



Government Subsidized Case Management and In-Home Care Massachusetts Home Care Program

Springwell is deeply committed to helping people remain independent in their own homes for as long as possible. As a newly enrolled participant in the State's subsidized Massachusetts Home Care Program, we suspect you will have some questions about the services you will be receiving. We hope that the information provided below answers many of your questions. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions that are not addressed below.

Who will actually be providing the in-home care?

Under the Massachusetts Home Care Program Springwell staff are not able to provide in-home care. Instead, Springwell must contract with private companies that provide such services. These companies are referred to as vendors.

Springwell contracts with many vendors. Once an individual is found eligible for in-home care and a care plan is created, the care plan is sent to all vendors within one or two business days. The list of care plans that are waiting for vendors is updated every day and resent to all vendors each morning. Vendors review the list each day and "pick-up" any request for services they can. Alternatively, some individuals are eligible for the consumer directed care option through which they can hire their own worker.

A Springwell Care Advisor told me I am eligible for services but, I want 10 hours a day of care and my care plan only provides 4 hours a week of care. My neighbor told me she receives 10 hours of care a day. I am the same age as my neighbor and would like the same amount of care.

The amount of care you are eligible for is based on a number of factors. Those factors include your financial situation, your ability to perform activities of daily living, any health concerns and the amount of support you receive from family and friends. No two cases are alike. Springwell is eager to offer you all of the services that the State offers for people in your particular situation.

How soon after someone is found eligible do they begin to receive in-home services?

The amount of time from the finding of eligibility to receiving in-home services varies. Sometimes it is as little as a couple of days and sometimes it takes months. Unfortunately, your Care Advisor cannot provide anything more than a guess as to when services will begin. The vast majority of people begin to receive in-home services within 3 weeks.

If you will be receiving what is referred to as Personal Care (help with bathing and/or toileting) a Springwell nurse must come to your home to conduct a second assessment before Personal Care services can be received. Though our goal is to have a Springwell nurse visit you within 2 weeks of the visit from your Care Advisor, unfortunately, it can be considerably longer for the nurse to visit. Your other services can begin while you wait for the visit from the nurse.

Please note that the program you are enrolled in, the State's subsidized Massachusetts Home Care Program, is not designed to provide immediate, emergency care.

Why does it sometimes take so long for services to begin?

Many factors contribute to the amount of time it takes for services to begin including:

- Vendors may not have a worker who is interested in working on a specific case. Like most businesses in the United States, vendors have trouble hiring workers. As the economy gets better, vendors find it harder to find workers who want to provide care for the salary provided under the government subsidized program you are eligible for.
- It is harder to find vendor workers who will accept cases in geographic areas where there is no mass transportation or very limited mass transportation because many vendor workers do not have cars.
- It is harder to find vendor workers who will accept cases that only need a few hours of service or that require services at odd times.

Is there anything I can do to help speed up the time it takes for my in-home care to begin?

Sometimes. The more flexible a person is with regard to when they receive care the easier it is to find a vendor worker who wants the case. For example: If someone only wants a male worker on Tuesdays from 11:00 – 1:00 it might take longer to find a worker than if the person will accept a female or male worker who can work any weekday. Another example: If you want a vendor worker who only speaks a specific language it will often take longer for us to find such a worker. Typically, the more specific your request, the longer it will take to find a worker. If you prefer to have more control over the person selected to provide care please speak with your Care Advisor about the Consumer Directed Care option which allows you to hire whomever you want to provide your care. Your Care Advisor can let you know if you are eligible for this option.

Can I choose the vendor worker assigned to me?

The State's subsidized Massachusetts Home Care Program that you are eligible for does not provide the opportunity for you to meet a vendor worker prior to the worker being assigned but, you can always decide not to have a particular worker come to your home again. While we can accommodate requests for workers of a particular gender we do not discriminate based on a person's age, race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or gender expression and therefore do not accept requests based on these attributes. If you prefer to have more control over the person selected to provide care please speak with your Care Advisor about the Consumer Directed Care option which allows you to hire whomever you want to provide your care. Your Care Advisor can let you know if you are eligible for this option.

What should I do if I don't care for the vendor worker who was assigned to me?

Please let your Care Advisor know as soon as possible that you have any concerns about your vendor worker. It is also helpful to know if you want to continue to receive services from that worker until a replacement is found.

Sometimes my vendor worker is late to arrive or leaves early. Should I do anything about this?

Yes. If your vendor worker is more than a few minutes late, please let your Care Advisor know as soon as possible. Your Care Advisor will speak to the worker's supervisor. Please note that many vendor workers use mass transit and are therefore not always able to precisely control their arrival time.

Sometimes my vendor worker cancels when I really need services. Why does Springwell permit this to happen?

We apologize for the inconvenience that you experience when your vendor worker cancels. There are times when the worker assigned to you is ill, or has a family member they have to care for, or unexpectedly has no transportation to come to your home. These are just some of the reasons that the worker may cancel or not even provide any notice that they are unable to come at their scheduled time.

Unfortunately, the State's subsidized Massachusetts Home Care Program, is not designed to guarantee service on a particular date and time. While the vast majority of individuals are able to get reliable care on a regular basis, the program highly recommends that individuals enrolled in the program have care back-up plans.

Sometimes my Care Advisor is not available when I call. Is there anyone else I can speak to if the issue cannot wait till my Care Advisor returns my call?

Care Advisors spend at least 50% of their time out of the office conducting home visits with individuals. It will therefore not be unusual for your Care Advisor to be unavailable when you call. You can always leave your Care Advisor a message and he or she will return your call either later in the day or the next business day. But, if you prefer to speak to someone sooner, you can always ask to speak with the Care Advisor on Call who is available Monday thru Friday, from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Please note that since the Care Advisor on Call is taking many calls throughout the day he or she may be on the phone with someone else when you call. If you leave the Care Advisor on Call a voice mail message your phone call will be returned as soon as possible, often on the same day. To speak with the Care Advisor on Call call (617) 926-4100.

Will you send a replacement worker if my worker doesn't show up or needs to take some time off?

Sometimes. If you request a replacement worker we ask our vendors if any of them has a worker who can cover your shift. If they do, we try to get the replacement worker to you as quickly as possible. Please note that the State's subsidized Massachusetts Home Care Program, does not pay for stand-by vendor workers who can fill-in for workers who are sick or who for another reason are unable to provide care. This is why the program highly recommends that individuals enrolled in the program have care back-up plans.

My care plan allows me to have 4 hours of homemaking services a week. Can my vendor worker clean my home while I am in the hospital?

No. The program you are enrolled in prohibits workers from providing any type of service when you are not home.

Is the Springwell nurse who came to my home able to help me change my bandages every week or put drops in my eyes?

Unfortunately, the Springwell nurse is prohibited from providing such care. The State provides a nurse that visits on a very limited basis to conduct assessments. If you need nursing care please speak with your physician about obtaining certified nursing services.

Can my Springwell Care Advisor do some quick errands for me like pick up some groceries or stop by the bank?

No, your Springwell Care Advisor is not able to run errands but, can help you think about who can help with such errands.

Can my Springwell Care Advisor help me complete MassHealth applications and other applications for public benefits.

We certainly understand that it is not easy to complete these applications. Unfortunately, Springwell's Care Advisors are not able to help you complete such applications. Your Care Advisor can provide you with a list of resources that do help with these applications.

I receive home delivered meals 3 times a week. Sometimes, I can't be home because I am at a doctor's appointment or have to run a quick errand. Can you leave my meal on my porch so I can eat it when I get home?

Your home delivered meal driver is not allowed to leave your meal if you are not home. The program you are enrolled has strict rules about the delivery of the meals and requires that the person who is receiving the meal be home to accept the meal.