

Important Questions "A to Z" to Ask a Potential In-Home Care Provider !

When selecting an In-Home Care Provider for a loved one, there are many very important questions that should be asked to assure that the proper provider is selected to meet the patients care needs. Based on **Always-Care's experience SINCE 1974**, we offer the following questions to assist you, because for most persons this is a totally new responsibility and challenge for them. You may use these questions as follows to assist you in your decision:

Key: *Questions are in RED* - Blue Text in [Brackets] is Always-Care ® Answers to Question

A. *Is the Home Care Provider;*

01. A "Home Care" Agency Licensed in Georgia?

[Yes, Always-Care ® is licensed by the State of Georgia as a "Private Home Care Provider"]

02. An Employment Agency? [No]

03. A Registry/Broker? [No]

04. A Independent Contractor? [No]

05. A Home Health Agency (HHA) (Medicare Agency) [No]

[In Georgia, if the patient is eligible for Medicare Services which are intermittent services {not continuing care}, Medicare Services will be provided by a Home Health Agency (HHA), or Hospice Agency. Always-Care ® Nursing Service which is a State of Georgia Licensed, Private Home Care Provider (PHCP), and will try to tailor its services around other services in order to try to achieve the most cost effective care.]

Note: Insurance carriers are not allowed to discriminate as to a (PHCP) vs. (HHA) if the care/services to be provided are Non Medicare, as long as they are covered by the insurance policy.

B. *Does the agency accept responsibility for screening, training, insuring and supervising their Care Giver staff?*

[Yes- All Always-Care ® Caregivers are (W2/Taxes Withheld) Employees, and are not Independent Contractors.] Note: Normally 02., 03, & 04, above do not.

C. *Does the Provider, have literature which describes its services/care which it will send to client with out obligation, and a web site with additional information ?*

[Yes - Always-Care ® will also have a Nurse make a No Charge-No Obligation visit to the Patient's home for pre-service consultation, if appropriate for our services.]

D. *How long has the agency been providing home care services IN YOUR AREA ?*

[Always-Care ® Has served Thousands of Georgia Clients - SINCE 1974.]

E. *How does the agency screen/select care givers?*

[Always-Care Nurse Supervisors, do a Personal Interview/Orientation and also do a Skills Check, Reference Checks, Criminal Records Check, plus even though not required by state rules, we do a Drug Screen, {we are a State of Georgia Certified Drug Free Workplace}].

F. *Does the provider use "independent contractors" to provide care?*

[Always-Care ® hires only Care Givers who are it's W-2 Employees.]

G. *Is there Licensed NURSE Supervision?*

[Yes, there are Registered Nurses (RN's) on Staff, who make supervisory visits to the client to assure that care is proper and safe. While this is not required in all cases under GA Licensing Rules, it is Always-Care® policy that all in home nursing and personal care is Nurse Supervised. Plus all staff in AC office are Licensed Nurses. When you call us, you will talk with a Nurse.]

H. *How are client complaints handled?*

[According to the Patient's Bill of Rights which is furnished in writing to all clients, and by phone and/or visit with the Client/Patient and the Always-Care Nurse Supervisor]

I. *Are the care givers covered with insurance?*

[Always-Care® care givers are W-2 Employees are covered with malpractice/liability insurance, workers compensation insurance, unemployment insurance, and are bonded.]

J. *What procedures are in place for Client/Caregiver for after office hours Emergencies?*

[The Always-Care Phone is answered 24/7. A Licensed Nurse is On-Call during non office hours]

K. *How is the Client (Patient) care determined?*

[The Always-Care® RN along with the Client/Patient and/or the Client's responsible party and the Client's Physician as appropriate will develop a written Service Plan and/or Plan Of Treatment to be followed by the Always-Care®, Care Givers - This can be via phone, and/or personal in-home visit as time permits. Also routine, and special in-home visits are made and care is changed as necessary, when the client's condition changes and/or when the Nurse Supervisor makes routine visits to the client as per state regulations.]

L. *Is care/services provided documented?*

[Always-Care® care givers record services and/or care provided along with all time worked, on Always-Care forms, which are signed by the Client/Client's, Responsible Party a copy of which is left in the home. These form are turned in weekly to Always-Care®, for billing and payroll purposes.]

M. *What are Fees for Services?*

[All Fees and billing procedures are disclosed in the Always-Care written Service Agreement for care, which must be signed by the Client/Client's Responsible Party. Fees are by the Hour, or by the Day (Live-In) based on the level of care and other factors.] See the link on this site under FAQ's [ALWAYS-CARE® FEES For Services - WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THEM?](#)

N. *What about Client/Patient Confidentiality?*

[Always-Care is HIPAA {Federal Privacy Regulations} Compliant.]
See on this site under: [NOTICE OF PRIVACY PRACTICES](#)

O. *What are providers Billing & Payroll Policies & Procedures?*

[Always-Care bills and pays weekly. If Always-Care accepts an assignment of insurance policy benefits, Always-Care will bill Client's insurance, or other payor such as in the case of Workers Compensation Insurance. Always-Care also pays it caregiver employees weekly, and withholds all appropriate state and federal taxes.]

P. Does the Provider accept Medicare/Medicaid?

[No, however this is important only if the Client is covered under these Federal/State Programs. {Note: In Georgia, Medicare is provided by Home Health Agencies - (HHA)'s and Always-Care is a Private Care Agency and has a State License which is called a "Private Home Care Provider" (PHCP) License}. If the client/patient is Medicare Eligible the services as provided by HHA's are limited and are intermittent under these programs. Therefore, Always-Care will work with the Client to tailor it's continuing care, • Part Time • Full Time or • Live-In Services, around and in coordination with other care, so that there is no duplications of services and unnecessary expense to the client. Note: Insurance carriers are not allowed to discriminate as to a PHCP vs HHA if the care/services to be provided are Non Medicare, as long as they are covered by the insurance policy.

Q. Can the provider give you names of other clients that it has served?

[Under HIPAA, {Federal Privacy Regulations} this is not allowed, unless the provider obtains "specific written permission" from the Client/Patient to do so, and many clients wish to maintain their privacy. Therefore if anyone does this they are NOT HIPAA Compliant, and are Breaking The law, unless they have the client's permission. However we can tell you about the type of clients we have serviced, but since we have been doing this since 1974, we have serviced almost all types of patients.] See an "Actual Client Testimonial" on the first page of this website.

R. Does Provider have funding sources available to the client for care?

[No, unless it is a Federal/State funded program, for low income patients such as CCSP which Always-Care participates in. Any client insurance will be evaluated and considered on an individual basis.]

S. Who owns the provider?

[Always-Care of Georgia Inc, d/b/a Always-Care ®Nursing Service is a Georgia Corporation, which is owned and operated by members of the same local "Gruensfelder" family, SINCE 1974. Their corporate philosophy is stated as; "Taking Care Of Yours...As If They Were Ours" ®]

T. What information is shown on the providers invoice?

[Always-Care provides a "very detailed" invoice showing the name(s) & skill levels of all care givers, the dates & hours worked, the billed rates, and payment terms. Billing and Paying of Care Givers is based on the Time Slip signed by the client for the care giver a copy of which is left in the home so the client, can compare it to the invoice received.]

U. Does provider have a Quality Assurance Plan?

[YES - Always-Care provides for written comments from Clients, phone calls, and by Routine Nurse Supervisor visits to the patient]

V. Who assures the Quality of Care of the provider?

[Always-Care hires full time Nurse Supervisors (RN's & LPN's) Also the State of Georgia Inspects Always-Care because it is licensed by the state]

W. How does provider select a care giver for client?

[Because all Always-Care care givers are W2 Employees, who have gone through a personal interview and screening process Always-Care is able to match as closely as possible the skills and qualification of the care giver to the needs of the patient. If for some reason the personality (we cant test for that) does not mesh with that of the client, the Always-Care Nurse supervisor can assign a different care giver.]

X. Does the provider require ongoing training of its Care Givers?

[Yes all Always-Care, care givers must complete annual in-service education requirements]

Y. What are the risk of having service by the provider?

[If the provider is new to the area, and is other than a licensed agency, using ONLY W2 Employee Care Givers, such as Always-Care, there are numerous risk which should be considered, and evaluated by your own financial/tax, insurance, and legal advisors. Cheep in Healthcare is not always the Best Medicine]

Z. What "amount of service" are you contracted for with the provider if you use them?

[Always-Care requires only that you contact us, and if you agree that the services can be changed verbally, you may do so via phone. Our minimum service requirements, will be explained to you and are in our written service agreement. If you no longer wish service, you must contact us at least 2 hours or earlier before the care giver is scheduled to arrive. If the care giver can be stopped from reporting, you are not billed for the minimum service. At Always-Care we want you to be satisfied, so we feel that we do not need to "lock you in" for a set amount of service above out minimum requirements if the patient does not want or need it.]

We know this is a lot of information, but we hope you found at least some of it helpful.

Also, Thank You - for considering to use Always-Care Nursing Service

We encourage you to ask about anything else that you wish to know about Always-Care ® Nursing Service and our care. Call our office at 404 26 NURSE (404 266 8773) during normal business hours M-F, 9A -5p and talk with a Live Local Nurse, or after hours if you need immediate service.