

HOME HEALTH CARE

Home health care professionals enable patients to receive medical attention in the comfort and convenience of their home. Many services can be provided in the home that once required a visit to the physician's office or hospital. Services are as individualized as the patient being helped and range from simple injections to complete care for a bedridden, seriously ill patient. Depending on your needs, you might receive home health services once or you might see various health care providers daily. The goal of Home Health care is to allow you to recover in the comfort and convenience of your own home with the important advantage of skilled medical treatment.

Home health agencies can usually provide registered nurses, nursing assistants, and physical therapists. Some will also have speech therapists, occupational therapists, and social workers. These professionals can provide valuable linkage between the physician and the patient. To ensure that you receive the very best care possible, our staff will coordinate your home health needs with the appropriate providers. Your doctor at LRCC always supervises your medical care.

Medicare mandates certain criteria that a patient must meet before being referred to Home Health. You should be aware of these Medicare rules as many private insurance policies follow Medicare guidelines. To qualify, the patient must:

- Require intermittent skilled nursing care or physical/speech or occupational therapy. There must be a medically predictable recurring need for skilled services, those services reasonable and necessary to the treatment of an illness or injury, which must be performed by or under the direct supervision of a registered nurse or therapist if the safety of the patient is to be assured and the medically desired result achieved.
- Be homebound, confined to the home due to illness or injury. Homebound patients need not be bedridden, but leaving their residence must require considerable effort or supportive devices such as a cane, wheelchair, or the help of another person. Infrequent absences from home are allowed primarily for medical care.
- Be under a physician's care, who in turn, provides the home health agency with written orders for home care.
- Receive services from a certified home health agency.

Hospice criteria is somewhat different, in that no homebound status is required. To qualify for Hospice, the patient must:

- Elect Hospice benefit.
- Have a terminal illness certified by a physician.
- Select a Hospice program that is Medicare certified.

Many patients will never need home health care, but those who do find that it provides great relief and comfort as well as good care. They know there is a professional involved in their care that can be contacted any time day or night to make an assessment and relay information to the physician. The physician knows that this professional will provide up to date information on the patient's condition and assist in providing complete care to each person. If you feel you or your loved one would benefit from medical services provided in the home, please ask your physician for a home health referral.