



HOUSTON COUNTY

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What is Home Care?

Home care provides medical and health-related services and assistance with day-to-day activities to people in their home. It can be used to provide short-term care for people moving from a hospital or nursing home back to their home, or it can also be used to provide continuing care to people with ongoing needs. Home care services may also be provided outside the person's home when normal life activities take them away from home.

What is the reason for home health care?

The need for home health care has grown for many reasons. Many treatments that could once be done in the hospital can now be done at home. Home health is usually less expensive and can often be just as effective as care in a hospital or skilled nursing facility. And most clients and their families prefer to stay at home rather than a hospital or a nursing home.

What is the goal of home health care?

The goal is to provide treatment for an illness or injury. Home health care helps you get better, regain your independence, and become as self-sufficient as possible. If you need long-term home health care the goal is to maintain your highest level of ability or health, and help you learn to live with your illness or disability while at home.

Where can I find out information about a home health agency?

Information about home health agencies in your area is provided by Medicare under "[Home Health Compare](#)".

Will Medicare pay for home care services?

Medicare only pays for home health services that are given by a home health agency that meets Medicare standards and is approved (certified) by Medicare. [Click here to view criteria for Medicare coverage.](#)

Who can call in with a referral?

We will accept referrals from clients, family members, social workers, mental health workers, physicians, nursing homes, hospitals, neighbors, friends, anyone who is concerned about someone in the community.

What Home Care Services Can Houston County Public Health Provide?

Houston County Public Health is certified by Medicare and Medical Assistance to provide home health care services

- **Skilled Nursing**
- **Home Health Aide**
- **Homemaking**
- **Physical Therapy (contracted)**

Skilled Nursing

Our skilled nursing care is provided by registered nurses who come from varied backgrounds and have a wide range of clinical expertise. Our nurses provide the highest quality nursing care and work with your physician to customize a plan of care specifically for you. Skilled nursing care includes dressing changes, irrigations, injections, and blood pressure, heart rate and respiration evaluation. Nurses also educate and teach clients and their family members how to care for acute and chronic health problems and how to manage stress. Our nursing staff orientates and supervises the home health aides and provides that link between the client and their physician. We can also help you access supplies, services and funding for healthcare services in your home.

Home Health Aide/Homemaker

A Home Health Aide/Homemaker (HHA/HM) has received at least 91 hours of special training and is certified to help you through a time of critical illness or special need. It is often the care provided by the aide that enables patients to stay at home, surrounded by their support systems. The HHA/HM is supervised by a Registered Nurse. The HHA/HM is pledged to respect the privacy of the family and to keep in strictest confidence all family affairs. As a member of the health team, the HHA/HM is working for you on an hourly basis.

HHA Duties:

- Personal Cares, including bath, partial bath, dressing, nail care, hair care, skin care and oral hygiene
- Urinary catheter care
- Assistance with bowel and bladder control
- Application of TED stockings

- Blood sugar check
- Vital sign measurement
- Simple Dressing Change
- Assistance with transfers and ambulation
- Assistance with exercise regime including ROM
- Assist with meal planning and preparation, including modified diets such as diabetic or low sodium diets
- Assist with feeding
- Reality orientation and safety check
- Medication reminders
- Homemaking as it pertains to personal care
- Household chores in the presence of technically sophisticated medical equipment or episodes of acute illness or infectious disease
- Household chores when the care requires the prevention of exposure to infectious disease or containment of infectious disease

Homemaker Duties:

- Floor care: sweeping, mopping
- Vacuuming carpets
- Dusting
- Bed making
- Laundry (Client provides washer, dryer or lines, or cost for coin laundry including mileage to/from laundry)
- Grocery shopping
- General light housekeeping tasks

Excluded Duties:

- Heavy cleaning
- Washing walls/ceilings
- Washing windows
- Moving furniture
- Defrosting freezer

- Yard work
- Shoveling snow
- Washing automobile
- Transportation
- Cleaning up after pets and litter boxes

What happens after someone calls with a referral?

After receiving a referral the nurse speaks with the physician to obtain orders to do an initial assessment. The nurse will go to the person's home and meet with the person and family if they desire and discuss our home care services and options. Together the nurse and client and family decide on a plan of care, which is then discussed with their physician. The plan of care includes what kind of services are needed, how often, and the length of the visit. If a client needs to be screened for a wavier program or needs medical equipment the nurse will arrange for those services.

Will insurance pay for home care services?

Insurance companies vary with coverage. The best way to find out coverage is to contact your representative.

What if I improve and need less care, or what if I need more care?

Your plan of care will be tailored to your needs. You are the decision maker when it comes to what services you want. Your nurse can suggest or refer you to other sources that are available in the community. If you no longer require services they may be discontinued and started again if the need arises.

Who can I contact about receiving home care services from Houston County Public Health?

Contact the [Home Care Coordinator](#) at 507-725-5810.

Can I chose another home care agency and still use public assistance to pay for the services?

Yes. Click *here* to see a listing of other agencies serving Houston County seniors.