

How to Interview and Select a Professional Patient Advocate

More than a few folks seek out help during a time of confusion or extreme stress. They are looking for solid information and someone to help them navigate choppy waters.

Because they may not be in tip-top shape during an acute situation or may lack sufficient experience with a scenario it can be a daunting task to locate a reputable provider with the proper credentials and experience to assist. We hope that you will find these interview questions to be a helpful guide in your interviewing and ultimate selection of a professional to help you.

Once you identify an Advocate for services you'll want answers to these questions:

1. ***Have you handled other cases similar to mine?*** Fundamental. We think you'd want to know.
2. ***How long have you been a private, independent Patient Advocate? Do you have relevant work background, training or experience providing this service? What is your experience?***
3. ***What are your credentials? Are you a Board Certified Patient Advocate (or BCPA)?*** If not you might ask if they subscribe to, abide by or must adhere to a Code of Professional Standards or Ethics.
4. ***What do you charge for your services? Do you require a down payment? Do you charge for mileage, or travel time?***
5. ***Do you carry Professional Liability and/or Errors and Omissions Insurance?*** The great majority of advocates must carry insurance to protect you and for themselves. If the advocate you are interviewing says he or she does not have E&O insurance, *ask them why not*. If the answer sounds plausible, continue.
6. ***Does anyone else pay you for helping me?*** Some providers are paid a commission for placing patients into a specific facility or for a referral to services they may recommend to clientele. This can muddy their objectivity and the allegiance to you so you'll want to know more about any potential conflicts of interest.
7. ***Do you have an idea of the approximate amount of time it will take you to handle the services I need? If not, how can I get an estimate?*** Every case is unique (after all we are working with human matters -and moving targets!) but you may ask about their past experiences and discuss timelines.
8. ***What is your caseload? Do you have time to handle the work I need to have done?***
9. ***Do you have references?*** Advocates may be understandably reluctant to provide names and contact information for references due to privacy laws. Alternatively, you can check their listings for true client testimonials. Become aware of their professional affiliations, and check memberships for good standing in professional organizations.

Additional, optional interview questions, depending on the services you may need:

1. ***Are you "on call" 24/7 or do you have specific hours of availability?***
2. ***Is your location in proximity to the patient?*** Keep in mind that an Advocate's services routinely include handling "back office" details, research and referral, care coordination and state-to-state matters that do not require them to be nearby.
3. ***Do you provide reports on the services you provide in my absence?*** If you are caregiving from a distance or need us to step in on your behalf when you cannot be there this is important. Ask about information sharing, communication methods, frequency or response.

***Whomever you hire, we recommend that you get these questions answered to your satisfaction!
NAVIGATE NC is confident in our ability to provide the services we quote.***

NAVIGATE NC offers a complimentary consultation. We schedule and dedicate a time to talk with you about your concerns, offer how we've likely assisted in similar situations and always build in time for questions and answers. Simply contact NAVIGATE NC to schedule your complimentary telephonic consultation.