



Where to Turn for Help with Your Care

Sometimes, despite the best efforts by agency staff and administration, you may experience problems or have concerns about the care you receive in your home. Here are some steps you can take to help resolve those issues.

Express Your Concerns

- Discuss your concerns with your caregiver and/or their supervisor. Be as specific as you can about the problems you're having. Think of the 5 W's – who, what, when, where, and why. Try to have information about as many of those W's as possible when making your complaint.
 - For example, instead of saying, "I don't like how she gives me a shower," you might say, "I have told Mary that I don't like getting my hair wet during my shower, but the last four times my hair has gotten wet because she lets the water run over my head."
- Ask a family member or friend to be there with you for this conversation if it would make you feel more comfortable.
- State what you would like to have happen and ask how the problem will be resolved to your satisfaction.
 - For example, "When Mary gives me a shower, I would like her to make sure I have on a shower cap, direct the spray of water so it doesn't hit my head or face, and give me a washcloth so that I can wash my face."
- Know your rights based on your contract with the caregiver or agency, and/or based on state law.
 - New Mexico state regulations for home health agencies can be found here: <http://dhi.health.state.nm.us/eLibrary/hflcregs/07.028.0002.pdf> or by calling (800) 752-8649.
- Go up the chain of command if you are working with an agency. Talk with the supervisor, and then the manager.

If You Need Outside Help

While it's always best to try to resolve any problems directly with the caregiver or agency, if a situation arises where you need additional help, there are organizations and people you can turn to.

- **Adult Protective Services** investigates abuse, neglect and exploitation of vulnerable older adults. To report suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation call (505) 841-4502 or toll free at (866) 654-3219.
- **Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs)** coordinate and often provide a range of services to assist older adults and frequently younger persons with disabilities maintain their independence and dignity. To find your local AAA, go to <http://www.n4a.org/about-n4a/?fa=aaa-title-VI>.
- **Care Managers or Service Coordinators** assist consumers in getting the care and services they need and can help resolve a problem. To get a list of private geriatric care managers, go to www.caremanager.org or call (520) 881-8008. If Medicaid or a state-funded program pays for your services, you will most likely have an assigned case manager.
- **Centers for Independent Living (CILs)** are organizations that provide services to maximize the independence of individuals with disabilities. To learn more about the services they provide, and locate a CIL near you, go to <http://www.virtualcil.net/cils/query-iandr.php?state=nm> or call (505) 226-5022.
- **Disability Rights New Mexico** works to address concerns about care and services, rights, access to services, and more for people with disabilities both in residential and community settings. To contact Disability Rights New Mexico, go to <http://www.drn timer.org/> or call (505) 256-3100.
- The **New Mexico Department of Health** is the entity that regulates health care agencies in New Mexico. The Department inspects these agencies and also investigates complaints. Contact information for the Department can be found at <http://nmhealth.org/> or by calling (800) 752-8649.