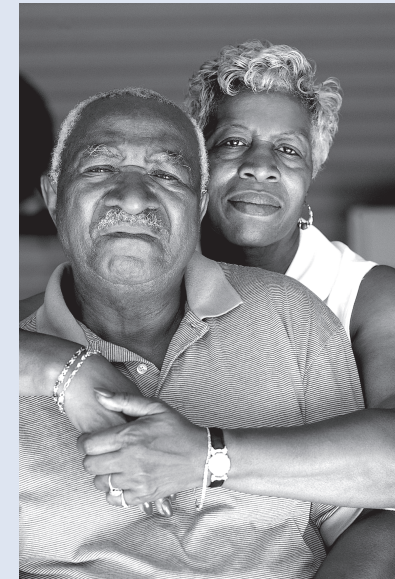
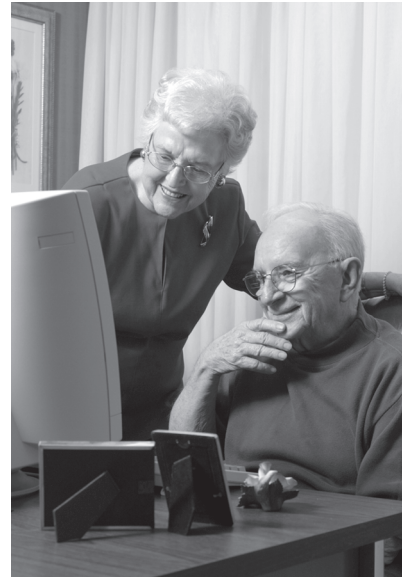


Getting Started With Medicare's Home Health Compare Web Site

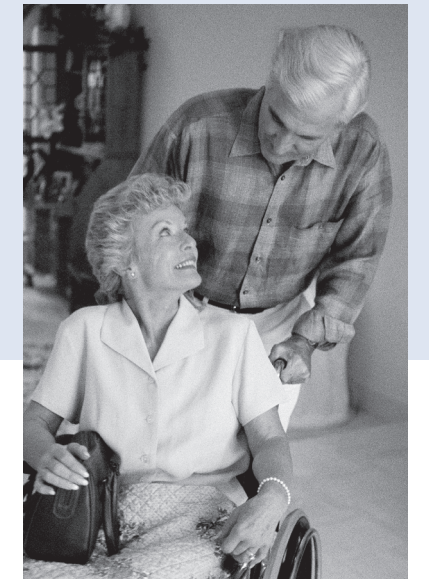
Getting information about the quality of local home health agencies is easy. First, know what services you (or your loved one) are likely to need. Then:

1. Go to **www.medicare.gov**
2. Select *Home Health Compare*
3. Follow the step-by-step instructions on the Web site to find information about agencies in your area

As you review the results of your search, look for agencies that perform well in the services you need most. When you call the agencies, use the checklist in this brochure to guide you in learning more about the services they offer.



If you are recovering from an illness, wound, surgery, stroke, or other disabling event, your doctor may prescribe home health care.



Compare care.

How to find home health care that's right for you

www.medicare.gov
1-800-MEDICARE
(1-800-633-4227)
TTY/TDD 1-877-486-2048



There's No Place Like Home

After my mother's surgery, she required special care. Home health care was the solution prescribed by her doctor to get skilled nursing care in the comfort of home.

I wanted to compare local agencies to see which provided the best quality of care. I searched on Medicare's Home Health Compare at www.medicare.gov on the Web. It reports quality of care measures for home health agencies. Then, I called the home health agencies to ask questions to be sure they could give her the care she needed.



What Is Home Health Care?

Home health care provides skilled nursing care, physical and occupational therapy, speech-language therapy, and medical social services in the comfort of home.

Home health care is prescribed by your doctor and is provided by a variety of health care professionals. Medicare covers home health care that is temporary and part-time.

Home health professionals may teach you, or your caregivers, how to care for wounds and manage medication. The goal is to help you reach and keep your best physical, mental and social well-being.

Home Health Care: What Medicare Covers

Medicare will help cover home health care costs for people with Medicare who meet the following four conditions:

- Your doctor must decide you need medical care at home, and make a plan for your care at home.
- You must need at least one of the following: intermittent skilled nursing care, physical therapy, speech-language therapy, or continue to need occupational therapy.
- You must be homebound. This means that you are normally unable to leave home unassisted. Being homebound means that leaving home is a major effort. When you

leave home, it must be to get medical care, or for short, infrequent nonmedical reasons such as a trip to get a haircut, to attend religious services, or adult day care.

- The Medicare program must approve the home health agency caring for you.

For more information about these services and Medicare's coverage of home health care, read the free publication from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, *Medicare and Home Health Care*, available on the Web at www.medicare.gov or by calling 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227).

Compare Care: Medicare's Information About Quality

To help you make an informed decision, Medicare provides quality of care information for all Medicare-certified home health agencies. You can compare how well agencies in your area help patients get better in the following measures:

- bathing
- dressing themselves
- getting to and from the toilet
- mobility
- getting in and out of bed
- taking oral medicines correctly
- level of confusion
- pain when moving around
- admission rate to the hospital
- the need for urgent, unplanned care

For this information, visit:

www.medicare.gov
(select Home Health Compare)
or call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227)
TTY/TDD 1-877-486-2048

Things To Ask Home Health Agencies

Quality of care can differ among home health agencies. To make the best decision, talk to your family, health care provider, or discharge planner. Call agencies and ask questions about their services. **Some services may not be covered by Medicare.** Ask whether the agency:

- offers the specific health care services you need, such as nursing or therapy
- has staff available to provide the hours of care your doctor ordered, and can start when you need them
- meets your special needs, such as language or cultural preferences
- offers the personal care services you need, such as help bathing and dressing
- offers the support services you need, such as help with laundry, cooking, or shopping
- can help you arrange for additional services, such as Meals on Wheels
- has staff available at night and on weekends for emergencies
- is Medicare-certified
- will explain what your insurance covers, and what you must pay out-of-pocket
- does staff background checks
- has letters from satisfied patients, family members, and doctors