



## HOW TO CHOOSE AND INTERVIEW A HOME HEALTH AGENCY

### 20 Questions to Ask When You Are Interviewing a Home Health Agency

#### COMPLIANCE:

**1. Are you certified by Medicare and Medicaid?**

**Answer:** The agency should be if they are providing skilled medical/ nursing care.

**2. Has your agency had any issues related to compliance with Medicare and/ or Medicaid in the last 5 years?**

**Answer:** The agency should always be in compliance with their governed regulations and standards of care. If an agency has had previous issues, ask what they have done to rectify the problem and are they in compliance now? If they are still having issues look for another agency.

**3. Are your caregivers bonded and insured through your agency?**

**Answer:** The agency should be to protect patients and agency from risk.

**4. Do you use contracted staff? If so, do they follow your hiring practices and regulatory requirements?**

**Answer:** Some agencies will use contracted staff for therapies, or for services that are utilized infrequently such as a dietician. This is fine as long as the contractor is following all the same regulations as the agency hiring them when providing care to the agency's patients.

**5. What are your privacy practices? May I have a copy of them?**

**Answer:** As a consumer / patient of Home Health you are entitled to this information to protect you and your health information (HIPAA).

**6. Has your agency received any notable awards or commendations?**

**Answer:** The agency should be able to speak to their certifications, accreditations, and any special programs that have received awards. They should also be able to speak about any staff member that has received and special certification or award.



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### **SAFETY:**

#### **1.What processes do you use to hire and assess your staff?**

**Answer:** The agency should have a process that speaks to interviews, background checks including criminal, reference checks, competency checks, verification of professional license or certifications, drug testing.

#### **2.What does your pre-employment screening look like?**

**Answer:** It should include more than one interview, background checks, reference checks, administration of role specific written tests to determine competency and fit for duty.

#### **3.Do you do additional evaluations each year?**

**Answer:** The agency should be able to speak to supervisory visits by their manager or designated clinician every 14 days, annual competency evaluations, additional competency evaluations for new tasks or a change in responsibilities or role.

#### **4.How do you evaluate staff?**

**Answer:** The agency should be able to speak to their process for performance evaluations, how they are done, how often they are done, and by whom.

#### **5.What training do you provide staff?**

**Answer:** The agency should be able to speak on their competency evaluations for skills, their education courses, and the format they use to disseminate the information. It should be in multiple formats, such as handouts, policy and procedure, learning management systems on-line, and in person.



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### **6. What is the process for reporting non-compliance?**

**Answer:** The agency should be able to speak to their compliance program, how staff are educated on it, and it is reported by staff or patient.

### **7. How do you respond to emergencies?**

**Answer:** The agency should be able to speak to, and provide you with educational handouts on their process. It should include information for how they respond to this during business hours and also after hours and on weekends and holidays.

### **8. May I see some testimonials regarding the care you provide?**

**Answer:** The agency should be able to discuss their Home Health Compare scores and provide you with a link to look at their scores in comparison to others. [www.homehealthcompare.gov](http://www.homehealthcompare.gov)

### **9. How will I know that the staff member coming to my home is who they say they are?**

**Answer:** The agency should be able to speak to employee Identification badges, uniforms, and scheduling. The agency should also be able to speak how staff are trained on these procedures when entering a patient's home.

### **10. In this pandemic; how do I know that the staff person entering my home will be protecting me from contracting COVID-19. What are your infection control procedures?**

**Answer:** The agency should be able to speak to their Infection control plan, how staff are trained on it, and what Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is used in the home setting. They should also be able to speak to their vaccination plan.

### **11. Will we have the same staff or team of caregivers every time?**

**Answer:** The agency should be able to speak to their scheduling process, and their ability to provide continuity of care.

### **12. What happens when staff does not show up when they are scheduled or are consistently late?**

**Answer:** The agency should be able to speak to their scheduling and notification process. They should be able to provide you with a printed schedule or all staff scheduled to provide cares and when they are coming.



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### FINANCES:

#### 1. How is my care in Home Health paid for?

**Answer:** The agency should be able to speak to your financial responsibility (if any) during or before the first visit. They should be able to discuss with you what your insurance will pay for and the approximate dollar amount that you would be responsible for. This discussion should also include any supplies or equipment that you would need and how that will be paid for.

*\*\*\* You should always contact your insurance company to understand your policy standards for coverage prior to any services being provided.\*\*\*\**

#### 2. What does homebound mean?

**Answer:** The agency should be able to inform you on the definition of "Homebound". You can also go to [www.Medicare.gov](http://www.Medicare.gov) for their definition or contact your insurance company.

#### Medicare considers you homebound if:

1. You need the help of another person or medical equipment such as crutches, a walker, or a wheelchair to leave your home, or your doctor believes that your health or illness could get worse if you leave your home
2. And, it is difficult for you to leave your home and you typically cannot do so. Your doctor must indicate in writing you are homebound.

### General

Can the agency meet any special needs I have such as language, or cultural preferences?