



## **Home Health Care in Onondaga County Certified and Licensed, Respite and Companion Care\***

### **How to Choose a Home Care Provider**

#### **Types of Home Care Agencies (Courtesy of Clear Pathways)**

##### **Home Health Agency**

Probably the oldest and most familiar provider of home care services is known as the home health agency. The **home health agency is licensed and usually Medicare certified and accepts other 3rd party billing of health insurances**. Medicare certification means that the agency has met specific federal guidelines and criteria regarding patient care.

The main and distinctive purpose of this type of agency is to provide skilled care for treatment or rehabilitation services to homebound patients. Home care professionals must strictly adhere to a physician approved plan of care that is deemed medically necessary and updated every 60 days in order for Medicare benefits to continue.

Home health agency services include skilled nursing, physical and occupational therapy, social work, and home health aide while under professional supervision. Home health care agencies focus more on the skilled medical aspects of care and the home health care aide serves only as a supplement to this care. Regardless of reimbursement eligibility, Medicare will only pay for skilled care in the home for a limited period of time to treat an illness or injury. The HHAs can provide a pre-authorized amount of personal care while under professional supervision however must discontinue care when skilled care needs are no longer justified.

Individuals often may still have ongoing personal care needs even though skilled services are no longer required. As a result of this common need, some home health agencies offer a private pay, non-certified component within their agency for nursing assistants to continue providing personal and custodial care. Hiring a non-medical home care agency directly or privately hiring a caregiver is another option when continued care through a home health agency is not feasible.

##### **Home Care Agency or Non-Medical Home Care Agency**

A non-medical home care agency is generally an agency that **provides home care services which are not considered to be skilled care**. These agencies provide what is termed non-skilled supportive custodial care that is supplied by home health aides, certified nursing assistants (CNAs) and also **non-certified nurse aides, homemakers, and companions**.

These greatly needed services range from housekeeping and companion care to assistance with personal care such as bathing, dressing, toileting, and eating. Unskilled care is not reimbursable under Medicare and therefore is paid for privately, or in some cases by private long-term care insurance. A physician's order is not required as the need for care is not deemed medically necessary and patient homebound status not required. A professionally authorized and monitored care plan is unnecessary.

These private pay agencies are usually still licensed under authority of each state but licensure requirements and regulations vary widely from state to state unlike federally regulated Medicare certified home health agencies. Most agencies employ their workers, do background checks and manage payroll and taxes. Most of these agencies professionally supervise and monitor their staff with regards to patient care. Non-Medical home care agencies play an undeniably big role filling gaps in home care services not covered under skilled care. Un-skilled home care services such as personal care assistance or other cooking and cleaning help is often what may be needed most and by many in order to remain in their homes.

Finding the home care provider best suited for your needs requires research, but it is time well spent. Important factors include the quality of care, availability of needed services, personnel training and expertise, and coverage provided by the payer. Before starting a search, it is important to determine which types of services you need. You may wish to consult with your physician, a hospital discharge planner or a social service organization for assistance in evaluating your needs. Once you've completed this assessment, you will be able to identify the type of home care provider that can best assist you. Once you acquire the names of several providers, you'll want to learn more about their services and reputations. Following is a checklist of questions to ask providers and other individuals who may know about the provider's track record. Their insight will help you determine which provider is best for you or your loved one.

## Questions to Ask

1. Is the agency licensed or certified? How long has the agency been serving the community?
2. What services does it provide? What is the charge for services? Are services covered by Medicare/Medicaid or other insurances?
3. How is staff selected and trained? What are their qualifications? Are references available?
4. What precautions does the agency take to ensure its employees are honest? How is staff supervised?
5. Are services available on emergency basis, on weekends, holidays, and nights?
6. Is it a place if workers are ill or do not show up for work? Do you have guaranteed service?
7. Is there a waiting list? If so, for how long?
8. What kind of communication is there between the agency and family? Is it in the form of reports or informal updates? Does the agency provide literature explaining its services, eligibility requirements, fees, and funding sources?
9. Are nurses or therapists required to evaluate the patient's home care needs? If so, what does this entail? Do they consult the patient's family and physicians?
10. Does the agency furnish written documentation of specific tasks and treatment provided? Do they provide written statements explaining the costs and payment plan options associated with home care?
11. When hiring a home health aide not represented by an agency, request a picture of the aide's identification card, driver's license or alien registration card. Obtain worker's name, birth date, and address and Social Security number. Do a police check to determine if there is a criminal record? Contact references. Set up a job description/contract and indicate job requirements, payment agreement, IRS requirements, and employee's social Security number. To learn more about your responsibilities as an employer, call the Internal Revenue Service at 1-800-829-1040. Request publication No. 937 "Employment Taxes & Information Returns."

### Certified Home Health Care Agencies

A certified home health care agency, or CHHA, is a licensed home health care agency that is certified by both Medicare and Medicaid. The services offered by a certified agency are medical and include nursing care, home health aides, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, nutrition assistance, social work and respiratory therapy. CHHA's also administer the long term home health care program (LTHHCP -- also called "nursing home without walls.")

Those who are eligible for home care under Medicare *must utilize* a certified agency. Medicare has guidelines limiting home care payments. It may help pay for home health visits only if four specific conditions are met:

1. The home health agency providing services in participating in Medicare and certified in New York State.
2. The care needed includes intermittent skilled nursing care, physical therapy, speech therapy or occupational therapy.

3. Patient/consumer is confined to home.
4. A doctor's referral is necessary. A doctor determines home health care as medically necessary and sets up a treatment plan.

A nurse will conduct an assessment of the patient's physical condition, and the agency will then be able to advise which benefits and services are available under Medicare. There may be a fee for the nursing assessment - ask in advance. **Many of these Agencies also offer Companion and Respite Care as well. Call for more information.**

**The Centers at St. Camillus Home Care Agency**  
813 Fay Rd., Syracuse, NY 13219  
(315) 488-2831

**Gentiva Home Health Services (An Affiliate of Kindred at Home)**  
200 Elwood Davis Road, Liverpool, NY 13088  
(315) 461-0209

**HCR Home Care Serving Onondaga County**  
(800) 270-4904

**St. Joseph's Home Health Care**  
7246 Janus Park Drive, Liverpool, NY13088  
(315) 458-2800

**VNA Homecare**  
1050 West Genesee St., Syracuse, NY13204  
(315) 477-4663

## **Licensed Home Health Care Agencies**

A licensed home care service agency provides nursing and home health aides for long term care. Although services may be similar to those offered by a Certified Home Health Agency, Licensed Home Care services are not reimbursed by either Medicare or Medicaid. Services are available to clients who have private insurance and those who pay privately. In some cases licensed agencies contract with local social services departments, or certified home health agencies, to provide services to persons with Medicaid coverage. Private long term care insurance policies usually limit the length of time care is allowed. Note that home care agencies generally require several days' notice to complete a home care plan and to make the necessary arrangements for in-home services. **Many of these Agencies also offer Companion and Respite Care as well. Call for more information.**

**All Metro Health Care**

526 Old Liverpool Road, Suite 1, Liverpool, NY 13088  
(315) 453-5537

**CareGivers**

4205 Long Branch Road, Liverpool, 13090  
(315) 451-6886

**Comfort Keepers**

6834 E. Genesee Street, Fayetteville, NY 13066  
(315) 474-0444

**Dignity Plus, Inc.**

675 South Main Street, Central Square, 13036  
(315) 668-9381

**Franciscan Health Support (A Division of St. Joseph's Home Care)**

7246 Janus Park Drive, Liverpool, 13088  
(315) 458-5600

**Home Aides of CNY, Inc. (A Division of VNA Home Care)**

723 James Street, Syracuse, 13203  
(315) 476-4295

**Integrity Home Care Service (A Division of the Centers at St. Camillus)**

813 Fay Road, Syracuse, 13219  
(315) 468-1484

**Interim Healthcare**

3300 James Street, Suite 201, Syracuse 13206  
(315) 437-4500

**Loretto – PACE CNY**

Sally Coyne Center 100 Malta Lane, N. Syracuse, NY 13212  
(315) 452-5800

**Maxim Healthcare Services**

224 Harrison Street Suite 680, Syracuse, NY 13202  
(315) 476-0600

**Menorah Park Home Health Services**

4101 E. Genesee Street, Syracuse, NY 13214  
(315) 446-9111

**Nursecore of Syracuse**

2301 Teall Avenue, Syracuse, NY 13206

(315) 433-9100

**Self-Direct, Inc.**

12 Oswego Street, Baldwinsville, NY 13027

(315) 635-5374

**StafKings**

417 Electronics Pkwy, Liverpool, NY 13088

(315) 432-5636

**VA Hospital Based Home Care Program (Veterans Only)****Must be in Veterans Hospital System**

800 Irving Avenue, Syracuse 13210

(315) 425-4669

**Winds of Agape**

1414 Grant Boulevard , Syracuse, N.Y. 13208

(315) 425-0547

**Respite Care**

Respite care provides relief to family members from their caregiving responsibilities. It may involve a person coming into the home on a regular basis for a few hours or an arrangement to allow the caregiver a break for a weekend or vacation. Some of the home health care agencies listing above offer respite. **Some hospitals, assisted living facilities and skilled nursing facilities (nursing homes) have beds available for respite purposes on a limited basis as well.** Call for more information.

**Caregiver Respite Program**

Onondaga County Office for Aging

Civic Center, 421 Montgomery St., 10<sup>th</sup> Floor, Syracuse, NY 13202

315-435-2362

For full-time caregivers of seniors, age 60 or older. In-Home Respite and Social Adult Day Services.

**Exceptional Family Resources (Serves the Disabled Community)**

1065 James Street, Suite 220, Syracuse 13203

(315) 478-1462 (Ext. 334 or 329)

**Home Aides of CNY, Inc. (A Division of VNA Home Care)**  
 1050 West Genesee Street, Syracuse, NY 13204  
 315- 476-4295

**Loretto- Sedgwick Heights**  
 1100 James Street, Syracuse, NY 13203  
 (315) 475-4388

**Veteran's Administration Respite Program (Veterans Only)**  
**Must be in Veterans Hospital System**  
 800 Irving Avenue, Syracuse 13210, (315) 425-4669  
 Planned limited stay in the VA Hospital in Syracuse.

## **Companion Care (Non-Medical)**

Companion care offers social interaction and companionship. Services are non-medical. Aides are there for safety and supportive care. They do not give baths (just reminder), do not give medications (point out what to take), use monitors for overnight stays.

**Alzheimer's Solutions**  
 PO Box 412, Jamesville, NY 13078  
 315-469-1000

**At Home Independent Living**  
 4464 Milton Avenue, Camillus, NY 13031  
 (315) 579-4663

**Comfort Keepers**  
 6834 E. Genesee Street, Fayetteville, NY 13066  
 (315) 474-0444

**Griswold Home Care**  
 110 Buchman Cl. Circle, Fayetteville, NY 13066  
 (315) 636-5191

**Home Instead Senior Care**  
 6443 Ridings Road, Suite 123, Syracuse NY 13206  
 (315) 438-3168

**Seniors Helping Seniors**  
 (315) 280-0739 or (315) 720-4441  
 Onondaga County with the exception of Baldwinsville.

**Syracuse Home Care**

126 South Terry Road, Syracuse, NY 13219

(315) 430-7481

**Senior Home Care Solutions**

PO Box 412, Jamesville, NY 13078

(315) 469-1000

**Touching Hearts at Home**

6311 Fly Road, Suite 106, East Syracuse, NY 13057

Phone: 315-751-5767

\*The above information is distributed on an “as is” basis, without warranty. Neither the compilers, nor Onondaga County, shall have any liability to be caused directly, or indirectly, by the instructions or definitions or by the agencies or organizations described. Moreover, any errors, and/or omissions, are unintentional. The listings are not exhaustive; exclusion should not be construed as a statement to the quality, or service provided.