

Caregiving for Seniors

By

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What is caregiving?

Caregiving means caring for others, whether friends or relatives, who have health problems or disabilities and need help. Caregivers provide many kinds of help to care receivers, from grocery shopping to helping with daily tasks such as bathing, dressing, and eating. Most people who need help from caregivers are elderly.

About one fourth of American families are caring for an older family member, an adult child with disabilities, or a friend.

According to recent surveys, more than 7 million persons are informal caregivers to older adults. Caregivers include spouses, adult children, and other relatives and friends. Other surveys found that almost 26 million family caregivers provide care to adults (aged 18+) with a disability or chronic illness, and 5 million informal caregivers provide care for older adults aged 50+ with dementia.

Studies show that more than half of caregivers are women. Care receivers are about half women and half men.

The average amount of time that caregivers spend on caregiving is about 20 hours per week. Even more time is required when the care receiver has multiple disabilities.

Caring for a person with disabilities can be physically demanding, especially for older caregivers, who make up half of all caregivers. One third of all caregivers describe their own health as fair to poor.

Fortunately there are a big number of different resources available for family caregivers. There are governmental and social organizations and private care companies specialized in different areas of Home Health Care.

The most important is to find what kind of help is suitable for your special situation and how to find these resources.

How can I find out about caregiving resources in my community?

There are resources with staff that can help you figure out whether and what kinds of assistance you and your care receiver may need.

The local Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is one of the first resources you should contact when help is needed caring for an older person. In New Jersey every county has one AAAs, which serve local communities, older residents, and their families. Local AAAs are listed

in the city or county government sections of the telephone directory under "Aging" or "Social Services."

You can also call the National Eldercare Locator, a toll-free service funded by the Administration on Aging (AoA), at 800-677-1116. The Eldercare Locator is also available online at www.eldercare.gov.

If your family member has a limited income, he or she may be eligible for AAA services including homemaker home health aide services, transportation, home-delivered meals, chore and home repair as well as legal assistance. These government-funded services are often targeted to those most in need. While there are no income criteria for many services, sometimes you may have more service options if you can pay for private help. AAAs can direct you to other sources of help for older persons with limited incomes such as subsidized housing, food stamps, Supplemental Security Income, and Medicaid.

Supportive services for the person needing care can include both in-home and community-based services, such as:

- Transportation
- Meals
- Personal and in-home care services
- Home health care
- Cleaning and yard work services
- Home modification
- Senior centers
- Respite services including adult day care.

There are a number of possible pitfalls in selecting private in-home health care provider. You may avoid majority of these problems if you will use the following checklist.

Tips how properly select professional in-home care services

When selecting a home care agency, there are some very important questions that you should ask of your prospective services provider:

1. Is the Care Provider a:
 - Home Care Agency,
 - Employment Agency,
 - Registry/Broker,
 - Independent Contractor?

Home care agencies accept responsibility for screening, training, insuring, and supervising their staff. The other models do not.

2. How long has the agency been providing private duty home care?
3. How does the agency screen and select caregivers prior to an assignment? Do they hire independent contractors?
4. Are references checked and criminal background and drug screens conducted on all employees?
5. Is there a licensed health care professional, who along with the client and family develops an individualized plan of care? How are emergencies handled after normal business hours?
6. How often are caregiver services monitored, and does the agency employ a full time registered nurse or other qualified professional to make regular visits to the client's home?

7. Does the agency adhere to state and federal guidelines in their employment practices, such as: withholding appropriate taxes, providing workers' compensation and other benefits?
8. Does the agency manage all payroll and employee related matters?

Need more information?

Ask Dr. Vadim Cherdak, Certified Senior Adviser for comprehensive in-depth discussion of your needs and to create a plan of care. Dr Cherdak also provide lectures and seminars on different topics related to Caregiving for public organizations and congregations.



Affinity Care provides professional Home Health Care for Seniors and Disabled. Call us with your questions: **732-790-2796** or e-mail: sc@AffinityCareNJ.com.

Visit our web site www.AffinityCareNJ.com to check resources available for seniors.

Affinity constantly searches, trains and employs the best caregivers in Central NJ.