Frequently Asked Questions

Find answers to frequently asked questions about our services, benefits programs, and other common topics. If you don't find what you are looking for on this FAQ page, feel free to contact us directly.

General Overview

What does it take to get started?

Call us, and we will move quickly to set up a new service with you. Required onboarding paperwork is available on this website, under the tab entitled "Onboarding Documents."

Do you help me to assess our needs?

Yes, we will spend time with you to understand your situation and to consider the right caregiver for your engagement.

What is the process after the onboarding form is completed and submitted?

Once onboarding documents are submitted, our scheduling manager works to customize the engagement using the information submitted by the client. We match care plans, logistics, and personalities to the best of our ability with specific caregivers from our staff. After this process is complete and the schedule is agreed upon, the engagement can commence.

Do I meet with you? Do I get to meet with the caregiver before the final "ok"? Can you meet with my parents?

Typically, a Community Outreach Liaison will visit the family via phone and then schedule a time to meet in person. Under the current circumstances, we are using technology such as Zoom, FaceTime, or phone to get to know each other. Our focus is on the safety of our staff and clients by minimizing contact. Regarding a meeting with a caregiver, we have learned that a meeting before an engagement does not offer meaningful insight for the client; while we have confidence in all our staff, we appreciate that sometimes we may have to send out a different caregiver after the engagement begins. Should there be issues such as the caregiver wearing too much perfume, talking too loud, or sitting in your favorite antique chair, feel free to communicate freely. If it's something you want management to address just let us know. If there we need to pivot and switch out caregivers, no problem. We have 100+ caregivers, and we have the right caregiver for you!

How quickly can you place a caregiver with us?

Typically, we like to have at least 24 hours to get the family properly set up in the system and give our scheduling team adequate time to put their matchmaking skills to work. However, if necessary (and presuming the client's paperwork is on file), we can often get a caregiver placed within just a few hours.

Is there a binder set up in the home with information about the patients' needs?

There will be a notebook with care plan notes, contact information, and a pad for caregivers to take daily notes. These can be helpful for family, medical staff, and long-term care insurance.

How does the caregiver typically get in the home if the patient is unable to answer the door?

We have used various tactics and tools to enter a home where the client cannot answer the door, including lockbox, spare key, garage door opener, hidden key, or garage combination.

When a client requires transportation, whose vehicle is used, yours or ours?

This is up to the client. If the caregivers drives the client's car, there is no additional charge. If the caregiver uses their own car, we charge a standard IRS mileage rate (currently $0.57/mile).

Will I have a direct point of contact at your company who will be familiar with my case and responsive to my questions and needs?

Our client outreach team maintains contact with our clients and their families during the entire engagement. They are committed to see that you are always satisfied. They will work with our scheduling department as necessary or may connect you directly with our scheduling department if needs are variable. Our team is available to you 24/7/365 so that you are never left hanging.

About Our Staff

How qualified are your caregivers?

Most of our caregivers are Certified Nurse's Assistants (CNA's), meaning they received comprehensive instruction and passed a state competency exam. In addition to the many hours of training they receive before taking their CNA exam, our staff receives training from our director of nursing and many hours of hands-on experience. In addition, all of our caregivers must pass thorough criminal background checks and are subject to random drug testing.

What's the difference between contractors and full-time employees?

Many companies utilize contractors rather than employees to fill caregiving assignments. They run an ad or send a text looking for people in the general public to act as caregivers and pay those people an agreed-upon hourly fee. Frequently, these people have little or no previous experience with the company and may or may not have any experience caregiving. The company will either pay the individual directly or ask the client to write one check to the caregiving company and one check directly to the caregiver. All of our caregivers are full-time W-2 employees trained by our director of nursing and often have hundreds if not thousands of hours of experience with our company. We offer them a full array of health benefits, and we pay 80% of their health care premiums. Fully-employed W2 employees are more committed and loyal to their employers and thus more committed to their clients.

How are employees screened, and what forms of training are mandatory?

Each caregiver goes through a national background check, drug screening, thorough interview with our HR director and Scheduling Manager, and their references are checked. Also, each caregiver must pass an internal written test and complete company orientation and training.

If the caregiver is not a good fit, what is the process to assign a new one?

We know our individual staff, and we use this knowledge, coupled with the information provided by our clients in their onboarding documents, to make the best possible matches between our staff and our clients. That said, the choice of caregiver is extremely personal, and personality matches are sometimes complicated. If a match doesn't work, we will work to make it right. If the issue can be easily corrected with direct communication (i.e., the caregiver is wearing too much perfume, talks to loud or sits in your favorite antiques chair), we encourage our clients to inform us or the caregiver directly so that change can be made. If there is a personality conflict or we can't redirect a staff person for whatever reason, we will simply substitute another one of our caregivers. We will work with the client until the optimal care team is in place.

Costs

Is there a minimum number of hours to which I must commit?

The minimum daily requirement is four hours, and there is no minimum weekly or monthly requirement.

Do I have to sign a long-term contract?

You are NOT committed to engaging us for any specific amount of time. The document you sign simply requires you to pay for any hours of service received.

Can I use my Long-Term Care policy?

Long-term care policies generally cover non-medical care services such as ours, while Medicare and general health insurance policies do not. While Cambridge is happy to assist with any necessary paperwork, including care notes, we cannot by law file directly with the insurer. The policy owner is required to pay Cambridge directly and then file with the insurer for reimbursement. It's important to note that many long-term care providers require a waiting or "elimination" period before coverage kicks in. We are happy to review your long-term care policy and advise you as to benefits and limitations, or you can call your insurer directly and ask for an explanation of benefits.

Am I responsible to pay for overtime?

By law, caregivers must be paid overtime (1.5x their base pay rate) if they work more than 40 hours/week. We strive to limit overtime by engaging several caregivers on an engagement so that overtime charges are not incurred. However, when a client insists on limiting caregivers or extending hours such that overtime is necessary, the client is responsible for additional charges of time and a half for each hour of overtime, as required by federal law.

Can caregivers accept tips?

We compensate our staff very generously, and we pay 80% of their health premiums. Clients are by no means obligated to tip our staff and we do allow gifts/tips for holidays, special occasions, or at the end of an engagement.

How are we invoiced, and how often?

Invoices are generated every two weeks and sent electronically to the correct person on file who pays the bills. We use the Automated Clearing House (ACH) system to charge our client's checking account.