



## How to Choose a Private Duty Home Care Provider

Private duty home care is generally considered to be services, skilled and para-professional, delivered in the home to individuals who pay privately for the services. Skilled care services are provided by a licensed professional, such as a nurse. Para-professional care services are provided by an individual trained to provide care which normally do not require a professional license, such as assistance with bathing, grooming, meal preparation, and shopping.

Choosing a private duty company is an important decision. Make inquiries of several companies in order to have a comparison. Cost should not be the only factor you consider. Missouri law does not have a provision for private duty companies to be licensed by the state and therefore you may find that companies you are considering have no home care license.

There are numerous benefits of using a company rather than a private individual to provide your care. Private duty companies train workers, the company pays worker's compensation, state and federal taxes, provides bonds and perhaps, most importantly, a company will have a caregiver plan to assure that a backup worker is available to help meet your care needs. Private individuals often do not have these options.

Below are a series of questions that you may want to use as a guide as you choose your private duty home care provider.

# A Guide to Choosing a Private Duty Company

## **About the company:**

- Is the company a member of a state or national association representing home care providers, such as the Missouri Alliance for Home Care?
- Does the company bond and insure caregivers?
- Does the company's Worker's Compensation Insurance cover all caregivers in the event they are injured on the job?
- Does the company deduct local, state, federal and social security taxes from the caregiver's wages?
- Is the company available on-call 24 hours a day 7 days a week 365 days a year?

## **About the caregivers:**

- What are the company's screening procedures for hiring caregivers? Do they perform background screenings, drug screenings, reference checks, is experience required, proof of car insurance, or other pre-employment screenings?
- Does the company regularly re-screen its employees?
- Are ongoing training opportunities available for the caregivers?
- Once assigned is there regular supervision and evaluation of the caregiver's performance? Who conducts these evaluations?
- Do the caregivers carry photo identification?

## **About the care:**

- Will there be an initial in-home evaluation and assessment? Conducted by whom?
- Will there be an individualized care plan in the home for the caregivers to follow?
- Is there a method for the caregivers to document the care provided?
- If you are dissatisfied with your caregiver, may you request a replacement?
- Will a back-up worker be provided if your regular caregiver cannot work his/her shift?
- What levels of care are available? 24-hour care, overnight or live-in care, 2 hour visits, minimum number of hours requirement?
- Is transportation provided? In the caregiver's car or in the client's car? Is adequate insurance coverage in place?

## **Terms of service:**

- Is there a contract required for services?
- What is the cancellation policy?
- What is the cost for care? Are there different charges/costs for care provided on weekends, at night or on holidays?
- Is there a mileage charge that the customer must pay for the worker's drive to and from the home?
- How are you billed and how frequently?
- Do they take credit cards or accept long term care insurance?