



HELP US CHOOSE HOME

Support
Home
Delivered
Health Care

HelpUsChooseHome.com

HELP US CHOOSE HOME

When:

- **Disease or disability** deprives our parents of the ability to provide their own personal care.
- **We have a child born prematurely** or with congenital problems.
- **We develop heart disease** that must be controlled through medications or monitored following surgery.
- **We develop breathing problems** resulting from asthma, COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) or other conditions so severe that we become totally dependent on a machine for our every breath.
- **Someone we love develops Alzheimer's disease**, can no longer recognize us and requires total care.
- **We or someone we love is recovering from a stroke** and needs therapy to learn to talk and walk again.
- **We or a loved one develops cancer** and needs help in managing medications, which may include intravenous chemotherapy, or requires assistance in recuperating from surgery.
- **We or someone we love develops diabetes** and needs help in managing the disease.
- **We or someone we love develops joint disease** and needs help in recovering after knee, hip or back surgery.
- **We or someone we love develops HIV/AIDS** or other infectious diseases that require supportive or nursing services.
- **We or a loved one struggles with multiple chronic diseases** and joins the 12 percent of Americans responsible for 75 percent of U.S. health care costs.



Pediatric Home Care

Children 18 years and younger are covered primarily under private insurance plans or Medicaid. But nearly 9 million children have no health care coverage at all. They lack access to the many benefits that home health and home care services offer, including:

- **Care for premature, low-birth-weight children** and those whose hearts or lungs are not fully developed.
- **Care for children born with congenital problems**, such as Down syndrome, Crohn's disease and juvenile diabetes.
- **Care for ventilator-dependent children.**
- **Protective support for fragile school children** with seizure or respiratory disorders.
- **Home intravenous chemotherapy for children** diagnosed with cancer.
- **Physical therapy that maximizes functioning for children** with disabilities.
- **Care for high-risk expectant mothers** and well-baby care.
- **Childhood inoculations against diseases** like smallpox, polio, hepatitis and the flu.
- **Post-hospital care for children who have sustained burns** or undergone surgery, thereby allowing earlier discharge and a quicker return to their home, siblings, parents, and friends.



Caring for Those with Disabilities

Medicaid is a jointly funded federal-state health care program for indigents. All Medicaid programs offer home health services, but personal and supportive home care services are offered at the state's discretion. As a result, more than half of home care is funded privately by patients and their families. Latest estimates indicate that 36 million non-elderly adults have no health care coverage, so they are denied the life-extending and affirming services home care offers:

- **Personal care services** that include help rising from bed and assistance with bathing, dressing and preparing meals.
- **Physical therapy, transportation and other assistance** to the working disabled.
- **Therapy services to accident victims.**
- **Remote telemonitoring to ensure safe functioning** of the severely disabled.
- **Psychiatric and psychological support** and medication management for individuals with mental or cognitive disorders.
- **Respiratory therapy for severe breathing problems** resulting from conditions such as asthma, emphysema and COPD.



Home Care for Older Americans

Medicare provides coverage for only 3.5 million of the 12 million Americans who receive home care annually. Its focus is highly medical, so a physician must order the service, patients must need skilled nursing care or physical therapy, and they must be confined to home in order to qualify. This care is usually of short duration – most Medicare home health patients are discharged after a single 60-day episode of care. If a patient's care needs are greater – if they are too sick or require care more than six days a week — they are deemed ineligible for home health and the many advantages it offers:



- **Assistance with Controlling Heart Disease:** Monitoring, patient self-care education, lifestyle management, smoking cessation, medication management and other services help extend and improve quality of life.
- **Fighting Cancer:** Post-surgical and treatment support includes monitoring of vital signs, compliance with medication regimes and administration of physician-ordered IV chemotherapy drugs at home. These protocols have resulted in fewer adverse reactions, besides reducing mortality and morbidity rates.
- **Combating Diabetes:** Close monitoring of blood sugar and diet, patient education and proper insulin administration can help older adults avoid amputation, blindness, heart disease and death.
- **Minimizing the Effect of Lung Disease:** Loss of lung elasticity comes naturally with age. But a history of smoking or job-related exposure to toxins exacerbates the condition. This results in greater susceptibility to colds, influenza and other respiratory ailments, such as asthma. Supplemental oxygen, supplied by home care agencies for some hours of the day or on a continuous basis, can extend life for individuals with these problems.
- **Stroke Rehabilitation:** Most stroke victims survive, but some suffer loss of memory, decreased mental acuity, paralysis and impaired ability to walk and speak. In many cases, speech therapy can help clients regain their ability to communicate verbally. And physical therapy can help restore their ability to ambulate and remain in the comfort of their homes.
- **Managing ALS, Alzheimer's and MS:** Trained home care professionals work with and help support patients and their families who suffer from these and similar diseases.
- **Kidney and Urological Diseases:** Home care nurses tend patients with kidney or urological infections, and provide skilled services and follow-up care after surgery.
- **Joint Diseases:** Major joint surgery is now commonplace; post-surgical discharge to home is cost-effective for Medicare and results in excellent recovery rates.



“Home care has been everything to me. Without their help I don’t know where I would be.”

Patient Helen Favier of Granite City, Illinois pictured here with Mary Jo Drake, RN, Anderson Home Health, Maryville, Illinois.

- **Controlling Infectious Diseases:** Senior citizens are at high risk for influenza. Home health agencies help address the problem by administering flu vaccines to older Americans on an annual basis.
- **Co-morbid Conditions:** Many seniors suffer from several maladies at once. Home care agencies serve as effective care coordination managers by fostering patient self-care education, monitoring compliance with orders from multiple physicians and helping to guard against adverse medication reactions. Co-ordination of care by home care agencies can help maintain maximum health and functioning among senior citizens, enhancing quality of life for them and those they love.



FAMILIES WANT TO CHOOSE HOME

Nine out of 10 people say they prefer home care over institutional care.

Home care helps keep people independent, helps keep families together and combines efficiency and compassion with the latest in health care technology. **That's why we must work together to prevent the more than \$13 billion in Medicare home health cuts requested in the President's 2010 budget and applicable over the next five years.**

Home care is high quality and comprehensive

Home care is consumer focused, offering personalized care in the comfort of patients' homes. Most home care providers offer state-of-the-art services, such as home IV chemotherapy for cancer patients and telehealth that allows caregivers to monitor patients' conditions remotely around the clock. This type of care is especially important for patients with chronic conditions, such as diabetes and congestive heart failure.

Home care has a role in all stages of health care

Home care touches all stages of life. It can be post-acute care following a hospital stay or a serious illness, long-term care for an individual with a disability or an elderly person in declining health, hourly shift care for a medically fragile infant on a ventilator, and end-of-life care for a terminally ill patient. Home care cost-effectively incorporates technology to better serve patients and empower consumers to take an active role in their own health care.

Home care leads to speedier recoveries

Data suggests that patients recover more quickly at home because they are not susceptible to life-threatening infections and other complications that occur in 20 percent of hospital patients. The incidence of adverse reactions in home care is roughly one percent.

Home care makes good economic sense

Home care is less expensive than institutional care. Home care has a proven track record in managing chronic conditions and reducing costly emergency room visits and hospital readmissions. The average home care visit costs \$150; the average hospital visit costs \$1,500 a day. Preventive home health care saves Medicare and Medicaid millions of dollars a year. **That's why the proposed cuts to Medicare must be rejected.** As our nation deals with the worst economic crisis in decades and millions of lost jobs, **home care is providing thousands of new jobs** for American workers. From 1993 to 2007, home care employment grew an average of 5.4 percent annually. The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that **many of the most needed jobs now and in the future will be in home care** (including the top two: personal care aides and home health aides) to meet the needs of the 78 million Baby Boomers who are just beginning to reach the age of qualification for Medicare and Social Security.

Home care is supported by Democrats and Republicans, liberals and conservatives.

Home care is one issue that historically has brought together Republicans and Democrats, liberals and conservatives. It's advocates include President Ronald Reagan and President Barack Obama, President Bill Clinton and President George Bush, Senator Ted Kennedy and Senator Orrin Hatch, and former Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole and his Democratic counterpart Senator Tom Daschle.

Home Care is at the Hub of the Health Care Continuum



WHY WE CHOOSE HOME

"I have the highest respect for them, especially for the nurses, aides and therapists, who devote their lives to caring for people with disabilities, the infirm and dying Americans. There are few more noble professions."

— President Barack Obama

"To all the compassionate, accomplished people who came and helped my mom through her recovery from a broken arm, I thank you ever so much."

— Family Member, Montana

"Over the past two years, Dad had really gone downhill and needed assistance with his health needs. Your staff of skilled, caring nurses made a difference in his life and also helped Mom cope with all the new areas of caregiving for which she was going to be responsible. Your careful explanation of medications and procedures encouraged her to be brave and do what was necessary to keep Dad at home as long as she was able."

— Family Member, Ohio

"Home care is a combination of compassion and efficiency. It is less expensive than institutional care...but at the same time it is a more caring, human, intimate experience, and therefore it has a greater human element...it's a big mistake not to try to maximize it and find ways to give people the home care option over either nursing homes, hospitals or other institutions."

— Former Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives Newt Gingrich (R-GA)

"Losing Mom was the hardest thing we have had to go through, but being able to have her at home, where she wanted to be, was only accomplished by you all."

— Family Member, Ohio

"The home health aide was "an absolute godsend for our family. Our son has a brain injury...he has problems [like] remembering when to eat and to watch out for danger...[She] allows me the peace of mind and freedom to go and do my errands."

— Mother, Kentucky

"Home health care agencies do such a wonderful job in this country helping people to be able to remain at home and allowing them to receive services."

— U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI)
Chair, Democratic Steering and Outreach Committee



“Between your nurses, aide and speech therapist you brought Mom from fragmented, chaotic thinking to being able to function....She socializes...she converses again...she knows her grandchildren. What a gift!”

— Family Member, Texas

“Home care has specifically been proven to be a compassionate, cost-effective means of delivering essential health services.”

— U.S. Senator Susan Collins (R-ME)

“[Mom] lived for over 10 years with COPD and osteoarthritis that was very debilitating. Without the...VNA team....she would have had to go into a nursing home....She lived and died with dignity, and our family could not have done it without the help of home care and hospice.”

— Daughter, Massachusetts

“Heath care at home...is something we need more of, not less of. Let us make a commitment to preventive and long-term care. Let us encourage home care as an alternative to nursing homes and give folks a little help to have their parents there.”

— Former President Bill Clinton

“We need incentives to...keep people in home health care settings...It’s dramatically less expensive than long term care.”

— U.S. Senator John McCain (R-AZ)

“Home care increasingly is one of the basic building blocks in the developing system of long-term care. On both economic and recuperative bases, home health care will continue to grow as an essential service for individuals, for families and for the community as a whole.”

— U.S. Senator Olympia Snowe (R-ME)

“Medicaid covers long-term care, but only for low-income families. And Medicare only pays for care that is connected to a hospital discharge....our health care system must cover these vital services...[and] we should promote home-based care, which most people prefer, instead of the institutional care that we emphasize now.”

—Former U.S. Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle (D-SD)



HELP US CHOOSE HOME

What You Can Do:

- **Go to www.helpuschoosehome.com and press “Take Action.”** You will be linked to a page that allows you to send an e-mail or compose a letter to your Senators and Representatives.
- **Call your Senators and Representatives.** Call the Capitol switchboard at 202-224-3121 or 202-225-3121 and ask to be connected to your Senators or Representatives. It will help if you have their names handy. Once connected to the office, ask to talk to the staff member that handles Medicare issues. Tell them that you oppose cuts to the Medicare home health benefit.
- **Go to www.nahc.org,** the website of the National Association for Home Care & Hospice, hit “Tell it to Congress” and compose an e-mail urging members of Congress to reject efforts to cut Medicare’s home health benefit by \$13 billion over the next five years; instead they should expand access to these life-saving home health services.
- **Make plans to visit the local offices of your Senators and Representatives in their home district.** Be sure to read materials on the websites mentioned above so that you are prepared.
- **Share positive home care and hospice experiences with your local newspapers and television stations.** Tell them what you think about plans to cut \$13 billion from the annual \$16 billion Medicare home health benefit, a benefit that must be ordered by a doctor and is available only to those senior citizens who are so sick they need skilled nursing care and/or therapy and cannot leave home without assistance.

About NAHC

NAHC represents the lion’s share of the 25,000 home care and hospice organizations that provide care to some 12 million people in the U.S. each year. Much of this care is non-medical, involves helping people with personal and supportive care needs, and is paid for privately. Several NAHC staff members previously worked for key Committees and Members of Congress.

The Goals for Health Care Reform

The National Association for Home Care & Hospice (NAHC) was created in 1982 as a voice for patients who have many complex medical problems and need home and community-based care in order to function and enjoy something resembling a reasonable quality of life. NAHC also represents the caregivers, nurses and therapists who provide the care, and as well as the organizations they work for. NAHC is committed to the highest values:

- Access to health care for all Americans.
- Greater use of technology as a way to increase the quality of care and make the most efficient use of scarce resources.
- Delivery of the highest-quality care at a fair and reasonable price to all who need help.
- Greater emphasis on preventive health care.
- Providing all Americans with long-term home care and help in managing their chronic diseases, two goals that should be accomplished simultaneously by extending care to all uninsured persons.
- Justice for all — economic, political and social.
- Fair wages, hours and benefits, particularly health care coverage, for all home care and hospice workers.

They helped write Medicare and Medicaid into law, especially the home health and hospice benefits, as well as legislation making Medicare/Medicaid fraud a felony. They also created the Office of Inspector General in the Department of Health & Human Services and State Medicaid Fraud Units to combat fraud and abuse in public programs.

For additional national and state-specific information about Home Care and Hospice, please visit:

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