

Ask The Key Questions To Find The Best Home Health Aides For Aging Parents

Like the rest of the nation, Nassau County's number of aging adults is increasing rapidly. Many families here are turning to home health care aides, allowing older parents to stay in their own residences instead of moving to nursing homes. But how do you select an aide that will provide the necessary quality care?

The number of 65+ adults in Nassau County rose 22 percent in 2007-17, from 196,254 adults to 239,660, according to a recent report by Center For An Urban Future. The same time period saw a 52 percent increase in our 85+ population (25,970 vs. 39,573).

This surge is fueling a boom in home health care jobs in the area. Last year, more home health care aide jobs were added in New York City than the rest of the United States combined. The trend will likely continue, says the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, which predicts a 41 percent increase in home health and personal care aide jobs from 2016 to 2026.

This demand has drawn a flood of people into the job market for home health aides. But some aides are more qualified than others. In fact, much more. In order to select the right home aide, you must



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start with the right agency. There are numerous home health aide agencies you can choose from—finding the right one requires doing some homework.

Asking some key questions and doing a little research in advance can decrease the chance of receiving an aide that is unqualified or improperly trained. Here are some important questions to ask the agency you choose:

How are aides recruited? What are your hiring requirements? Are they found through ads in a newspaper? On Craigslist? Sometimes it's their first job and the aides don't have the right training.

What are the screening requirements? Are employees drug tested? Do you conduct criminal background checks on all applicants?

Is the home health care service insured? Are their employees covered in their workplace, which could be your parent's home?

How are aides' assignments determined? Are their employees matched based on the skill sets needed for specific patients?

What is your training program? How are your aides trained? A qualified aide should know many important tasks, including basic catheter care and assisting with toilet needs. Safe transfer techniques from a bed to a chair are essential and an aide should also be familiar with turning and positioning immobile patients to prevent bedsores.

How are aides supervised? How are they evaluated on the care being provided? A check-in phone call at a set time of day is not enough. The service should make unscheduled in-home visits to check on the situation. Ask

if the agency spot checks the aides it hires. Video cameras have drawbacks in these situations since you can't watch a 24-hour video stream.

Are the aides trained in CPR, fall protocol and other emergency measures? All aides need to know how to handle accidents or medical crises in the clients' homes.

A lot of those questions are common sense. But I know from personal experience how stressful it can be to find safe home health care for your parents or loved ones, particularly when it is needed urgently or suddenly. Asking these questions will help ensure that you've found the best and most risk-free care. If you later suspect poor care from an aide that injures your loved one, know that an attorney can help protect your loved ones' rights in this type of situation.

—*John Dalli is a partner of Dalli & Marnio LLP, a Mineola-based law firm that has helped families recover millions of dollars in cases of neglect at nursing homes or other elder care facilities as a result of under-staffing since 1999. For more information, visit www.dallimarino.com.*

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

At the end of this season's session, New York is celebrating the passage of the most stringent climate legislation in the nation.

Negotiated with Governor Andrew Cuomo by Long Island Senator Todd Kaminsky and Long Island Assembly member Steve Englebright, the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act provides a path to an 85 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions sector wide by 2050, including a carbon-free electric grid by 2040.

We can't solve the climate

crisis on our own. Let us lead by example.

—*Peggy Lyons*

SAVING LIVES

Cancer is the second leading cause of death in New York State. Early detection of cancer can save lives by finding cancer early when treatment is most likely to be successful and before some cancers even start. The New York State Cancer Services Program (CSP) provides breast, cervical and colorectal cancer screenings at no cost to uninsured women and men. Health outcomes are greatly improved when breast, cervical and colorectal

cancers are found early. Every April is National Cancer Control month and the CSP is looking to decrease the cancer burden in the state.

Since its inception in October 2018, the CSP of Nassau County has provided uninsured and underinsured individuals with 880 cancer screenings resulting in six diagnoses and enrolling four people in the New York State Medicaid Cancer Treatment program. These are people who otherwise might not have received these critical services. These people could be your family members, friends, neighbors and coworkers.

Thankfully, many

previously uninsured state residents have been able to get insurance and coverage for cancer screenings through the Affordable Care Act. However, there still remain many uninsured individuals living in our community. The CSP stands ready to serve, but we need the help of our community.

Help spread the word about the CSP in our community by encouraging uninsured men and women to call 718-470-4165 to promote critical cancer screening services to those who need them.

—*Sara Parise*

Director of CSP of Nassau County, Long Island Jewish Medical Center

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