

What do you look for when choosing a long-term care facility?

Once you understand your loved one's needs, you'll have a better grasp on the services that each facility offers, and you'll be better able to match up those which more closely meet your family member's clinical needs. Among these are the following considerations (Check off all those offered):

1. Therapy Options

- speech
- physical
- occupational

2. Special Services

- Alzheimer's Unit
- Hospice Care
- Mental Health Care
- Nutritional Rehabilitation
- Dementia Unit
- Chronic Care

3. Religious Services

- In-House
- Transportation Available to Outside Services

4. Social Activities

- Movies
- Game Nights
- Knitting
- Other Types of Recreation

5. How are Residents Kept Physically Active?

6. What Community Programs are offered?

7. Is there Transportation out of Community into Town?

- Yes No

8. Is there a resident advisory council?

- Yes No

9. How does Your Loved One get His/Her Medication?

- In house pharmacy
- Other (Name): _____

There is no question that the clinical capabilities of each facility you consider should rise to the top of your decision-making criteria. That said, there are also quality-of-life considerations. These are significant, because in many ways it will be quality-of-life issues that will determine

how well adjusted your loved one is in this setting. And how well adjusted she is will strongly influence her health and functionality. Here are several important factors to consider in this area:

First, while you should certainly be willing to travel within reason for the best care, remember that geography matters. If the facility is an hour away, it will be much more difficult for you to visit than if it were 15 minutes away. Look for the best care that's closest to home or work.

Second, how comfortable do you think your family member will be here? To answer this, review the following checklist. In fact, answer each of these questions immediately after you visit a facility. That way when you go to compare notes later you'll have a lot more than memory to rely on:

10. Is there an odor?

Yes No

11. How is the noise?

Much too loud Noticeable Quiet

12. How clean is it?

Very Clean Somewhat Clean Uncleanly

13. Is the lighting adequate?

Yes No

14. How are the visiting hours?

Very Accommodating Average Too Limited

15. How is the temperature?

Normal Too Warm Too Cold

16. How is the food?

a. Does it comply with religious and cultural demands?

Yes No

b. Is it available at proper times during the day?

Yes No

c. Is it nutritional?

Very Nutritious Average Not Nutritious

17. Is it safe?

a. Are handrails located throughout the halls?

Yes No

b. Does it meet fire safety requirements?

Yes No

c. Are locks and security systems up to date?
(ie; are there guards at the doors?)

Yes No

d. Are there security guards?

Yes No

- e. Are the mentally imbalanced properly separated from the general population?
 Yes No
- f. Do the plumbing and electronics work?
(Call buttons, elevators, outlets, TV, etc)
 Yes No

18. Is it wheelchair accessible?

- Yes No

19. How many beds are occupied?

_____ out of _____

20. What is the roommate situation—are there private rooms available?

- Yes No

21. How is the atmosphere?

- Cheery/Pleasant Courteous, but not Friendly Cold, Clinical

22. How many nurses to patient/resident?

23. How is the training of the nurses, aides, administration?

- Excellent and Ongoing Adequate Insufficient

24. How is the housekeeping?

- Frequent & Thorough Acceptable Incomplete & Inadequate

25. How does the staff interact with the patients?

- a. Are they attentive to patient needs and emotional well-being?
 Yes No
- b. How is the health of the patients (bed sores, infections, weight, etc.)
 Good Fair Poor
- c. Are the patients properly dressed?
 Yes No
- d. Does the staff appear happy to be there?
 Yes No

26. Is the administration willing to sort out any problems easily?

- Yes No

27. In good standing with state requirements?

- Yes No

28. Fees

- a. Are they clearly marked/laid out?
 Yes No
- b. Are they competitive?

Yes No

c. Is the Social Worker helpful understanding/utilizing Medicare?
 Yes No

d. Have they dramatically increased in recent years?
 Yes No

e. What, if any, insurance is accepted?

29. What happens when there becomes a financial difficulty?

30. Would you want to live there?

Yes No