

CHOOSING A HOME CARE AGENCY

First, consider what your needs and wishes are. Write down this information so you will remember it when talking to the agency. Being clear about these basics during your first contact with the agency may save time and prevent disappointment.

How do I plan to pay for the service? _____

(Medicare, Medicaid, private insurance, out-of-pocket? Have I talked to my doctor about a referral? Have I checked to see if my insurance will cover this?)

What do I want them to help with? _____

(For example, bathing, dressing, housekeeping, meal preparation, grocery shopping, transportation, companionship, "sitter" service, etc. Will they need to provide "hands-on" care? Do I also need skilled services such as physical therapy or nursing?)

When do I want them to come? _____

(How often, what days, for how many hours per visit, etc. Is this a short-term or a long-term need? How flexible can I be about scheduling? How soon does service need to start?)

Are there any special needs or requests? _____

(Male aide, strong aide for large patient, aide who has worked with dementia patients, non-smoker, etc.)

Once you have considered your own needs, you are ready to start finding out what the agency has to offer. Some questions that may be helpful are:

NAME OF COMPANY _____

Do they accept Medicare? Medicaid? Private insurance? Will they file? _____

If paying privately, do they offer "private duty" services? _____

What are their basic hourly charges? _____

Are there overtime charges, or higher charges for evening or weekend coverage? _____

Do they offer the kinds of services I need? _____

What hours of the day are they available? _____

When would they be able to start? _____

Can they provide services on holidays if needed? _____

Can they meet my special needs or requests? _____

Will the same person provide service at each visit? _____

What happens if the aide is sick or goes on vacation? _____

Are they licensed by the Division of Health Services Regulation? _____

How many years have they been in business? _____

Are they accredited? _____

Do they perform staff background checks and bond their employees? _____

Do they have liability insurance? _____

Can they provide references? _____

