

# CHOOSING A NURSING FACILITY



## A Checklist To Complete Before Selecting the Proper Facility



State Senator  
**XX**

XX Senatorial District

**C**hoosing a nursing home is a difficult and important decision. To help you make a good choice, I have compiled this checklist, which you can take with you on visits before you select a facility.



### LICENSING

- ☐ Does the facility have a current Pennsylvania license?
- ☐ Does the administrator have a current Pennsylvania license?



### CERTIFICATION AND QUALITY

- ☐ If Medicare and/or Medicaid coverage is needed, is the facility certified to provide it?
- ☐ Does the facility have a formal quality assurance program?



### LOCATION

- ☐ Is the facility pleasing to the potential resident?
- ☐ Is it convenient for the resident's personal physician?
- ☐ Is it convenient for the resident's family and friends?
- ☐ Is it near a hospital that serves facility residents?
- ☐ Is it near a hospital where your personal physician practices?



### SAFETY

- ☐ Does the facility meet state and/or federal codes?
- ☐ Are written emergency evacuation plans with floor plans posted throughout the building?
- ☐ Are exits clearly marked and unobstructed?
- ☐ Are exit doors unlocked on the inside?
- ☐ Are doors to stairways kept closed?
- ☐ Are fire drills held periodically?
- ☐ Are there hand rails in hallways and grab bars in restrooms?
- ☐ Is the facility well-lighted inside?



Is it free of hazards underfoot?



Are chairs sturdy and not easily tipped?



Are warning signs posted on wet/waxed floors?



### CLEANLINESS

- ☐ Does the facility meet your standards for cleanliness?
- ☐ Is it free of unpleasant odors?



### BEDROOMS

- ☐ Do bedrooms open into halls?
- ☐ Does each resident have a room with a window?
- ☐ Are rooms limited to four beds?
- ☐ Is there a privacy drapery for each bed?
- ☐ Is there a nurse call bell by each bed?
- ☐ Is fresh drinking water available at each bed?
- ☐ Is there at least one comfortable chair per resident?
- ☐ Is there a clothes closet or separate set of drawers for each resident?
- ☐ Is there room for a wheelchair to maneuver?
- ☐ Is care used in selecting roommates?
- ☐ Is there easy access to each bed?



### LOBBY

- ☐ Is the atmosphere welcoming?
- ☐ Is the furniture attractive and comfortable?
- ☐ Is there a bulletin board with activities posted?
- ☐ Are certificates and licenses on display?



### HALLWAYS

- ☐ Are the hallways wide enough for two wheelchairs to pass easily?
- ☐ Are they well-lighted?

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## DINING ROOM

- ☐ Is the dining area attractive and inviting?
- ☐ Are tables convenient for those in wheelchairs?
- ☐ Is food tasty and attractively served?
- ☐ Is time adequate to eat meals?
- ☐ Do meals match posted menus?
- ☐ Are those needing help receiving it?



## FOOD

- ☐ Does a dietician plan menus for residents on special diets?
- ☐ Are personal likes and dislikes taken into consideration?
- ☐ Does the menu vary from meal to meal?
- ☐ Are snacks available?
- ☐ Is food delivered to residents unable or unwilling to eat in the dining room?
- ☐ Are warm foods served warm?



## KITCHEN

- ☐ Is the food preparation area separated from dishwashing and garbage disposal?
- ☐ Is food needing refrigeration put away promptly?
- ☐ Does kitchen help observe sanitation rules?



## ACTIVITY ROOMS

- ☐ Are rooms available for resident activities?
- ☐ Are supplies and equipment available? (games, yarn, kiln, etc.)
- ☐ Are residents using equipment?



## SPECIAL PURPOSE ROOMS

- ☐ Are rooms set aside for physical examinations or therapy?
- ☐ Are rooms available for private visits with family and friends?



## ISOLATION ROOMS

- ☐ Is a room set aside to house those with a contagious illness?



## BATHROOMS

- ☐ Are toilets convenient to bedrooms?
- ☐ Are they easy for a wheelchair-bound person to use?
- ☐ Is there a sink in each bathroom?
- ☐ Are nurse call bells located near each toilet?
- ☐ Are hand grips on or near toilets?
- ☐ Do bathtubs and showers have non-slip surfaces and hand grips?



## GROUNDS

- ☐ Is there easy access for the handicapped?
- ☐ Is outdoor furniture available for residents and visitors?
- ☐ Are the grounds free of hazardous objects?



## RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

- ☐ Are arrangements made for residents to worship as they please?



## MEDICAL INFORMATION

- ☐ Is a physician available in an emergency?
- ☐ Are personal physicians allowed?
- ☐ Is regular medical attention assured?
- ☐ Are medical records kept on file?
- ☐ Are residents involved in plans for treatment?
- ☐ Is confidentiality of records assured?
- ☐ Are other medical services (dentist, podiatrist, etc.) available?
- ☐ Will the resident's personal physician be notified in an emergency?
- ☐ Does the facility report periodically to the resident's personal physician?



## CARE PLANNING

- ☐ Does the facility provide services for terminally ill residents and their families?
- ☐ Does the facility have an Alzheimer's disease program?
- ☐ Does the facility care for mentally ill residents?



## HOSPITALIZATION

- ☐ Does the facility have an arrangement with a nearby hospital?
- ☐ Is emergency transportation readily available?



## NURSING CARE

- ☐ Is a registered nurse responsible for the nursing staff in a skilled nursing facility?
- ☐ Are licensed nurses on duty around the clock?
- ☐ Are trained nurse aides and orderlies on duty in homes providing nursing care?



## PHARMACY

- ☐ Are routine and emergency drugs available?
- ☐ Does a pharmacist review resident drug regimens in a skilled nursing facility?
- ☐ Is a pharmacist available for staff and resident consultation?



## THERAPY

- ☐ Is there a physical therapy room available under the direction of a qualified physical therapist?
- ☐ Is therapy available to meet special needs?
- ☐ Are services of an occupational therapist or speech pathologist available?



## ACTIVITIES

- ☐ Are resident preferences observed?
- ☐ Are group and individual activities available?
- ☐ Are residents encouraged to participate?
- ☐ Are outside trips planned?
- ☐ Do volunteers work with residents?



## SOCIAL SERVICES

- ☐ Is a social worker available to help residents and families?



## GROOMING

- ☐ Is assistance with bathing and grooming available?
- ☐ Are barbers and beauticians available?



## STAFF ATTITUDES

- ☐ Does the staff show interest in and affection for individual residents?
- ☐ Is the staff courteous?
- ☐ Is the administrator available to answer questions, hear complaints or discuss problems?
- ☐ Does the staff respond quickly to resident calls for assistance?
- ☐ Does the staff know residents by name?



## RESIDENT RIGHTS

- ☐ Does the facility have a written description of resident rights and responsibilities?
- ☐ Is the staff trained to protect resident dignity and privacy?
- ☐ Does the facility have a resident council?



## COSTS

- ☐ Are all services covered in the basic daily charge?
- ☐ If not, is a list available of specific services not covered in the basic rate? (Some facilities have rate schedules covering linen, personal laundry, haircuts, dental care, etc.)
- ☐ Are advance payments returned if the resident leaves the facility?



## YOUR ROLE

- ☐ If you are selecting a nursing facility for someone else, are you:
- ☐ Involving this person in the decision?
- ☐ Prepared to ease the transition by going along on admission day and staying a few hours during the "settling in" period?
- ☐ Ready to visit frequently and encourage friends to make similar visits?
- ☐ Willing to provide the same amount of love in the nursing home as you would at home?

