



STAGES *of* SENIOR CARE

Your Step-by-Step Guide to Making the Best Decisions

by Paul and Lori Hogan

Chapter 7: What to Ask When Choosing Nonmedical Care

So it's time to consider in-home care. Because this may be the first departure from complete independence or family care, the decisions you make are very important and may color your relationship with Mom and how she sees future care options. You need to make informed decisions about the service you secure and the caregiver assigned to your mother.

Use these questions to get answers as you proceed:

Questions to Ask Yourself

- Does Mom want to stay home?
- Have I discussed this option with Mom?
- Is she open to accepting a caregiver?
- How comfortable will Mom be with a stranger in the house?
- To what extent have you involved your siblings in this decision?
- What kind of nonmedical help does Mom need?
 - Meal preparation?
 - Light housekeeping?
 - Limited local transportation to doctors and the grocery store?
 - Reminders to take medications?
 - Companionship?
- Does she need medical support to stay at home? If so, what types of medical services does she need? (Depending on the type and level of care, you may need a different service or to secure supplemental in-home medical service.)
 - Administration of medications?
 - Respiratory assistance?
 - IV drug administration?
- How many hours of service will Mom need?
- How much can we afford to pay for in-home care?





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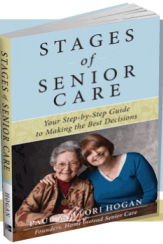
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- What will determine how much we are willing to pay?
 - Price of service (hourly rate)?
 - Total cost (for a month of service)?
 - Mom's living preference? (Sometimes home care can be more expensive than assisted living, for example.)

Questions to Ask a Nonmedical Service Provider

- Is the caregiver an agency employee? (This is the arrangement we recommend.)
- Or is the caregiver an agency contract employee? (Make sure you understand the implications.)
- Or is the caregiver working on her own/freelancing? (Be wary.)
- Have the caregivers been trained?
 - By whom?
 - What is the extent of training?
 - Does this training include special dementia or Alzheimer's training?
 - Does the agency train *all* its caregivers? Are they all trained to the same level?
- Have the agency's caregivers passed criminal background checks?
- Has the agency secured personal references on all caregivers?
- Can you check references on the agency and the caregiver assigned to you?
- Does the agency offer backup/replacement caregivers?
- How much control will you have in selecting the caregivers?
- What restrictions (if any) apply to the services provided?
 - Minimum hours of service per day?
 - Weight restrictions? How much weight will your caregiver be allowed to lift?
- How much flexibility will you have in setting a schedule for services?





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- How much notice does the agency need to begin or cancel service?
- What is the cost of service?
 - Is there a minimum number of hours of service per visit/week/month?
 - Are there special overnight rates?
- Does the agency maintain a quality assurance or supervisory program?
- Does the agency provide backup caregivers if your regular caregiver is unable to work?

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