

"Home care" is a simple phrase that encompasses a wide range of health and social services. These services are delivered at home to recovering, disabled, chronically or terminally ill persons in need of medical, nursing, social, or therapeutic treatment and/or assistance with the essential activities of daily living.

Generally, home care is appropriate whenever a person prefers to stay at home but needs ongoing care that cannot easily or effectively be provided solely by family and friends. More and more older people, electing to live independent, non-institutionalized lives, are receiving home care services as their physical capabilities diminish. Younger adults who are disabled or recuperating from acute illness are choosing home care whenever possible. Chronically ill infants and children are receiving sophisticated medical treatment in their loving and secure home environments. Adults and children diagnosed with terminal illness also are being cared for at home, receiving compassionate care and maintaining dignity at the end of life. As hospital stays decrease, increasing numbers of patients need highly skilled services when they return home. Other patients are able to avoid institutionalization altogether, receiving safe and effective care in the comfort of their own homes.