

A Message from Your Senator



Dear Friend,

Making a decision about a nursing home in which to place a loved one or yourself is not easy. Often, the decision must be made in a matter of days. Even when one knows

well in advance, there still are many aspects that should be considered in picking the right home. I hope this brochure will help make your decision easier.

Sincerely,



Wayne D. Fontana
Senator—42nd District

More Information

For information about nursing homes, contact:

Office of State Long Term Care Ombudsman
Pennsylvania Department of Aging
555 Walnut Street • Forum Place • 5th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17101-1919
(717) 783-1550

Division of Nursing Care Facilities
Pennsylvania Department of Health
Room 526 • Health & Welfare Building
7th & Forster Street • Harrisburg, PA 17120
(717) 787-1816

For complaints regarding Nursing Homes/Long Term Care Facilities:

call toll-free: 1-800-254-5164

Visit the PA Department of Health web site at:

www.health.state.pa.us



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- ◆ Important Questions to Ask
- ◆ Tips on Touring Homes
- ◆ Financial Considerations

N A Guide to Selecting a NURSING HOME

Compliments of

**State Senator
WAYNE D. FONTANA**

Serving the 42nd District

Making a Decision

The major concern of most people about to enter a nursing home is how they will finance the care. Before you begin looking at homes, account for all possible sources of funding and project those sources well into the future. Include private insurance, personal financial resources and eligibility for Medicaid or Medicare. Ask for a written copy of each home's policies, including admission, transfer and discharge agreements. Ask each home if there are items or services you want that are not included in the payment rate and what they cost. Ask your family and friends about what they have heard about the nursing homes you are considering. Clergy and medical professionals may provide you with insight. To help you better compare what each home has to offer, ask the following questions. There is space for the answers from three nursing homes.

Asking Questions

◆ Name of nursing home:

◆ What is the bed capacity?

◆ How many residents is the home currently caring for?

◆ Who is the facility owner?

◆ Who is the managing company?

◆ What is the current license status?

◆ Has the facility had licensing problems in the last five years?

◆ What are the nursing hours per patient per day?

◆ What are the staff levels at different times of the day and night?

◆ What is the availability of specific therapy the resident will require?

◆ Is the home conveniently located for family and friends to visit?

◆ Is the home affiliated with a religion?

◆ Is the home a Medicare participant?

◆ Is the home a Medicaid (Medical Assistance) participant?

◆ How much will you or your loved one be required to pay over specific periods, such as weekly or monthly?

◆ Will they let you examine recent menus?

◆ Is there a registered dietician on staff?

◆ What resident activities are provided?

◆ What is the name and telephone number of a local advocate for nursing home residents and families?

Touring Homes

Spend additional time in the home beyond your initial visit and tour, even if it involves just sitting in a public area where residents have access. Drop by at different times of the day. Talk to residents and observe the actions and attitude of the staff.

◆ Name of nursing home:

◆ Is it clean?

◆ Does it smell clean?

◆ What are the visiting hours?

◆ Do the hallways, stairs and bathrooms have grab bars?

◆ Does the home/rooms have a colorful, pleasant, home-like atmosphere?

◆ Are the residents clean and properly groomed?

◆ Is there an active resident's council?

◆ Do staff members knock before entering residents' rooms?

◆ How do staff members talk to residents?

◆ Do residents appear generally upbeat?
