

Questions to ask before you choose a home health agency

homehealthscheduling.com

Agency _____

Date _____

Before you call

☐ **Is the agency Medicare-certified?**

Good sign: Yes, and they can give you their CMS number.

Worry if: "We are licensed" with no Medicare certification, when Medicare is paying.

☐ **What is your Medicare quality star rating, and your patient survey rating?**

Good sign: They know both and can say what they are working on.

Worry if: They do not know, or say ratings do not matter.

☐ **Do you serve her ZIP code and the exact address?**

Good sign: A clear yes.

Worry if: "Probably," or "we will see who is available."

Notes _____

The first visit

☐ **How soon can a nurse or therapist come for the first visit?**

Good sign: A date within two days of the referral or of her coming home, or the date the doctor ordered. Medicare requires one of those.

Worry if: No date, or "when we have staff."

☐ **Who decides what care she needs, and will we see the plan?**

Good sign: A clinician assesses her at home and reviews the written plan with you.

Worry if: The plan is "in the system" and you never see it.

☐ **How often will visits happen, and will the schedule be in writing?**

Good sign: A specific frequency per discipline, in writing. Medicare requires the written schedule.

Worry if: "As needed" with no numbers.

Notes _____

Who shows up

☐ **Which disciplines will come: nursing, physical or occupational therapy, speech, social work, aide?**

Good sign: It matches what her doctor ordered.

Worry if: Fewer disciplines than ordered, or "we will add those later."

☐ **Will it be the same people most visits?**

Good sign: A primary nurse or therapist with a named backup.

Worry if: A different person every visit.

☐ **Are your staff employees or contractors, and are they background-checked and licensed?**

Good sign: A direct answer on both.

Worry if: Hesitation about contractors or checks.

☐ **If a home health aide comes, who supervises the aide and how often?**

Good sign: A nurse or therapist checks at least every 14 days while skilled care continues. Medicare sets that minimum.

Worry if: No answer.

Notes _____

Continued on the back.

How they communicate

☐ **Who do I call with a question, and how fast do you call back?**

Good sign: A named clinical manager, in writing, and a same-day callback. Medicare requires the name and number.

Worry if: Only a general voicemail.

☐ **Is there someone to reach after hours and on weekends?**

Good sign: A clinician on call around the clock.

Worry if: An answering service that cannot reach a clinician.

☐ **How will you tell me when a visit is late, cancelled or rescheduled?**

Good sign: A call or text before the visit window.

Worry if: "The clinician will let you know."

☐ **How do you keep her doctor informed?**

Good sign: Notes and orders sent for signature with every change.

Worry if: Updates only "if there are problems."

☐ **Will you teach the family what to do between visits?**

Good sign: Yes, and they describe how.

Worry if: Teaching is not mentioned.

Money

☐ **What will Medicare cover, and what will we owe?**

Good sign: They explain coverage before care starts and in writing.

Worry if: Vague, or a surprise charge "depending on the visit."

☐ **Will you tell us in writing before any service Medicare might not pay for?**

Good sign: Yes, before care starts and before any change. Medicare requires it orally and in writing.

Worry if: They have never heard of that.

☐ **Do you bill us for anything?**

Good sign: A clear list, usually nothing for Medicare-covered home health.

Worry if: Deposits or fees up front.

When things go wrong

☐ **What happens if she falls or gets worse between visits?**

Good sign: A clear plan: call this number, a nurse decides whether to visit.

Worry if: "Call 911" and nothing else.

☐ **How do you prevent hospital visits?**

Good sign: They name what they watch for and how often they check.

Worry if: No specific answer.

☐ **How do I file a complaint, and with whom?**

Good sign: They name their process and the state agency hotline without being defensive.

Worry if: No process, or irritation at the question.

☐ **What happens when care ends?**

Good sign: A planned discharge with written instructions and a handoff to her doctor.

Worry if: Care just stops.

Quick warning signs

- They could not tell you their star ratings.
- No first-visit date.
- No written plan or schedule.
- Nobody to reach after hours.
- Fees before care starts.
- They were annoyed by your questions.

Medicare publishes quality ratings. Look yours up at homehealthscheduling.com/tools/find-home-health-agency. Logicly builds scheduling software for home health agencies and does not rate agencies.