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For many individuals and families, the realization a family member needs extended healthcare brings uncertainty and questions: “What if we choose the wrong person?” “What if mom/dad don’t like the provider?” “How do we know she’s getting the best care possible?”

Some people hear about experiences colleagues or friends have had with home healthcare providers. Others read articles in the paper, and many of us don’t know where to begin. There are simple guidelines you can follow when selecting a home healthcare provider. When you find a provider with whom your family member feels comfortable, *you* feel less anxiety and concern.

Four Factors for Quality Home Healthcare

No two home healthcare providers are alike, but there are four factors¹ that create excellent client and provider experiences. They are:

1. the expertise that the provider offers;
2. the ability of the provider to communicate with the individual, family, social workers, and colleagues;
3. the personal relationships that develop between the client and provider; and
4. attention to detail, such as schedules and treatments.

A provider that demonstrates that these four factors are consistently and thoughtfully delivered to clients increases the likelihood of a high-quality home healthcare experience.

Explore Your Options Carefully

Selecting the right home healthcare provider can provide peace of mind. Unfortunately, finding the right provider can get complicated or downright frustrating. Few people are trained - or even expect - to be placed in the position of finding a home healthcare provider. It’s not an intuitive process, and many providers introduce themselves in a blaze of glory only to follow with enormous failure in delivery. Avoid such disappointment by



taking some time to think about what you and your family need, and learn all you can about the organization that wants to provide you with home healthcare services.

Objective Assessment of Needs

The person who requires care and the caregiver may have different perceptions of the person’s requirements. An elder care nurse or social

worker can play an important role by providing an objective assessment of needs; facilitating communication between the caregiver, the person requiring care, and the family; and resolving issues that surround independence and concern about loved ones.

Take a Long-term View

Elder family members may require greater medical attention as they grow older; a home healthcare provider may be part of their lives for a long time if they remain at home. Therefore, you should consider two key questions: Does the agency offer continuity of care and nurse supervision? Does the agency have strong roots in the community that ensure sustainability?

By selecting a home healthcare provider with a strong reputation and the ability to provide multiple levels of care, your family member or loved one will receive continuity of quality care, see a familiar face at the door, and experience depth of caring that will provide you with peace of mind and confidence in the choices you make.

¹Laferriere, R. (1993) Client satisfaction with home health care nursing, *Journal of Community Health Nursing* 10(2), 67-76

VNA Personal Services provides long-term care and planning designed to help seniors age in place safely, comfortably, and with as much independence as possible. Our team of Nurses, Licensed Nursing Assistants and Homemakers can help with personal care, housekeeping, laundry, meal preparation, errands, transportation to appointments/lab and/or recreational activities, medication management, supervision, and companionship. By securing services through the VNA Personal Service Department you are investing in high quality care found throughout the Elliot system of care. We can be reached at 663-HOME (4663).

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