

GUIDELINES

for Choosing a Safe Nursing Home

Edwards & Ragatz, P.A.

Personal Injury and Commercial Trials

"Balancing The Scales Of Justice – For Those Who Need It Most"

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Car and Truck Accidents

Medical Malpractice

Insurance and Coverage Litigation

Product Liability

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Follow These Guidelines

To Help You Choose A Safe Nursing Home

Then visit and tour the nursing home using the checklist inside this brochure.

Choosing to place a loved one in a nursing home can be one of life's most difficult decisions. Taking the time to investigate the available options can make the process much easier for everyone involved. First, evaluate whether a nursing home is needed, your loved one's condition and if there is an available support system already in place.



- Evaluate if the care will be short term – such as rehabilitation from an injury – or long term, which may be required for someone with a progressive illness.
- Consider the level of care, the available support system, financial benefits available and how long the care will be needed.
- If your loved one needs nursing home care, begin your search nearby so you and others may visit on a regular basis. Determine whether a nursing home has the skilled personnel to provide the quality of care needed.
- Visit the home and use the checklist provided in this brochure.
- Consult:
 - Your loved one, if they are competent.
 - Your loved one's physician.
 - Hospital social services department if your loved one is hospitalized.
- Compare nursing homes in all 50 states using the 5-star rating system on www.medicare.gov. At the home page search for "Nursing Home Compare." The site has several features to help you narrow the search.
- Compare service charges of different nursing homes.
- Check the State of Florida nursing home inspection report on the nursing home and compare the number of deficiencies to the state average. The report is required to be posted in a public area in the nursing home.
- Question the staff, interview residents and the family members of residents.
- Take an escorted tour and conduct an unscheduled visit, preferably on the weekend when staffing is lowest.
- Visit during a meal to see how staff interact with the residents.
- Stay involved and provide support and love. Visiting regularly is important to your loved one and to observe the quality of care.
- If a problem occurs, intervene reasonably and constructively. Ask to talk to the director of nursing or administrator.
- Do not ignore problems.

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Use This Checklist

To Evaluate A Nursing Home

Nursing Home Name: _____

Date of Visit: _____



NURSING HOME BACKGROUND

- Medicare certified
- Medicaid certified
- Level of care needed (skilled, custodial), and a bed is available
- Special services if needed in a separate unit (dementia, ventilator or rehabilitation), and a bed is available
- The nursing home is located close enough for friends and family to visit
- Review of state inspection report
- Review of complaint file
- Review list of charges for nursing home
- Review list of charges for doctor
- Given copy of resident's rights
- No arbitration agreement

STAFF

- Staff appear to be warm, polite and respectful
- Staff name tags
- Staff knock on the door before entering resident's room and refer to residents by name
- Staff background checks
- Staff know the residents by name and are recognized by them

- There is a full-time registered nurse in the nursing home at all times, other than the administrator or director of nursing
- The same team of nurses and certified nursing assistants work with the same resident 4 to 5 days per week
- CNAs work with a reasonable number of residents
- CNAs are involved in care planning meetings
- There is a full-time social worker on staff
- The nursing home's management team (including the director of nursing and the administrator) has worked together for at least one year

RESIDENT'S ROOMS

- Personal belongings and/or furniture allowed in rooms
- Personal storage space (closet and drawers) in room
- Window in room
- Access to a personal telephone and television
- Choice of roommates
- Water pitchers accessible
- Policies and procedures to protect personal possessions

HALLWAYS, STAIRS, LOUNGES AND BATHROOMS

- Clearly marked exits
- Area for visits with friends and family
- Smoke detectors and sprinklers
- Wheelchair accessible common areas, resident rooms and doorways
- Handrails and grab bars in appropriate areas

NURSING HOME LIVING SPACES

- Residents are clean, appropriately dressed and groomed
- Unpleasant odors
- Appears clean
- The temperature is comfortable
- Noise levels
- Smoking

SAFETY AND CARE

- What is the emergency evacuation plan and how often are there regular fire drills (bed-bound residents included)?
- Do residents get preventive care (i.e. yearly flu shots) to stay healthy?
- Can residents continue to see their personal physician?

- Any arrangement with a nearby hospital in case of emergencies?
- Are residents and family members included in care plan meetings at convenient times whenever possible?
- What is the status of any deficiencies (failure to meet one or more federal or state requirements) on the nursing home's last state inspection report?

MENUS AND FOOD

- Meals offer choice of food items (Are your favorite foods served?)
- Are snacks available upon request?
- If help is needed at mealtime, is staff available?

ACTIVITIES

- Are activities available to all residents, including those unable to leave their rooms?
- Are outdoor areas available for resident use?
- Is there an active volunteer program?

ADDITIONAL NOTES
