

Choosing a Home Health Provider

After the hospital has given you a list of options for Home Health Nursing providers, how do you choose between them? Below is a suggested list of questions you might ask during your interview to get the information you need to help you decide. These are only suggested questions, if you have any other questions for the provider, be sure to ask!

- Will my insurance cover the cost of nursing?
- How long has the agency been serving this area?
- How does the agency find and choose their staff? What qualifications does the agency require? Do they perform background checks?
- How does the agency train nurses? Will they be trained in the specific needs of my child?
- Will the nurses have pediatric experience?
- Will the nurse train with my family in the hospital before discharge?
- How many nurses will rotate each week?
- How is the schedule of nursing hours decided? Do we have the final say?
- Do you have nurses that can cover the shifts we need?
- Does the agency meet specific needs we might have (language or cultural preferences)?
- If there is a problem, will the nurse consult with my child's medical team? How does the nurse communicate with my child's medical team? Can the nurse come with us to medical appointments?
- How is the nurse expected to handle an emergency?
- Will the nurse have a supervisor that oversees their work?
- If there is a concern is there someone we can call? Is there someone to call 24 hours?
- What is the procedure for getting a replacement nurse?
- What happens if a nurse calls and cannot come in? Does the agency guarantee shift coverage?
- Will back-up nurses be trained for my child? How many?
- Does the agency provide a Patients Bill of Rights?

Interviewing a Nurse

After you've chosen the Home Health Provider, you will have the opportunity to interview nurses for your child. This may be your first experience not only having a nurse in your home, but also managing staff. Below are some topics you might consider as you make your list of interview questions.

- Motivation for working as a home health nurse
- Length of time working for this agency
- Experience with children
- Experience with your child's condition
- Local experience – do they live locally?
- Shift availability
- Smoking preference
- Questions such as:
 - Asking strengths & weaknesses
 - Describe an example of an emergency and his/her actions
 - What kinds of things cause them stress

Choosing a Durable Medical Equipment Provider

Similar to the Home Health Nursing, the hospital may provide you a list of Durable Medical Equipment providers. This may be more limited due to regional availability and your child's specific needs. Even so, you may want to ask some or all of the following questions to learn more about the company and how they can serve your needs. Again, if you have any other questions, make sure you ask!

- Will my insurance cover the service? Will there be any out-of-pocket expenses?
- When will the equipment be delivered to our home?
- Is there 24 hour service on the equipment? What happens if there is a problem "after hours"?
- How do you handle replacement supplies? Do we need to call to have deliveries?
- Are there any other supplies this DME carries that our child might need? Diapers? Formula? Assistive or mobility devices?