



MASSACHUSETTS
GENERAL HOSPITAL

SOCIAL SERVICE

Paying for Your Personal Emergency Response System

A **Personal Emergency Response Systems (PERS)**, also known as Medical Emergency Response Systems, lets you call for help in an emergency by pushing a button. A PERS system has a small radio transmitter that you wear as a pendant or watch, which communicates with a console connected to your phone. Emergency response center staff monitors calls and determine the appropriate response.

Personal Emergency Response Systems can be purchased, rented, or leased.

Ways to get help paying for your PERS (Personal Emergency Response System)

- **Through your insurance company.** Although Medicare and many insurance companies don't pay for PERS equipment, some MassHealth (Medicaid) plans do (Standard, CommonHealth, CarePlus, and Neighborhood Health Plan). Insurance companies will require:
 1. A letter from your primary care doctor on letterhead stating that a PERS is medically necessary; and
 2. A prescription for the PERS from your doctor (MassHealth requires a special PERS prior authorization form be filled out by your doctor).
- **Some hospitals and social service agencies may subsidize the device for low-income users.**

Your local Area Agency on Aging may be able to tell you what systems are available in your area, call **1-800-AGE-INFO** to connect with your local Massachusetts agency or the National Elder Care locator at **1-800-677-1116**.

Getting a PERS

If you buy a PERS, expect to pay an installation fee and a monthly monitoring charge. Rentals are available through national manufacturers, local distributors, hospitals, and social service agencies, and fees often include the monitoring service. Read the contract carefully before you sign, and make note of extra charges, like cancellation fees.

Use a reputable vendor. Check with your local consumer protection agency, state Attorney General, and Better Business Bureau to see if any complaints have been filed against them. Questions you can ask a PERS company include:

- Is the monitoring center open 24/7? What kind of training does staff receive?
- What's the average response time, and who gets alerted?
- Do you offer a mobile version that works outside my home?
- What's your repair policy? What happens if I need a replacement?
- What are the initial costs? What costs are ongoing? What kind of services and features will I get?
- Will I be able to use the same system with other response centers if I move to another city or state?

PERS Companies^{*}

Local:

Partners HealthCare at Home Lifeline

Partners Lifeline serves eastern Massachusetts only, but will refer to other programs outside their service area. Partners Home Care Lifeline accepts MassHealth (Medicaid) and will take care of all the paperwork and insurance approval. For more information call 1-800-910-4225

or visit partnersathome.org/our-services/healthcare-technology/lifeline.aspx

National:

Lifeline

Call 855-681-5351 or visit: lifeline.com/

ADT Companion Service

For more information call 800-588-0023 or visit adt.com/health

Connect America

Call: 877-266-0733

Connectamerica.com

-Adapted from the Federal Trade Commission

consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0023-buying-health-products-services-online and aarp.com

^{*}This list is offered as a convenience for Massachusetts General Hospital patients and their families. This is not a complete list; there may be other similar services available. **Mass General does not endorse any non-Mass General affiliated programs.**