avida

Family guide
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How to choose the best personal care agency in Milwaukee

Searching for the best personal care agency in your area? The right agency is one you can trust in your home every day. Use this checklist to compare agencies near you in Milwaukee County — including us.

THE SHORT ANSWER

The best personal care agency for your family is certified by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, has a registered nurse overseeing a written care plan, accepts your coverage, sends trained and background-checked caregivers who speak your language, and has real reviews from local families.

Wisconsin DHS says personal care workers are supervised by a registered nurse and follow a written plan of care. Source: dhs.wisconsin.gov/guide/pca.htm

How to use this guide

1. Read the 10 checks (pages 2–3).
2. Call two or three agencies with the questions on page 5.
3. Tick the comparison chart (page 4) and choose with confidence.

Questions? We're happy to help.

Call or text:

(414) 348-4600

Scan to see the guide online

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10 things to check before you choose

Ask every agency about each point. A good agency answers clearly and doesn't rush you.

1 Certified by the State of Wisconsin

Why it matters: Personal care agencies in Wisconsin must be certified by DHS to provide Medicaid personal care. You can look any agency up in the state's Provider Search.

- [x] **How Avida measures up:** Avida is a state-certified personal care agency, listed at 2500 W Layton Ave, Suite 120, Milwaukee.

2 A registered nurse oversees the care plan

Why it matters: State rules require personal care to follow a written plan of care, supervised by a registered nurse. Ask who that nurse is and how often they check in.

- [x] **How Avida measures up:** Registered nurses oversee every Avida care plan and support our caregivers.

3 Accepts your coverage

Why it matters: Many families pay $0 for personal care through Wisconsin Medicaid. Make sure the agency works with your program before you sign anything.

- [x] **How Avida measures up:** Avida works with Wisconsin Medicaid, Family Care, Partnership and IRIS. Private-pay families get a written quote after a free call.

4 Trained, background-checked caregivers

Why it matters: Wisconsin's Caregiver Law requires background and criminal history checks for caregivers. Ask what training caregivers get before their first visit.

- [x] **How Avida measures up:** Every Avida caregiver passes a background check and completes our personal care worker training.

5 Caregivers who speak your family's language

Why it matters: Care goes better when your loved one can talk easily with their caregiver about pain, food, and how they feel.

- [x] **How Avida measures up:** Our team is fluent in English and Spanish, with other languages supported through a translation partner.

6 You can choose someone you already trust

Why it matters: Many families want a daughter, son, niece or close friend to be the paid caregiver. Not every agency allows this. Under Wisconsin Medicaid, a spouse, or a parent of a child under 18, can't be the paid caregiver.

- [x] **How Avida measures up:** Avida hires, trains and pays family caregivers, so your loved one can be cared for by someone they know.

7 Uses electronic visit verification (EVV)

Why it matters: Wisconsin requires EVV for Medicaid personal care: caregivers check in and out of every visit. It protects your loved one's approved hours.

- [x] **How Avida measures up:** Avida caregivers clock in and out for every visit and time slot, and we train them step by step.

8 Covers the hours you actually need

Why it matters: Ask about early mornings, evenings, weekends and overnight care before you need them.

- [x] **How Avida measures up:** Avida offers overnight and 24-hour home care with a rotating team of trained caregivers.

9 Real reviews from local families

Why it matters: Read Google reviews, not just the agency's website. Look for comments about reliability and respect.

- [x] **How Avida measures up:** Avida is rated 5.0 stars on Google by Milwaukee families.

10 Local and easy to reach

Why it matters: When something changes, you want a real person who knows your family — not a national call center.

- [x] **How Avida measures up:** Our office is on Milwaukee's south side. Call or text (414) 348-4600.

Compare agencies side by side

Call two or three agencies and tick each box when they give you a clear yes. The agency with the most checks — and the one you trust — is usually your best fit.

Agency 2 — name and phone: _____

Agency 3 — name and phone: _____

What to check	Avida	Agency 2	Agency 3
Certified by Wisconsin DHS	☑	☐	☐
Registered nurse oversees the care plan	☑	☐	☐
Accepts our Medicaid, Family Care, Partnership or IRIS plan	☑	☐	☐
Background-checked, trained caregivers	☑	☐	☐
Caregivers speak our language	☑	☐	☐
Can hire a family member or friend	☑	☐	☐
Uses EVV for every visit	☑	☐	☐
Covers evenings, weekends or overnight	☑	☐	☐
Real Google reviews from local families	☑	☐	☐
Local office we can reach	☑	☐	☐
Total checks	**10**		

Want to see exactly what daily help includes? See our personal care services in Milwaukee: avidahealth.org/personal-care-services-milwaukee

Questions to ask any agency on the phone

Print this list and keep it next to the phone while you call agencies. Write the answers on the lines.

1. Are you certified by Wisconsin DHS as a personal care agency?

Agency 2: _____

Agency 3: _____

2. Do you accept my loved one's Medicaid, Family Care, Partnership or IRIS plan?

Agency 2: _____

Agency 3: _____

3. Who is the registered nurse on my loved one's care plan, and how often will they check in?

Agency 2: _____

Agency 3: _____

4. What training and background checks do your caregivers complete?

Agency 2: _____

Agency 3: _____

5. Can a family member or friend be hired as the paid caregiver?

Agency 2: _____

Agency 3: _____

6. Do you have caregivers who speak our language?

Agency 2: _____

Agency 3: _____

7. What happens if our regular caregiver is sick or on vacation?

Agency 2: _____

Agency 3: _____

8. Can you cover evenings, weekends or overnight if we need it?

Agency 2: _____

Agency 3: _____

9. How soon could care start after our approval?

Agency 2: _____

Agency 3: _____

10. Who do I call if I have a concern, and how fast will you respond?

Agency 2: _____

Agency 3: _____

Red flags to watch for

- ! The agency can't tell you if it's certified, or you can't find it in the state's Provider Search.
- ! No one mentions a nurse or a written care plan.
- ! You're pushed to sign before anyone checks your Medicaid or program coverage.
- ! There's no clear answer about who covers a visit when your caregiver is out.
- ! No reviews, or only reviews on the agency's own website.

Check any agency yourself — free

You don't have to take any agency's word for it, including ours.

Look the agency up

Use the state's Provider Search and filter for personal care agencies.

Wisconsin DHS Provider Search
www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/guide/provider-search.htm

Talk to your ADRC

The Milwaukee County ADRC gives free, unbiased help with long-term care options: (414) 289-6874.

Milwaukee County ADRC guide
avidahealth.org/milwaukee-county-adrc-guide

Read the state's guide

Wisconsin DHS explains what personal care agencies do and how to choose one you trust.

Finding and choosing a personal care agency
www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/guide/pca.htm

Know how to raise a concern

If something goes wrong with any provider, the state explains how to file a complaint.

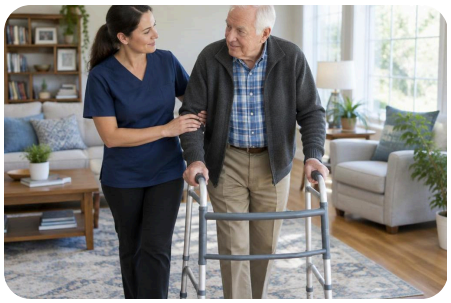
Problems with your health care
www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/guide/problems.htm



Bathing, dressing, and grooming



Meals and help with eating



Safe mobility and transfers

Questions about choosing an agency

What is the best personal care agency near me?
The best agency is the one that fits your family: state-certified, nurse-supervised, accepts your coverage, and has caregivers your loved one is comfortable with. Call two or three agencies with the questions above and compare their answers.

Is personal care free with Medicaid in Wisconsin?
For many families, yes. When your loved one qualifies through Wisconsin Medicaid, Family Care, Partnership or IRIS, approved personal care hours are often $0 to the family. Our free eligibility check can tell you where you stand.

What's the difference between a personal care agency and a home health agency?
A personal care agency helps with daily activities like bathing, dressing, eating and moving safely. A home health agency focuses on skilled medical care, like wound care or therapy. In Wisconsin, some home health agencies also provide personal care.

Can we change personal care agencies later?
Usually, yes. How you switch depends on your program. Talk with your care manager or IRIS consultant, or call us and we'll explain the steps for your situation.

Does Avida serve outside the city of Milwaukee?
Yes. Avida serves all of Milwaukee County and nearby areas, including Waukesha, Racine and Kenosha counties.

Check for free if your loved one qualifies

One short call. If your loved one qualifies through Wisconsin Medicaid, Family Care, Partnership or IRIS, personal care is often $0. Private-pay families get a written quote.

(414) 348-4600 · 2500 W Layton Ave, Suite 120, Milwaukee, WI 53221

This guide is general information, not legal or medical advice. Program rules can change; confirm details with Wisconsin DHS or your ADRC.



Patient, respectful care in your loved one's own home.