



# Town of Sudbury

## Board of Health Social Work Department

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### Things to Consider when Hiring Home Care Agencies

*Home care agencies can either supplement or replace care provided by family members to allow seniors to maintain their independence and stay in their own home as long as possible. If you are thinking about this option for a loved one, here are some things to consider to help you find the home care that's right for you and your family.*

- The first step is finding homecare that meets you or your loved one's needs.
  - The Seniors Blue Book is a free informational manual that is updated twice a year and illustrates home care options in addition to a variety of other senior services. Physical copies can be obtained at the library and senior center. Services can also be accessed by calling their free referral line at 978-443-8318 or online at <https://www.seniorsbluebook.com/>
  - Caregiving Metrowest has a variety of resources, including homecare, for those in need and caregivers. Information can be found online at <http://www.caregivingmetrowest.org/>
  - Bay Path Elder Services in Marlborough can assess for eligibility for subsidized homecare and can help to locate homecare resources. They can be reached at 508-573-7200 or online at <http://www.baypath.org/>
- Find out how the agency evaluates for the type of care that is needed. If you are dealing with a specific chronic illness (i.e. dementia), ask your provider to identify their caregivers that have experience with that specific illness. From there, interview multiple caregivers to determine your best fit among qualified applicants.
- When looking at an agency or provider, see if they can offer the 3R's: Resumes, References and Reviews. By reviewing work history, caregiver feedback, and references who have worked with this caregiver previously, you will be able to identify the most reliable, competent and experienced caregivers.
- Emergencies can happen and it is important for an agency to have back-up resources. Bad weather, car trouble and personal days should not get in the way of your loved one getting the care they need. It is important to understand the capabilities of your homecare provider and to understand their plan for back-up care. This is especially important for clients (i.e. those who suffer from dementia) who cannot be left alone.
- It is important to ask the agency how much the caregivers earn per hour in compensation. Caregivers have one of the highest turnover rates of any industry (upwards of 60%) mostly because their wages have not kept pace with inflation, which can lead to disruption in care if a caregiver leaves in search of higher wages.

- Find out the how the agency is licensed and if its caregivers are bonded and insured. Some states require that home care agencies are licensed through the state. Selecting a licensed home care agency assures that agency meets the minimum standards required by the state to protect clients and their families. The agency should also have both professional and general liability, bonding, and Worker's Compensation.
- Find out how an agency credentials their caregivers. Caregivers are typically licensed as Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA) or Home Health Aides by the state in which they work. In addition, agencies should supply customers with background checks, proof of insurance, references and a work history of the caregiver. Also inquire about ongoing supervision and training for caregivers in the agency.
- Inquire about the services provided and the cost of those services, as well as the minimum number of hours that can be provided per day/visit. Be mindful that 24/hr care may be less costly per hour than the hourly costs for fewer hours during the day. Keep in mind that it may be helpful to consider agencies with a variety of services in order to give you or your loved one the option to add services or hours if needs increase.
- Ask the agency how they keep track of caregivers' hours worked and services provided. Most providers will create a care plan listing activities and schedules for the caregiver on a weekly basis. Most also require their caregivers to keep detailed notes for both completed activities and changes in condition. This is particularly important if you are a remote family member trying to get care for your loved one.
- Find out the agency's procedures for dealing with issues and concerns that come up during care. For example, if a client and caregiver do not get along, you want to know what the agency's process is for matching and replacing a caregiver.

\*\*These tips have been adapted from [homecare.com](http://homecare.com), [caregivers.com](http://caregivers.com), and social worker's knowledge