



## HOW TO ADDRESS CONCERNS WITH A HOME HEALTH OR HOME CARE AGENCY

Despite the best efforts of home health or home care agencies, sometimes issues arise. Below are some helpful tips on how you can solve these problems.

### Communication Tips

- **Ask open-ended questions**

These are questions that cannot be answered with “yes” or “no.” These questions build rapport and help you get more information.

- **Listen**

Restate in your own words what someone has said. This shows that you are truly listening and trying to understand the other person.

- **Utilize “we” whenever possible**

By using “we,” this sends a message that you want to work with the agency to ensure quality care.

- **Write down any problems or incidents that occur**

Be sure to include the date, time, person(s) involvement and what action(s) were taken following the incident.

### Steps You Can Take to Solve a Problem

#### Working with the agency

- Consider asking a family member, friend or someone in your circle of support for help resolving your issue.
- Talk to the worker involved in the incident. Document your conversation.
- Speak with the agency staff person you were told to contact with any questions or concerns.
- If this does not resolve the issue, then go to someone with more responsibility. Speak to:
  - ◊ A supervisor

- ◊ The administrator of the agency
- ◊ The person to whom the administrator reports
- Use the agency's grievance policy.
  - ◊ Submit a written document description of your problem or complaint to the agency. Include information about who is involved, what is happening, and when and where it is happening.
  - ◊ Keep a copy for your records.
- Ask for a meeting.
  - ◊ Include family, friends and/or others who will advocate on your behalf.
  - ◊ Be sure that the person who can fix the problem is at that meeting.

### Going outside the Agency

#### If the agency is licensed:

- *State Licensing and Certification Agency.* This agency monitors or regulates licensed agencies. You can work to get your problem corrected by filing a complaint.
- *Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program.* Ombudsmen work to resolve complaints on behalf of long-term care residents; they can answer questions, give suggestions, offer assistance and support, or address issues you may have. In some states, ombudsmen also serve home care consumers. Contact your state long-term care ombudsman program to find out if your ombudsman program provides home care advocacy.
- *Citizen Advocacy Group.* Citizen Advocacy Groups are concerned citizens who advocate on behalf of quality long-term services and supports in their locality, state or region.

To locate the State Ombudsman, program representative, State Licensing and Certification Agency, or Citizen Advocacy Group in your state, go to [http://theconsumervoice.org/get\\_help](http://theconsumervoice.org/get_help).

- **Care/case managers**  
Care or case managers 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](http://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.

If the agency is not licensed:

- Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program
  - Citizen Advocacy Group
  - Care/case managers
- If these individuals or groups cannot help, they may be able to direct you to organizations that can. See above for contact information.*

**No matter what, be persistent and don't give up!**

### **Additional Resources**

- For more in-depth information on these and other related topics, see the *Piecing Together Quality Long-Term Care Guide* produced by the Consumer Voice <http://theconsumervoice.org/product/piecing-together-quality-long-term-care-a-consumers-guide-to-choices-and-advocacy>.

**For more information and resources on getting quality care  
go to, [www.theconsumervoice.org](http://www.theconsumervoice.org)**

*National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care (formerly NCCNHR) is a nonprofit organization founded in 1975 by Elma L. Holder to protect the rights, safety and dignity of American's long-term care residents.*