

# HOME CARE – QUESTIONS YOU NEED TO ASK!



**W**hen a home care supplier is chosen, people often fail to do the necessary research, as the care might be urgently needed or because price determines the choice of supplier. As home care is a specialised and unique service and caregivers have to adapt to the familiar environment of the patient's home, it is essential to ask certain questions so as to be empowered to choose the best supplier for your needs and that your budget allows.

There are various questions you need to ask before choosing a home care supplier:

- A home care supplier must have a home nursing practice (PR) number, otherwise the caregiver's service hours cannot be claimed from your medical scheme
- A home care supplier must have good relationships with the different medical schemes and know what can be claimed for and how, as not all services are paid for by all medical schemes

- A home care supplier's service record must be checked as there are various fly-by-night suppliers that don't necessarily have the required experience or accreditation
- Services must follow the prescriptions of treating doctors and also accommodate the individual needs of a patient
- The evaluation or assessment that is performed by a registered nurse – before commencement of the service – must be the basis of the formulation and implementation of an individual care plan
- Care plans must adhere to science-based clinical guidelines
- The home care supplier must follow a patient-centred approach that takes into account the patients' and family's preferences, needs and values, as well as guiding clinical decisions
- The home care supplier supports a multi-disciplinary professional team approach that looks after all the patient's needs as physical, psychological and social circumstances can often complicate care
- A 24-hour emergency line is essential
- The caregiver should at least have received accredited Quality Council for Trades & Occupations (QCTO) training
- South African Nursing Council (SANC) registration is required when the caregiver is a registered nurse or an enrolled nursing assistant
- A criminal check must have been performed
- Make sure that the caregiver/s earn a minimum wage and that the company is registered and fulfils its SARS obligations. Overhead costs of a registered company can sometimes contribute to marginally higher service costs, but it is important that these aspects are properly researched.

A responsible supplier will ensure its caregivers are trained on an ongoing basis as it is important for the patient to know that you are receiving the best possible care. A multi-disciplinary team ensures that all needs can be met and that the individual care plan will keep the patients' best interests at heart.

Although home care is a relatively new concept in South Africa, Medwell SA's incorporated companies had already entered this field in 1996. •

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