

Ensuring Quality in Home Care

With so many patients receiving home care and hospice services, ensuring quality of care is vitally important. Fortunately, a number of measures of quality are available to consumers.

Organized home care and hospice programs are regulated by both the state and federal governments. Licensed home health agencies must undergo an initial licensure survey through the California Department of Health Services. Medicare-certified programs are surveyed annually against the Medicare Conditions of Participation. Home infusion pharmacies are regulated by the Board of Pharmacy.

Effective July 2001, home medical equipment companies are required to be licensed by the Department of Health Services, Food and Drug Branch.

Non-medical home care provided through private and home care aide organizations does not have the same regulatory requirements as licensed home health agencies. However, home care aide organizations train, supervise and assume liability for their caregivers. To ensure reliable care, companies can send out substitutes for unavailable caregivers, and thereby facilitate dependable, secure care.

Many providers seek voluntary accreditation through organizations such as Accreditation Commission for Home Care (ACHC); Community Health Accreditation Program (CHAP); Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO); and National Association for Home Care, Home Care Aide Services Accreditation Program.

As employers, home care organizations also comply with all federal and state OSHA requirements, as well as other applicable business laws and regulations.