

CHECKLIST FOR SELECTING A CARE FACILITY

If you decide that the most appropriate, least restrictive setting for the conservatee is a care facility, visit recommended facilities in order to decide which one to choose.

The following questions will help you evaluate the facility. Many of these questions are reprinted with permission from the American Association of Retired Persons. Most of them apply to skilled-nursing facilities, but you will find many of them useful in appraising other kinds of care facilities as well.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

YES NO Ask the Facility Administrator:

- Is the facility licensed by the appropriate state department?
The license should be posted in an obvious place.
- If it is a skilled-nursing facility, is the administrator licensed by the state Board of Nursing Home Administrators? This license should be posted in an obvious place.
- If the facility is advertised as a life-care or continuing-care facility, does it have a valid certificate of authority from the Continuing Care Program of the California Department of Social Services?
- Have there been any citations by the licensing authority?
- If so, have the problems been corrected?
- Is the facility certified to receive Medicare and/or Medi-Cal payments?
Ask for a copy of the facility's last certification report.
- Does the facility offer rehabilitation therapies such as occupational, physical, and speech therapy?
- Are residents allowed to wear their own clothes?
- Are residents allowed to decorate their rooms?
- Are residents allowed to keep some of their own possessions, including furniture?
- Is there a place for private visits with family and friends?
- Are the visiting hours convenient for residents and visitors?
- Is a list of residents' rights posted in an obvious place?
- Are the rooms well-ventilated? At what temperature are rooms kept? _____ ° F

- Can residents have a say in choosing roommates?
- Are social services available to residents and their families?
- Does the facility have recreational, cultural, intellectual, or religious activities?
- Are there group and individual activities? Ask to see a schedule of events.
- Are activities offered for residents who are confined to their rooms?
- Is there an activities coordinator on staff?
- Are residents encouraged—but not forced—to take part in activities?
- Do staff members assist residents in getting from their rooms to activities?
- Are residents encouraged to participate in activities outside the facility?
- Do residents have the opportunity to attend religious services and talk with clergy in and out of the facility?
- Are barber and beautician services available?
- Does the facility provide transportation for residents?

YES NO Does each resident have:

- A reading light?
- A comfortable chair?
- A closet?
- A chest of drawers for personal belongings?

YES NO Ask Yourself:

- If the facility is a locked or secured-perimeter facility, do you have the specific court authorization to place the conservatee in this type of facility?
- Is the facility near the conservatee’s family and friends?
- Is the facility conveniently located on a bus route?
- Is the atmosphere warm, pleasant, and cheerful?
- Is there a sense of fellowship among the residents?
- Is the facility administrator courteous and helpful?

- Are staff members cheerful, courteous, and enthusiastic?
- Do staff members show residents genuine interest and affection?
- Do staff members seem attentive to residents' needs? (If they are watching TV, for example, they may not be attentive to residents.)
- Do the residents look well-cared for and content?
- Do staff members appear to treat residents with dignity and respect? (For example, do staff members knock before they enter residents' rooms?)
- Do residents, visitors, and volunteers speak favorably about the facility?
- Is the facility clean and orderly?
- Is the furniture attractive, comfortable, and easy for physically impaired people to get into and out of?
- Does the temperature seem comfortable and the rooms well-ventilated?
- Is the facility reasonably free of unpleasant odors?
- Do bathing and toilet facilities offer adequate privacy?
- Is there a curtain or screen available to give each bed privacy?
- Is there a public telephone for residents' use?
- Is fresh drinking water within reach?
- Is there suitable space available for recreational activities?
- Are tools and supplies provided for recreational activities?
- Is there a lounge where residents can talk, read, play games, watch television, or just relax away from their rooms?
- Does the facility have a yard or outdoor area where residents can get fresh air and sunshine?
- Are there wheelchair ramps?
- Are the toilet and bathing facilities easy for physically impaired residents to use?

SAFETY QUESTIONS:

YES NO Ask the Facility Administrator:

- Is there an automatic sprinkler system?
- Are there portable fire extinguishers?
- Is there automatic emergency lighting?
- Are the smoke detectors, automatic sprinkler system, and automatic emergency lighting in good working order?
- Are there fire drills for staff and residents?
- Is there a smoking policy for staff, residents, and visitors? What is it?

Are there nurse call buttons and emergency call buttons:

- At each resident's bed?
- At each toilet?
- At each bathing facility?

YES NO Ask Yourself:

- Are smoking policy rules observed?
- Is the facility free of obvious risks, such as obstacles, hazards, and unsteady chairs?
- Are there hand rails or grab bars in toilet and bathing facilities and on both sides of hallways? Ask to see the bathrooms.
- Do bathtubs and showers have nonslip surfaces?
- Do all rooms open onto a hallway?
- Are exits clearly marked and exit signs illuminated?
- Are exit doors unobstructed and can they be unlocked from inside?
- Are doors to stairways kept closed?
- Is the facility well-lighted?
- Are hallways wide enough to allow wheelchairs to pass each other easily?

Is an emergency evacuation plan posted in a prominent place?

HEALTH SERVICE QUESTIONS

YES NO Ask the Facility Administrator:

- In case of medical emergencies, is a doctor available at all times, either on staff or on call? Ask for the names of doctors on staff or on call.
- Does the facility allow residents to be treated by doctors of their own choosing?
- Are residents involved in planning their own care?
- Is confidentiality of medical records assured?
- Has the facility made arrangements with a nearby hospital for quick transfer in an emergency?
- Is emergency transportation available?
- Does the facility have an arrangement with a dentist to provide residents with dental care on a routine basis or on an as-needed basis? Ask for the names of dentists who provide care for residents.
- Are pharmaceutical services supervised by a pharmacist? Ask for the pharmacist's name.
- Does a pharmacist maintain and monitor a record of each resident's drug therapy?
- Are residents allowed to choose their own pharmacy?
- Has a separate, secure room been set aside for storing and preparing drugs?
- Is there at least one registered nurse (RN) or licensed vocational nurse (LVN) on duty day and night?
- Is an RN on duty during the day, seven days a week?
- Does an RN serve as director of nursing services?
- If the conservatee requires special services such as physical therapy or a special diet, can the facility provide them?
- Is the conservatee's doctor willing to visit the facility?

MEAL QUESTIONS

YES **NO** **Ask the Facility Administrator:**

- Are at least three meals served each day?
- Are meals served at normal hours, with plenty of time for leisurely eating? Ask to see the meal schedule.
- Are more than 14 hours scheduled between the evening meal and the next day's breakfast?
- May I visit the dining room during mealtime?
- Are nutritious between-meal and bedtime snacks available?
What is served? _____
- Are special meals prepared for patients on therapeutic diets?
- Can visitors join residents at mealtime?
- Is there a charge for visitors' meals?
- Ask to sample a meal. Does the meal that is served match the posted menu?
- Are residents given enough food?
- Do the meals look appetizing?
- Does the food taste good?
- Is food served at the proper temperature?
- Is the dining area attractive and comfortable?
- Do residents who need help eating receive it, either in the dining room or in their own rooms?
- Is the kitchen clean and reasonably tidy?
- Is food that should be refrigerated left standing out on counters?
- Is waste properly disposed of?
- Does the kitchen staff follow good standards of food handling?

FINANCIAL QUESTIONS

What is included in the basic monthly fee, and what is not covered? Get this information in writing.

YES NO Ask the Facility Administrator:

- Is there a list of fees for specific services that are not included in the basic rate?
- Is there a refund for unused days that were prepaid?
- Is there a minimum period (sometimes called a private pay period) before the facility will accept Medi-Cal?

YES NO Ask Yourself:

Does the contract between the resident and the facility clearly state:

- Costs?
- The admission dates?
- Services that will be provided?
- Discharge and transfer conditions?

How does the cost compare with that of other facilities?