



Home Care Umbrella Covers a Wide Range of Services

Home Care is presently one of the fastest growing divisions of health care due to the increase in the aging population and shorter hospital stays. Home Care can generally be broken up into a few main programs or types of agencies; however, there are various other programs that are available in the community to assist in keeping a patient safely in their home for as long as possible.

Certified Home Health Agencies are agencies that can bill Medicare, Medicaid and various insurance companies and provide intermittent short-term skilled care to patients in their homes. These services may include nursing, home health aides, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, social work and nutrition. Generally, a certified agency is ordered by the patient's physician when they are discharged from a hospital, subacute facility or nursing home if they are in need of skilled services.

Licensed Home Health Care Agencies are agencies that can bill Medicaid (through contractual agreement with the county), various insurances, other contractual agreements, or privately to the client. These agencies can provide more chronic long term care to patients in their homes. These services generally include nursing, home health aide or personal care aide services, and housekeeping or companion services.

Long Term Home Health Programs are managed by the Department of Social Services and are a Medicaid waiver program. They are also referred to as a "nursing home without walls" program. They may provide nursing, therapy, social work, nutrition and personal care services along with some waived services such as personal emergency response systems (PERS), nutrition services, transportation and social day care.

As mentioned, there are many other programs out in the community to assist individuals with living safely at home. Individuals may receive several services such as meals or transportation, have a personal emergency response system, attend a medical or social day care, or may even decide to move to a senior housing complex or assisted living building - all with the intentions of living in their own "home environment".

NY Connects Niagara County can provide information about various types of home care services and agencies in our community. Individuals in need of information regarding NY Connects Niagara County, home care agencies, or other available long term care services are encouraged to call (716) 438-3030 for assistance.

Marla Duerr is the Director of Mercy Home Care, McAuley Seton Home Care and Sisters Long Term, all under Catholic Health Home Care. Marla is also a member of the Niagara County Long Term Care Advisory Council. Catholic Health also offers a Personal Emergency Response system called Catholic Health Home Response. Additional information about Catholic Health Home Care is available by calling (716) 668-3511. The NY Connects column appears in the Union-Sun & Journal the last Saturday of each month. Submissions for topics or agency spotlights for future articles are welcome. To recommend a topic or make a suggestion, call 438-3030 or email nyconnects@niagaracounty.com.