

## **Benefits of Utilizing a Licensed Home Care Agency**

If you hire a caregiver on your own or use a placement agency (sometimes called a registry) you will be the employer of the caregiver. While the hourly rate you will pay is less than what a home care agency will charge, this is definitely a situation where you get what you pay for. In both the placement agency model and the direct employment model, the client is assuming all the employer responsibilities. When you utilize a licensed home care agency, the agency assumes these responsibilities.

- Payroll Taxes
  - The employer of the caregiver is required to pay the employer portion of payroll taxes for social security/Medicare. If you obtain your caregiver from a placement agency, you are the employer.
- Worker Related Injuries and Liabilities
  - If the caregiver is injured in the home, the client, as the employer, is responsible for the costs associated with the work injury. When the caregiver is employed by a licensed home care agency, the caregiver is covered under the agency's workers compensation and liability insurance.
- Abuse and Exploitation
  - Licensed home care agencies are required to conduct criminal background checks and to follow regulations on reporting suspected abuse. Privately employed and family caregivers can themselves be a source of abuse.
- Supervision of the Worker
  - Training, supervision, scheduling and quality assurance are functions provided by licensed home care.

## Benefits of Utilizing a Joint Commission Accredited Agency

The Joint Commission is the nation's premier accrediting body for health care providers. Not only does the Joint Commission assure that its accredited agencies meet high standards for quality of care, it is a recognized expert in determining what processes contribute to the best possible outcomes of care. A Joint Commission accredited organization has access to a wealth of resources and support for quality care and is held accountable for continuous compliance with recognized standards of care.

- The Joint Commission provides an accredited home care agency with a framework for quality.
  - Standards of care define what must be present to ensure quality care; related Elements of Performance are the specific actions that are required to achieve compliance with each standard.
  - Continuous Compliance activities require the accredited agency to review standards annually and develop and implement actions to maintain compliance.
  - On-Site Surveys are implemented unannounced so that trained surveyors can assess standards compliance in real time and in typical business conditions.
- Standards of Care cover these categories:
  - Environment of Care
  - Emergency Management
  - Human Resources
  - Information Management
  - Infection Prevention and Control
  - Leadership
  - Medication Management
  - National Patient Safety Goals
  - Provision of Care, Treatment and Services
  - Performance Improvement
  - Record of Care, Treatment and Services
  - Rights and Responsibility of Individual
- Examples of what this means to you:
  - Accredited agencies must develop, maintain and regularly test emergency procedures to help ensure care and safety for its clients during emergency situations.
  - Staff is trained on and utilizes proper infection prevention and management practices.
  - There is evidence that the mission and philosophy of the agency is clearly stated and understood at all levels of the organization.
  - Accredited agencies follow established protocols for medication management .
  - Processes support National Patient Safety Goals for falls risk reduction and oxygen use.
  - Appropriate client assessment, coordination of care and education interventions are a part of client care plans and documented in the client record.
  - Activities of the staff promote respect for patient rights and protection against abuse.

