



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact:

Annie Eddey; m: 973-449-0921

annie@oliveprsolutions.com

**Educated Patients Decrease Fraud and Increase Quality of Care
- February is National Wise Health Care Consumer Month and Mission Healthcare
offers tools for patients to learn their options and rights-**

San Diego, Calif. (February, 7 2013)—Mission Healthcare, which offers medical and non-medical services in the home, educates patients and consumers on their rights and choices in healthcare services.

“Many individuals think whatever their doctor prescribes is their only choice—that is incorrect,” said Amy Nelson Director and Co-Founder of Mission Healthcare. “Patients and families need to be their own best advocate and we need to educate them on how to make the best choices.”

Many people do not realize that care in the home is an affordable option. Studies prove how financially and psychologically important it is to keep elderly and ill family members in the familiarity of their home as long as possible. It is the ideal healing environment, where access to loved ones and familiarity quicken recovery time. The technology that is now available allows care in the home that was previously only available in a hospital setting. With consistent care in the home, time in the hospital is prevented. Elderly patients are more susceptible to infection in the hospital, and are more inclined to stay active, when they are able to maintain normal routines in the comfort of their home.

“We need to educate consumers on how to pick agencies that are reputable and let them know they have the final decision in who provides them service,” said Nelson.

Educating yourself about an agency is the best way to determine the right agency for you or a loved one. It also helps keep fraud in the home health industry down, which costs consumers and providers alike. Legitimate providers are bearing the weight of fraudulent ones because the federal government has reduced payments because Medicare spending has increased in recent years. Much of the increase is from fraudulent providers who in many cases are billing for services they never provided.

“If we can educate consumers and providers, we should be able to speed up the needed cleansing process,” said Nelson.

Below are questions the consumer should be asking about Home Health, Home Care and Hospice agencies so they can be empowered to select the right agency:

Home Health-- Medical care provided in the home usually following surgery, injury, or diagnoses of an ailment.

- Does the agency guarantee a visit by a licensed healthcare professional within 24 hours of receiving a referral?
- Does the agency assign supervisors to oversee the quality of care provided to each patient?
- Does the agency care for patients that require complicated and complex treatment protocols?
- Do they offer specialized behavioral health services?
- Is the agency led by experienced healthcare professionals?
- Is the agency Medicare certified?
- Do they have a healthcare professional on-duty 24 hours a day, seven days a week (not an answering service) to answer all of your questions?
- Does the agency have procedures in place in case of emergencies?
- Do they cover a wide geographic area?
- Do they offer all disciplines included in home health benefits? (Nursing, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Medical Social Work, and Certified Home Health Aides)
- Does the agency offer any specialized programs that address your particular disease state or the surgical procedure you have just have just undergone or are planning to undergo?

Home Care-- Non-medical care in the home such as grooming, bathing, meal preparation, and surgical aftercare.

- Does the agency you are considering require you to purchase a minimum number of hours per day?
- Will the agency agree that you and/or your loved one can interview caregivers until you find the one that is right for you?
- Does the agency offer any specialized programs that cater to the needs of you or your loved ones?
- Do they provide transportation for errands, appointments and shopping?
- Does the agency have policies and procedures in place to guarantee your personal health information (PHI) is protected and private?
- Is the agency led by experienced healthcare professionals?
- Does the agency perform detailed background checks and drug tests on all employees?
- Do all caregivers receive at least 16 hours of Orientation and Training by qualified individuals?
- Does the agency maintain appropriate insurance policies including, but not limited to: Workers' Compensation, General Liability, and Professional Liability?
- Does the agency guarantee a visit by a skilled home care professional within 24 hours of receiving a referral?
- Does the agency perform on-site visits to introduce the caregiver at the beginning of care and periodic onsite visits to ensure that the quality of care is maintained?

- Do they have a skilled home care professional on-call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to answer questions?
- Does the agency have procedures in place in case of emergencies?
- Do they cover a wide geographic area?

Hospice

- Does the hospice agency offer alternative treatment approaches to managing pain?
- Does the agency guarantee a visit by a licensed healthcare professional within 24 hours of receiving a referral?
- Does the hospice provide 100 % attention during the first 48 hours of admission?
- Does the hospice agency help to reduce the family's fear of loss?
- Is the agency lead by experienced healthcare professionals?
- Is the agency Medicare-Certified?
- Does the agency have any nationally recognized accreditations?
- Does the agency assign a supervisor to oversee the quality of care provided to each patient?
- Do they have a healthcare professional available 24 hours a day, seven days a week?
- Does the agency have procedures in place in case of emergencies?
- Do they cover a wide geographic area?
- Do they offer a variety of treatment approaches to accommodate the needs of a variety of patients?

About Mission Healthcare:

Mission Healthcare is a clinically owned and operated organization whose services include Mission Home Health, Mission Hospice, and Mission Home Care. By providing a continuum and continuity of care, Mission Healthcare strives to have a positive impact on the lives of patients, their families, and their healthcare partners no matter what their needs may be. Mission Healthcare utilizes all available resources to provide the highest level of care possible to their patients, all while in the optimal healing environment, the home. www.homewithmission.com

###