

## 10 QUESTIONS TO ANSWER BEFORE...

### Managing Your LTC Services and Supports to Achieve Better Quality

1. Did you know that obtaining long-term care services is just the beginning of your long term-care experience?

**Fact:** To optimize your long-term goals for choice and independence and to achieve the highest quality care, you should be educated and informed about how to “manage” those services continuously.

2. Have you documented and shared a list of your goals for an assisted living or nursing home?

**Fact:** “Independent living” is not about doing things by yourself; it is being in control of how things are done. This includes healthy self-management practices, seeking support services as needed, following your physician’s plan for your care, and making sure your loved ones know your desires.

**Web resource:** <http://www.medicare.gov/PHR/Overview.asp>

3. Are you prepared to expect and receive “consumer-centered” care?

**Fact:** No matter the setting or service, your preferences and desires should be respected in the plan of care that results from your provider’s personal assessment. Learn more from the NCCNHR: The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care web page.

**Web resource:** [www.nccnhr.org](http://www.nccnhr.org)

4. If you have chosen to receive services in a nursing home, have you reviewed the annual state inspection report and spoken with the assigned “Ombudsman” at the facility you’ve chosen?

**Fact:** Reviewing inspection reports and talking with an Ombudsman in a nursing home or assisted living home can help you get you/your loved one’s needs met in a high-quality manner. Also see “How to Choose a Nursing Home” on the Heinz Family web site.

**Web resource:** [www.heinzfamily.org](http://www.heinzfamily.org)

5. If you have chosen to stay home with supportive services, have you asked your providers who will monitor the services for effectiveness and quality?

**Fact:** If you are residing in a community setting with in-home care or community supports (e.g., transportation, adult day care, housework), it is important to know in advance who monitors these services and what procedures the service provider uses to evaluate their effectiveness, quality of care, and the process for making improvements.

6. Do you know whether or not the person who will provide you with personal services has a healthy and happy workplace environment?

**Fact:** Your high-quality care is dependent upon your “direct care worker” having adequate compensation, appropriate training, a reasonable workload, and respect from colleagues and clients. Learn more from the “Better Jobs Better Care” web site.

**Web resource:** [www.bjbc.org](http://www.bjbc.org)

7. Are you familiar with the “continuous quality improvement” (CQI) process?

**Fact:** The CQI process involves: a) collecting information, b) figuring out any problems, c) identifying strengths and weaknesses, d) taking action for improved performance, and e) tracking outcomes and starting the process over. Your involvement in this process will allow you to help your providers deliver appropriate, effective, and adequate services or products. You can learn more about this process from the National Association for Healthcare Quality.

**Web resource:** [www.nahq.org](http://www.nahq.org)

8. Are you aware of the importance of “catching someone doing something good?”

**Fact:** Catching someone doing something good, and saying so, establishes your credibility and fairness. Then, if you later need to ask that worker for a change to improve the quality of care, they are more likely to be open to your suggestions.

9. Have you established with your provider(s) what to do when you have asked for quality improvement from your direct care worker and the response has been unsatisfactory?

**Fact:** It is important to have a line of reporting or person to contact if you have concerns about the timeliness, respect, safety, appropriateness of services or other issues with the care you or your loved one are provided.

10. Do you and/or a loved one feel you need help managing your long-term care services and supports?

**Fact:** There are “care managers” all over the country in public and private settings who may be able to help. You can locate one by contacting your Area Agency on Aging or the Case Management Society of America.

**Web resource:** <http://www.eldercare.gov/Eldercare.NET/Public/Home.aspx>

**Web resource:** <http://www.cmsa.org/Consumer/tabid/61/Default.aspx>