



AGING TODAY

Home Care vs. Home Health: What is the Difference?



By Bob Roth, Managing Partner of Cypress HomeCare Solutions

There is a common misunderstanding by many that home care and home health care are one and the same. The difference is that a home care (In Home Personal Care) agency provides Caregivers who assist with activities of daily living, while home health is a medical service providing treatment and care for illnesses and injuries at home.

The options for care and comfort are increasing as our aging population grows, and both home care and home health care agencies provide services that assist individuals and families with aging successfully at home. Unfortunately, the differences between these services and many others is not known or fully understood until the need arises.

Home care and home health both encourage individuals to remain in the comfort of home as they age, but there are key differences you need to know so that you can understand you and your loved ones needs when the time comes.

HOME CARE

The goal of home care is to assist and empower an individual and their family to remain independent at home. Home care providers accomplish this through care that is focused on the individual's unique needs. Non-medical caregivers provide assistance with activities of daily living, which can include meal preparation, transportation, running errands, light housekeeping, medication reminders and simply companionship

The amount of care is directed by the care recipient, family members or trusted advisor. In addition, the length of service is determined solely by these individuals, which provides additional flexibility for the family. Also, those who receive care are not required to be homebound, nor must they need medical eligibility or a Physician order.

Medicare is not a payment option for home care

Rather, recipients of home care services have the option of paying privately, through a long term care insurance policy or through Medicaid, or in Arizona the Arizona Long Term Care System (ALTCS) following a comprehensive application process.

HOME HEALTH

The goal of home health is to treat an illness or injury that will aid in regaining a person's strength, independence and self-sufficiency. Some of the services home health provides are physical therapy, occupational therapy, wound care, speech therapy, IV support, injections and the monitoring of serious illnesses. Home health is more medically oriented, where clinicians (nurses, therapists, home health aides) are providing care (nursing, therapies, etc.) for the aging, infirmed and those people that are recovering from injuries, illnesses, or surgery.

Unlike home care, home health requires a Physician order and that the care recipient must be homebound. In addition, the length of service for home health is determined by the individual's diagnosis and need, with visits occurring intermittently as needed. Finally, Medicare is an acceptable payment for home health services, along with private insurance

HOME CARE AND HOME HEALTH WORKING TOGETHER

Home care and home health can also work together to care for individuals and their families. For instance, one of our clients at Cypress HomeCare Solutions who had been receiving our home care services for more than seven years, nearly 5 years ago the client began needing additional, medical-related care. By introducing home health services, this client was able to avoid moving to a skilled nursing facility. The familiar surroundings of home provide the client, who suffered from Alzheimer's disease, the ability to maintain a frame of reference while he is receiving both home care and home health care services. By joining forces, the home care agency and home health provider can

create an environment that promotes comfort and ensures peace of mind.

The client recently passed away and it is believed that as a result of the personalized care that the client received he was able to live longer and have a better quality of life.

Bottom line, services provided in the home offer individuals and their families added comfort and reassurance that they and their loved ones can remain in their most comfortable surroundings. Val Halamandaris, president of the National Association of Home Care and Hospice, confirms that “the intervention of services at home makes it possible for people to live out their lives fully.” By understanding that home care and home health are available and knowing the differences in what they provide, it will be that much easier to be prepared for the future.

Home Care

- The goal of home care is to assist and empower an individual and their family to remain independent at home
- Home care provides assistance with activities of daily living, including meal preparation, transportation, errands, light housekeeping, medication reminders and concierge services
- Home care is provided hourly or per visit
- Care recipients are not required to be homebound
- No medical eligibility is required
- Physician order is not required
- Length of service is determined by the individual or their family
- Payment options: private pay, long term care insurance and Medicaid (ALTCS)

Home Health

- The goal of home health is to treat an illness or injury that will aid in regaining a person’s strength, independence and self-sufficiency
- Home health services include physical therapy, occupational therapy, wound care, speech therapy, IV support, injections and the monitoring of serious illnesses
- Medical care is provided intermittently as needed
- Care recipients must be homebound
- Medical eligibility is required
- Physician order and Physician signed Plan of Care are required
- Length of service is determined by an individual’s diagnosis and need
- Payment options: Medicare and private insurance

This column was published in [Lovin’ Life After 50](#) and [Jewish News](#) as Cypress’ monthly contribution.