA services are capped a Licensed agency can provide you with the remaining services needed. These services are paid for privately, by long term care insurance or by Medicaid. Licensed Agencies provide Home Health Aide (HHA) Services. Certified Home Health Aides can provide hands on services meaning they can provide assistance with bathing and showering. They work under the supervision of an RN. HHA's can also provide hands on care and other tasks (but not limited to) such as record keeping, temperature checks and pulse rates. In addition HHA's will do light housekeeping, medication reminders, laundry and meal preparation. Some Licensed Agencies offer other services such as Case Management, Medication Management and Skilled care.

Companion Care:

Companion care provides non medical care meaning they do not provide hands on care.

Companions perform tasks such as meal preparation, medication reminders, light housekeeping, laundry, grocery shopping, driving, pet assistance and companionship.

Licensed Home Care agencies may refer to a Companion Agency as a client improves and no longer requires skilled or hands on care. And companion Agencies may refer to Licensed Agencies if their client begins to decline and require a higher level of care. They can also work in conjunction with each other. Companion Care can often accommodate smaller hours as well.

These services are covered mostly by private pay and sometimes by Long Term Care Insurance.

Independent Contractors:

Some Companions and Home Health Aides do not work with an Agency and consider themselves Independent Contractors. Typically Independent Contractors charge less than what an Agency charges. Since an Independent Contractor is not working for an Agency there may be less restrictions as to what they can do. Clients/Families must understand the tax issues, private background checks, replacement of Aide when Private Aide needs off and the general management of care. (Some Licensed Agencies will provide monthly or more, case management visits for Independent Contractors). It is suggested to check with a Lawyer and Accountant as well before hiring a private Aide.