Life Changing Care

HOME CARE THAT KNOWS THE HARD PART.

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A Home Care Evaluation Guide for Estate and Medicaid Planning Clients

> A reference for families beginning to plan for in-home care in the Cleveland metro area. Prepared for distribution by elder law and estate planning professionals.

SECTION 01

When to Start the Conversation

Most families do not think about home care until a fall, a diagnosis, or a hospital discharge forces the decision. By that point, options narrow and costs rise. Families who begin the conversation early, before there is a crisis, consistently find better care, more providers to choose from, and a smoother transition for everyone involved.

As an attorney, you are often the first professional a family trusts with the full picture of their situation. That position gives you the opportunity to open the door on home care before it becomes urgent. A referral at the planning stage is one of the most practical things you can do for a client.

This guide is designed to help your clients ask the right questions when they begin evaluating home care providers.

SECTION 02

Five Questions to Ask Any Home Care Agency

Give this list to your client before they meet with any agency. A strong agency will welcome every one of these questions.

- [ ] **Does every caregiver hold a credential that verifies direct care competency?**
  The Direct Service Provider (DSP) credential is Ohio's recognized standard for hands-on caregivers. It covers personal care, safety, communication, and working with people who have complex needs. Ask for the answer in writing, not just verbally.

- [ ] **Is the agency licensed in Ohio, and what does that license cover?**
  Ohio licenses home care agencies through the Ohio Department of Health. Licensure sets minimum standards for operations, background checks, and care planning. Ask to see the current license and ask which specific services fall under it.

- [ ] **How does the agency handle behavioral or dementia-related situations?**
  Not every agency is prepared for this. Ask whether caregivers have specific training for memory conditions, behavioral changes, and communication challenges. Ask for a real example of how the agency has managed a difficult situation at home.

- [ ] **What is the supervisor-to-caregiver ratio, and how often does a supervisor visit the home?**
  Regular supervisory visits signal that the agency is watching the quality of care, not just scheduling shifts. Find out whether supervisors visit on a set schedule or only when a problem is reported.

- [ ] **How quickly can care begin, and what happens when a caregiver is unexpectedly unavailable?**
  Ask about backup coverage specifically. A good agency has a bench. Find out whether the backup caregiver is someone already familiar with the client or a stranger sent at the last hour.

SECTION 03

A Note on Timing and the Planning Process

SECTION 04

Red Flags to Watch For

If a client encounters any of the following, advise them to pause before committing to any agreement.

- No verifiable credentials for caregivers, or credentials that cannot be confirmed in writing

Families who establish home care early create a documented record of care: who provided it, what was provided, and when. That record can be a useful reference point later in the planning process.

This is not legal or financial advice, and every client's situation is different. The point is simply that a care record, once it exists, exists. Waiting until a crisis means starting from zero.

Encourage your clients to speak with a home care agency while they still have the time to ask good questions, tour facilities if needed, and make a considered choice. The planning window is an asset. It does not stay open indefinitely.

- No clear supervisory structure or no scheduled supervisory visits to the home
- Informal agreements handled through verbal arrangements rather than a written care plan and service agreement
- No clear billing documentation or difficulty explaining what is included in the rate
- No backup caregiver plan or vague answers about coverage when a caregiver cannot come
- Pressure to begin care immediately before a written agreement is signed
- No current Ohio Department of Health license or reluctance to share it

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Serving Cuyahoga, Lake, Lorain, Medina, and Geauga Counties

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All caregivers at Life Changing Care carry the Direct Service Provider (DSP) credential. 10 active caregivers. 10 on standby.

Life Changing Care is a private pay home care agency serving the greater Cleveland area.