

# Nursing Homes and Assisted Living: Compare Because You Care

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# Objectives:

- Understand the difference between assisted living and nursing homes
- Understand various payment systems
- Understand the requirements for admission for each setting
- Understand how to choose a great facility for your needs
- Know what the phrase “The right care, at the right place, at the right time” means

# Assisted Living Facilities

- Assisted living is a long-term care option for seniors who need more assistance than is available in a retirement community but who do not require the intense medical and nursing care provided in a nursing home.
- Assisted living facilities are licensed and inspected by the state survey agency for compliance with the rules and regulations.
- Assisted living facilities offer a variety of services but the most common are medication reminders, all meals, transportation, and minimal assistance with the activities of daily living such as bathing and dressing.

- Some assisted living facilities have specialized memory units for the resident with dementia or Alzheimer's disease.
- However, assisted living facilities are restricted by law from admitting or retaining residents who require an extensive amount of health care.
- Medicare will pay for home health services if needed in assisted living and Medicaid will pay for personal care services, homemaker services, and medication oversight up to \$1,000 a month, but will NOT pay for room and board.

# Nursing Homes

- Provide 24-hour nursing care to those who are chronically ill or injured and unable to function independently
- There are different levels of care
  - Skilled services
  - Intermediate Care

# Skilled Care

- The patient comes to the facility after at least a three-day inpatient hospital stay
- Services are specialized and require a multitude of services delivered 24 hours a day by licensed nursing staff
- Other services may include: physical therapy, speech therapy, occupational therapy, intravenous medications administration or tube-feedings.
- For the first 21 days of skilled services, traditional Medicare will pay for the service at 100%

- Many patients coming to skilled services will only stay in the facility long enough to do their rehabilitation and then will return to their homes.
- If the patient has a Medicare advantage plan, the insurance company will approve or not approve the services for payment and the length of stay for the patient

# Intermediate Care

- The patient requires long term health care on a 24-hour a day basis.
- Most require assistance with activities of daily living
- The nursing home provides this care with a holistic approach—in addition to the nursing care, the patient requires mental, social, emotional and spiritual needs
- Care is “person-centered” as much as possible and allows for personal choice
- The ultimate goal is to provide services that promote the highest level of functioning for the patient

# How do you Choose????

- Making this decision is NEVER easy.
- Every facility is licensed and offers an array of services with round the clock medical care
- Not every facility however, offers skilled care services or participation in the Medicaid program. Not all providers have contracts with some of the managed care organizations so one of the first considerations has to be about what payment source is being used and what facilities participate with that plan.

- A lot of facility choices are made very quickly—let's face it, none of us want to think about needing long term care services and have choices made ahead of the illness that brings us to those doors.
- Ask the hospital discharge planners, social workers and your family physician if they have recommendations
- Ask your friends and family if they have a personal preference
- Make sure the information you receive is first hand knowledge and not based on rumors

- Nursing Home Compare can be accessed on line and allows you to look at survey history, quality measures, staffing ratios, and location of the facilities.

# Visit!

- Once you narrow the choices, visit the facilities
- Make an appointment with the admissions director, administrator or social worker for the first visit so that you can tour and ask questions
- If possible visit more than once

# What to look for:

- What is the first impression of the facility?
- What type of interaction do you see between the residents and the staff?
- Is the location close enough for family and friends to visit?
- Does the patient's physician make rounds at the facility?
- Does the facility appear clean and odor free?

- What is the general atmosphere of the facility?
- Do staff members know the patients by name?
- Are call lights being answered timely?
- Are visiting hours convenient?
- Does the weekly menu appear to be appetizing?
- If possible, look at a patient tray or even eat at the facility to see if the food is appealing.

- Is there an activity calendar posted?
- Are there a variety of activities during the day that you feel will be appealing to the patient?
- Are there any outside trips scheduled?
- Do activities happen at all different times of the day?

- Are the patients/residents neat and clean?
- Do they appear happy?
- Does it appear that they have maintained their dignity and self-worth?

- Ask if there is a family council. If so, find out when they meet and if you have time before the admission, attend one of the meetings and speak to other family members that have loved ones in the facility.

# Costs:

- What services are NOT included in the daily rate?
- Does the facility accept Medicaid, Medicare, Private insurance, and/or Medicare Advantage?
- What is the policy on returning advance payments?

# Patient Rights

- Is there a written description in the facility of the rights of the patients?
- Is it available for review?
- Is there a mechanism so that each patient may worship as they please?
- Are religious holidays celebrated?

- An unrealistic expectation is One-on-one care
- If a patient has a history of falls at home, they will fall in the nursing home/hospital/assisted living, etc.
- If a patient wanders at home, they will wander in the facility. Some facilities have Dementia Units where a key pad code is required to access but some don't

# What to do if there are issues to resolve....

- Talk to the social worker, the director of nursing and/or the administrator
- If there is a grievance form, fill it out and give it to them
- If that doesn't work, Call your area ombudsman for remediation

- Constantly, we are talking about the Continuum of Care---
- That continuum includes all health services available to you including long term care services
- You should always seek “The right care at the right time with the right provider”

????????? QUESTIONS ????????