



HOW TO HIRE AND SCREEN A HOME CARE PROVIDER

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Elder Abuse – “The Crime of the 21st Century.”

- **Be aware** that with elders alone at home, it can be a **crime of opportunity** for the home-care worker.
- Consider the people who enter the elder's home freely and work long hours are UNSUPERVISED.
- We need a conscious effort to protect our elders at home.

Four Types of Home Care Companies

- ❑ **Employers:** Employees are hired and paid directly by home care agency.
 - ❑ Covered by workers comp. and liability laws.
 - ❑ Home care agency is responsible for federal tax, Social Security, and Medicare withholding, and state / local income taxes.
 - ❑ Usually bonded and insured.
 - ❑ Background checked, drug tested, supervised, and trained.
 - ❑ Back-up caregivers are available if needed.

Four Types of Home Care Companies Continued.

- **Registries:** Companies that coordinate the scheduling of caregivers.
 - ▣ Paid as independent contractors.
 - ▣ Caregivers responsible for own taxes.
 - ▣ Liability insurance is covered by the homeowner / elder.
 - ▣ If caregiver considered an employee, then elder is responsible withholding taxes, SS, and Medicare.
 - ▣ Ask about background checks, drug testing, supervision, and training.
 - ▣ Consult an attorney / accountant.

Four Types of Home Care Companies Continued.

- **Referral Services:** Referral and background screenings typically provided for a fee.
 - ▣ Elder / family becomes the legal employer.
 - ▣ Federal ID must be acquired and obligation to pay federal withholding, Medicare, state and local taxes, and employer matches.
 - ▣ In some cases – workers comp. required, family medical leave, and other state labor industry practices.
 - ▣ No supervision, drug testing, training.
 - ▣ Consult an attorney and accountant.

Four Types of Home Care Companies Continued.

- **Independent Caregiver:** Individuals who sell their services as caregivers.
 - ▣ Typically place ad in the paper or online.
 - ▣ Elder / family responsible for tax withholding, workers compensation, unemployment compensation, liability insurance.
 - ▣ No background check, drug test, supervision, or training.
 - ▣ Consult an attorney and accountant.

Types of Personal Care

- **Companion Care:** Meal prep., light housekeeping, assistance with daily activities such as letter writing, reading, and entertainment. Caregiver generally does not touch the client.
- **Personal Care:** Helping with ADL's: Eating, bathing, dressing, toileting, transferring, and continence. Hands-on care.
- **Skilled Care:** Licensed professional such as RN, LPN, PT, or OT. Covered by Medicare, Medicaid, and private insurance.

Getting Started...

- Call local Ombudsman office to see if there are any complaints against specific agencies.
 - Adult Well-Being Services – 616-245-9451
- Call Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan for a referral or Care Manager Assessment visit.
 - 616-456-5664
- Talk to your doctor or hospital discharge planner.
- Medicare's Home Health Compare tool compares Medicare-certified home health care providers.
- Better Business Bureau

Good Steps to Take

- Create a list of care needs-
 - ▣ Include your expectation of how those needs will be met.
- Ask for recommendations-
 - ▣ Friends, family, support group members, church, health care providers, Angie's List
- Interview at home-
 - ▣ Prepare your questions beforehand
 - ▣ Include a third person present / discuss impressions
- Check references!

Questions to Ask a Care Provider:

☐ Questions to ask an **Agency**

- ☐ How long in business?
- ☐ How is agency licensed or accredited?
- ☐ Are the employees bonded and insured?
- ☐ Does agency offer a RN visit prior to start of service?
- ☐ Describe quality control.
- ☐ What happens if the aid doesn't show?
- ☐ Minimum hours / days required?
- ☐ Is there 24 hour care in case of emergency?
- ☐ Cost? Additional cost for weekend / holiday?

Questions to Ask a Care Provider:

- Questions to ask an **Agency** continued:
 - ▣ What kind of criminal background tests performed?
 - ▣ Drug testing?
 - ▣ Are references checked? How many?
 - ▣ Are personnel files updated annually?
 - ▣ What kind of experience / certification do aids have before they are hired?
 - ▣ Describe your staff training.
 - ▣ Who pays workers SS and other insurances?
 - ▣ Is there a care plan in writing for each client?
 - ▣ Will the same person be providing care on a regular basis?
 - ▣ Can I interview the employee?

Questions to Ask a Care Provider:

- Questions to ask the **individual care provider**:
 - ▣ How long have you been working in this field?
 - ▣ Describe your experience working with seniors.
 - ▣ Are you specifically trained in dementia care?
 - ▣ Are you trained in CPR and first aid?
 - ▣ Are you bonded? Drug tested? Carry liability insurance?
 - ▣ Will you pay your own taxes?
 - ▣ References?
 - ▣ Do you have a background check?
 - ▣ What is your back up plan in case you are sick?
 - ▣ Do you have your own transportation?

Conclusion:

- ❑ Criminal background checks only show CONVICTIONS – not complaints or arrests.
- ❑ Check local sex offender registries.
- ❑ ICHAT searches for convictions in Michigan only.
- ❑ Nanny cam?
- ❑ Un-announced visits?
- ❑ Hide cash, checkbooks, credit cards and all other personal information (SS#, Medicare #)