

Tips for Finding Reliable Care

In-Home Care Checklist: Questions to ask Potential Providers

Choosing a home care provider raises many questions. There are many different types of home care services, and the choices can sometimes be confusing to those seeking care.

This checklist provided by Pioneers Hospital Home Health will help you make an informed decision by ensuring that you have asked the right questions and received information about all of the issues and responsibilities related to finding an appropriate agency to provide care for an elderly, frail or disabled person in a private home. Private duty care is provided by agencies who work directly with families and the families pay a fee for the services provided.

Agency

- How long has the agency been providing private duty home care?
- What are the credentials and experience of the staff who perform the screening, assignment and oversight of caregivers?
- Are they fully insured?

Employment

- Who employs the caregiver?
- Does the agency manage all payroll and employee-related matters and adhere to state and federal guidelines in its employment practices, such as withholding appropriate taxes, providing workers' compensation insurance and other benefits?
- Do they also use independent contractors? If so, who employs the person and pays mandated taxes and withholdings in this case? How do they differentiate between the employees and the independent contractors?
- Are references checked and criminal background and drug screens conducted on all employees/personnel they use to staff in homes?
- How does the agency screen and select caregivers prior to an assignment?

Services

- Is there a care professional who, along with the client and family, develops an individualized plan of care?
- How are emergencies handled after normal business hours?
- How often are services monitored?
- Does the agency employ a full time nurse, social worker or other qualified professional to make regular visits to the client's home?
- Are you required to sign a contract for services?
- Are costs estimated up front?

As an additional criteria, check out the agency locator at www.NAHC.com to see if the agency is associated with a professional organization that provide ongoing education and best practices for its members.