

## Medical Home Health

Medical home health is a benefit that is fully covered by Medicare. Many people believe that medical home health will provide unlimited care at home, but unfortunately, this is not the case.

In order to qualify for medical home health, you must first be “homebound”. Medicare defines this as requiring significant effort to leave your home. You can still be considered homebound if you go to church on Sunday, or if you get your hair done on a weekly basis, but someone else must do the driving.

In order to receive services you must have an order from a physician, and you must have a nursing or therapy need.

When your physician orders home health, most often the registered nurse will come

see you first (sometimes a physical therapist will see you first). The nurse will do a thorough evaluation of your medical condition, your support system, and your living situation. This evaluation will determine the frequency and duration of the services you will receive. If the nurse determines that you need more services than the physician ordered, the doctor will be contacted for additional orders.

A nurse can come see you for medical needs like chronic wound care, medication teaching, or monitoring a chronic medical condition. You can also receive physical, occupational and speech therapy in the home. In some instances you can also have a home health aide help you with your self care activities. Most home

health agencies have social workers who can refer you to additional community resources.

If you think you need medical home health, don’t hesitate to talk to your doctor about a referral. The choice of home health agency is yours—the patient. Is certainly true that many people are not familiar with a particular agency, but your physician or hospital discharge planner should give you a choice. If you don’t think you can make a choice, there is nothing wrong with letting make a suggestion. Always keep in mind that if you have problems with a home health agency, you can always change. You will find a tool at the Medicare website that compares home health agencies, and you may also find this information helpful when choosing an agency.

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### DID YOU KNOW?

- *7.2 million individuals received home health care services in 2000*
- *Only 38% of people were aware of any home health agency*
- *45% of people don't know how home health is paid for*

—National Association for Home Care and Hospice

## Monica Benson, JD

Monica A. Benson is a graduate of Texas A&M University and Texas Wesleyan University School of Law. She sits on the Board of Directors of the Tarrant County Probate Bar Association and is a member of the Tarrant County Young Lawyers, Vision Fort Worth, the National Association of Elder Law Attorneys, and the Life Care Planning Law Firms Association.

Licensed in 2005, Monica has worked for Steve since her first year as a law student in 2002.

Monica is a frequent speaker in Fort Worth and surrounding communities, including the annual Alzheimer's Association Symposium for the North Central Texas Chapter, the Let Someone Know Event, and training sessions for volunteers with Guardianship Services.

Monica is a Fort Worth native and a fifth generation Texas. When not at the office,

Monica spends her time refereeing between her two dogs, Molly and Daisy, and her cat, Picasso, as well as training to run half marathons.



*Monica Benson, JD*