



Dear Nightingale Homecare patient,

You may have questions about the health care professionals sent to your home and the role that each one plays in your recovery. Nightingale Homecare is providing this document to help you understand “who does what” and what you can expect from each of your home care professionals. Please note that not every patient will have every type of home visitor, *all* home care professional services are ordered by the doctor that is overseeing your care at home and all professional home visitors will be in close communication with each other and with your doctor.

What is the role of my **nurse**? If you have a registered nurse involved in your care, you can expect him/her to look at your medications and determine if you need any help or instruction with them. If it is necessary, your nurse might organize your medications in a medication cassette or “pill box” to make it easier to keep things straight. Nurses will also monitor and treat any wounds you may have, change wound dressings if necessary, administer intravenous (IV) medications or certain injections, change catheters, help manage your pain, and evaluate your vital signs and disease symptoms. The registered nurse will also teach you and your family members how to provide care yourselves. Nurses also play a big role in helping you to understand your illnesses and manage these illnesses as well as possible to keep you out of the hospital.

What is the role of my **physical therapist**? If you have a physical therapist involved in your care, she/he will evaluate how you are moving and functioning in your home and develop an exercise program designed specifically to help you regain your mobility and function. Physical therapists can work on strength, mobility, balance and coordination. They also play a big role in looking at your home and making recommendations for things you can do to prevent falls and injuries. They make sure you are using the correct mobility equipment, such as walkers or canes and that the way you are moving around is safe. They teach you and your caregivers how to safely move you if you need help going between your bed and your chair. If you have a therapist, but not a nurse, she or he will also ask to look at your medications. Therapists are also required to check vital signs to make sure you are well enough to receive therapy.

What is the role of my **occupational therapist**? If you have an occupational therapist involved in your care, she/he will evaluate how you are doing with your activities of daily living, such as bathing, getting dressed, getting your meals and tending to your home. They take a close look at how problems you may have with movement, muscle weakness, sensation, vision, hearing, breathing and thinking affect your activities of daily living. They have a lot of knowledge about special devices that can make activities of daily living easier for those that have some of these challenges. They also make

recommendations for how minor changes at home, such as moving things around can make activities of daily living manageable.

What is the role of my **speech therapist**? If you have a speech therapist involved in your care, she/he will focus on problems you may be having with memory, problem solving, swallowing, speaking, and/or understanding speech. She/he will develop a plan for you and your caregivers to address specific problems in these areas.

What is the role of my **social worker**? If you have a social worker involved in your care, she/he will evaluate whether there are any community programs or services that you could benefit from because of any physical, financial or emotional challenges you are having. Social workers are skilled at helping people to cope with stress and improve difficult family situations. They are also very knowledgeable about different types of housing and how much support is available in different housing environments. They can also help in figuring out how to plan for the future needs of someone whose health is declining.

What is the role of my **dietician**? If you have a registered dietician involved in your care, she/he will be looking closely at your eating patterns and nutritional status. She/he will work with you to develop an eating plan that works for you and follows the instructions of your doctor. She/he will also help you plan for meals and give you tips for shopping and cooking. Sometimes dieticians are called in to work with patients that have severe issues with weight gain or weight loss, diseases that affect their nutritional status and patients that have to be fed through a tube.

What is the role of my **home health aide**? If you have a home health aide, she/he will be working under the strict direction of your nurse or therapist and following a care plan that was developed by the professionals involved in your care. She/he will help you with your personal care, such as bathing/showering and getting dressed and ready for the day. Your home health aide can also tidy up after providing your personal care, provide a little housekeeping help, change your bed linens, start some laundry and help with any exercises that your therapist has ordered. Home health aide visits are limited to about one hour, so the amount that the home health aide is able to do for you will depend on how long those activities take. Home Health Aide visits usually are provided one to three times a week, depending on your circumstances. The number of visits that you receive is determined by Medicare criteria and will be explained to you by your nurse or therapist. If you need more help than what the home health aide can provide under Medicare guidelines, Nightingale will be happy to talk with you about options to consider. We are experts with in-home supportive care services and have helped many people that are having difficulty managing at home.

Please contact the Nightingale office at

(602) 504-1555

to find out how Nightingale Homecare can custom-fit all of your home care needs.