

Checklist for Those Considering a Nursing Home

Look at the Daily Life at the Home

- Do residents appear to enjoy being with staff members?
- Are residents dressed for the season and time of day?
- Do staff members know the residents by name?
- Do staff members respond quickly to residents' call for assistance?
- Are activities tailored to residents' individual needs?
- Are residents involved in a variety of activities?
- Does the home serve food attractively?
- Does the home take personal food preferences into consideration when planning meals?
- Does the home use care in selecting roommates?
- Does the home have a residents' council? If so, how does the council influence decisions about resident life?
- Does the home have a family council? If so, how does the council influence decisions about resident life?
- Do community groups visit the home and provide services there?

Look at the Care Residents Receive

- Are various staff members and professional experts involved in evaluating each residents' needs and interests?
- Do residents or their families participate in developing residents' care plans?
- Does the home offer programs to restore lost physical functioning (physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech and language therapy)?
- Does the home have any special services, such as special units for residents with dementia or respiratory problems?
- Does the home have a program to restrict the use of physical restraints?
- Does the nursing home have a treatment arrangement with a nearby hospital?

Look at the Way the Nursing Home Handles Finances

- Is the facility certified for Medicare?
- Is the facility certified for Medicaid?
- Are residents or residents' families informed when charges are increased?

Look at the Home's Environment

- Is the outside of the home clean and well maintained?
- Are there outdoor areas where residents can go?
- Is the inside of the home clean and well maintained?
- Are there handrails in hallways and grab bars in the bathrooms?
- When the floors are being cleaned, are warning signs displayed or areas blocked off to prevent accidents?
- Is the home free from unpleasant odors?
- Are toilets convenient to bedrooms?
- Do noise levels fit the activities going on?
- Is it easy for residents in wheelchairs to move around the home?
- Is the lighting appropriate for what residents are doing?
- Are there private areas where residents can visit with family, visitors, or physicians?
- Are residents' bedrooms furnished in a pleasant manner?
- Do residents have personal items in their bedrooms?
- Do residents' room have accessible storage areas for personal items?

Other Things to Study

- Does the home have a good reputation in this community?
- Does the home have a list of references?
- Is the home convenient for family and friends to visit?
- Do care review committee members and other local activities visit the facility regularly?