



# Consumer Guide

## HOW TO CHOOSE AN IN-HOME CARE AGENCY

When you want to continue living at home, but need some extra assistance, in-home care is a great option. It helps you maintain independence while making sure your needs are fully met. Finding the right in-home care agency can sometimes feel overwhelming, so we've developed the following questions to help you get started. Ask these questions during your first conversation with any in-home care agency. Below each question, you'll find an explanation of why that question is important. Plus, you'll also find Valley VNA Senior Services' answers, so you can see how we compare to other agencies.

### **QUESTIONS TO ASK:**

#### **HOW LONG HAS YOUR AGENCY BEEN IN BUSINESS, AND WHAT'S YOUR COMMITMENT TO THE COMMUNITY?**

Why ask this? It's critical to find out what experience the agency has in providing in-home care. It's also important to remember that agencies affiliated with national chains may use your fees to support out-of-state headquarters.

**VALLEY VNA SENIOR SERVICES' ANSWER:** We're an independent, non-profit agency established in 1908. We've been helping our local community for almost 100 years, and our revenues are used to support our Community Outreach Programs (blood pressure clinics, flu shot clinics, foot care clinics, and meals-on-wheels, etc.).

#### **WHAT RANGES OF SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE?**

Why ask this? You'll want to be sure an agency can meet your needs both now and in the future, if your care requirements change.

**VALLEY VNA SENIOR SERVICES' ANSWER:** We offer a broad range of services, and you can choose those you need. As your needs change, we'll change our in-home care plan to match. In addition, we can present you priority placement options to move into one of our assisted living residences.

#### **WHO ARE YOUR CAREGIVERS? DO YOU HAVE REGISTERED NURSES ON STAFF?**

Why ask this? For your own safety, it's important to know who is coming into YOUR home and caring for you.

Registered nurses on staff provide extra quality assurance and act as a resource if caregivers spot medical symptoms or other hazards.

**VALLEY VNA SENIOR SERVICES' ANSWER:** We look for experienced caregivers, and we always try to match caregiver/client personalities for a good fit. All caregivers go through an in-depth orientation, followed by ongoing education by RNs and area specialists. Many have completed the "Dementia Specialist Training Program" taught by the Alzheimer's Association of Greater Wisconsin. Our Care Consultants are all RNs—they'll develop a one-on-one care plan, supervise caregiver services and conduct follow-up house calls. The expertise of our RNs allows us to offer a high level of care. Before they ever step into your home, all employees go through a rigorous screening process, including background and reference checks, and they are bonded and insured through our agency.



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## HOW DOES THE AGENCY HANDLE PROBLEM-SOLVING?

Why ask this? It's important to know how problems will be solved. Formal quality control policies and procedures should be in place, and the agency should be able to clearly explain them to you.

VALLEY VNA SENIOR SERVICES' ANSWER: We have 24-hour procedures in place. If questions or problems arise during regular business hours Mon.- Fri. (8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.), you'll call your Senior Care Consultant (RN). After-hours, our management staff is on-call to speak with you and resolve issues.

## HOW ARE FEES DETERMINED?

Why ask this? Fees are related to the type of care given and management costs, so it's important to know what you're getting.

VALLEY VNA SENIOR SERVICES' ANSWER: As a non-profit agency, we employ a "medical model" of care provision. That means our fees are based on the costs of employment for our one-on-one caregivers and RNs.

## CAN WE SET UP A TIME TO MEET AND DISCUSS DETAILS OF MY CARE NEEDS?

Why ask this? It's important that you meet an agency representative in person, in your home, to make sure you feel comfortable with the agency and its policies.

VALLEY VNA SENIOR SERVICES' ANSWER: One of our Client Care Coordinators (RN) will schedule an in-home consultation with you to go over your specific needs and discuss the fees associated with those services.

**Be sure an agency can answer these questions to your satisfaction. If not, continue your search until you find one that does.**

Valley VNA Senior Services' In-Home caregivers are available for as little as 15-minute visits, or as much as 24-hour care, 7 days a week.

**For more information or a free in-home consultation,  
please call (920) 727-5555 (Fox Cities) or (920) 426-1931 (Oshkosh).**

