

# Helping you choose: Quality ambulatory care



## AMBULATORY HEALTH CARE IS PROVIDED IN:

- Ambulatory surgery centers
- Community health centers
- Convenient care centers
- Dental practices
- Dialysis centers
- Doctor's offices
- Imaging centers
- Retail clinics
- Urgent care centers

Here is some information to help you choose the best provider for you or your loved one. Your doctor also can recommend some providers. Talk with representatives from each.



## QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT CARE

- Ask about the treatment or services that you need.
- What are the risks?
- Can you get written information about your treatment or services?
- Will the organization honor your advance directives?
- How will your pain be managed?
- If you're having a procedure, will you meet your anesthesiologist?
- Are family members allowed in the care/recovery area?
- What is the cost of your treatment or services? Are there any other costs you need to know about? Is it covered by your medical insurance?
- Can you get help finding financial aid if you need it?
- Is the organization licensed by a state agency?
- Is the organization certified by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services?
- Is the organization accredited by The Joint Commission? Being "accredited" means that the organization is evaluated against requirements that address patient safety and quality. Visit Quality Check® at [www.qualitycheck.org](http://www.qualitycheck.org) to find Joint Commission-accredited ambulatory care organizations.
- Can you get a copy of the patient's rights and responsibilities? Can they be explained to you?
- Is patient information kept private? Is there any reason for this information to be released?



## QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT HEALTH CARE STAFF

- What is the training and background of the doctor?
- Is the doctor certified by a medical board?
- Are nurses and other staff trained in emergency services, such as cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)?
- Is staff trained to use high-tech medical equipment?



### QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT EMERGENCY CARE

- Is there a 24/7 telephone number you can call if you have questions or problems? Will a doctor or nurse answer the phone? How are emergencies handled after hours?
- Is the organization associated with a local hospital? Does it have a transfer agreement with a local hospital?
- Is there an emergency plan if there is a power failure or natural disaster? Is there a plan for moving patients to another organization if there is an emergency?



### RESOURCES

[“Speak Up: Help Prevent Errors in Your Care”](#)

*The Helping You Choose series is published by The Joint Commission — the largest health care accrediting body in the United States that promotes quality and safety.*