



## Where to Turn For Help with Your Home Care

Sometimes, despite the best efforts by agency staff/administration or your provider, 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 provider 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 if it would make you feel more comfortable.
- State what you would like to have happen and ask how the problem would 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, regulations or protocols.
  - **Vermont** state regulations for home health agencies can be found here: <http://dail.vermont.gov/dail-statutes/statutes-dlp-documents/regs-designation-operation-home-health-agencies> or by calling (802) 871-3065.
- Go up the chain of command if you are working with an agency. Talk with the supervisor, and then the manager.

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## If You Need Outside Help

While it's always best to try to resolve any problems directly with the worker or agency, there are places you can go if a situation arises in which you need additional help.

- **Adult Protective Services** investigates abuse, neglect and exploitation of vulnerable older adults. To report suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation, call 1-800-564-1612 or (802) 871-3317, or fax: (802) 871-3318. You can also report online at: <http://www.dlp.vermont.gov/abuse-reporting-form/abuse-reporting-form-1>.
- **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](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.
- **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, call 1-800-639-1522 or (802) 229-0501 or click here: <http://www.virtualcil.net/cils/query-iandr.php?state=vt>.
- The **Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living (DAAIL)** is the entity that regulates home health agencies in Vermont. The Department inspects these agencies and also investigates complaints. Contact information for the Department can be found at <http://dail.vermont.gov/> or by calling (802) 871-3065.
- **Disability Rights Vermont** (formerly known as Protection & Advocacy in Vermont) 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 Vermont, call 1-800-834-7890 or (802) 229-1355 or click here: [www.disabilityrightsvt.org](http://www.disabilityrightsvt.org).
- **State/Local ombudsmen** advocate for individuals who receive long-term care services and supports in facilities and in the community through the Choices for Care Program. To talk to an ombudsman if you have questions or concerns about your care or services, call 1-800-889-2047 or go to <http://www.ltombudsman.org/ombudsman/vermont>.