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*If Veterans don't help Veterans, who will?*

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# Helping you choose: Quality nursing care center services



Sometimes, after a hospital stay or an extended illness, you or your loved one may need additional nursing care or rehabilitation. Nursing and rehabilitation centers also may be known as skilled nursing facilities or nursing homes. These centers provide 24-hour care to patients and residents of all ages. Ask your doctor, social worker, or hospital discharge planner to suggest some nursing homes to visit. You should find out some information to help you choose the best nursing home for you or your loved one. The following questions can help you get the information you need.



## QUESTIONS ABOUT CARE AND SERVICES

Ask the staff:


- What services do they provide?
- Do they have a list of fees and services?
- Do they accept payment from Medicare or Medicaid?
- Can they help you find out what is covered by insurance or government programs?
- Can they help you find a way to pay for care?
- How many nurses are on duty? How many staff members are available during evenings, weekends and holidays?
- Do they offer physical, occupational and other therapies?
- Do they treat people with dementia? How do they provide a safe environment for them?
- How do they provide security? How do they keep everyone safe?
- What if there is a medical emergency? What will happen?
- Do volunteers work with the residents? How?
- How do they handle end-of-life decisions? Are you and your family involved?



## PATIENT, RESIDENT AND FAMILY CONCERNS

- Who assesses your needs? Can a family member be involved?
- Is there a plan of care? The plan should cover services, how long treatment or care will last, and the goals for recovery. Do they involve you or your family in creating the plan so that your personal goals can be met?
- Do they have a resident council to discuss concerns? Does it meet regularly? How are suggestions from the council handled?
- How are personal, religious, or cultural beliefs addressed?
- Are there activity programs? Religious services?
- Can your room be decorated?
- Ask about food services. Is there a set time for dining? Is there a 24/7 cafeteria? Can you meet with a dietitian?



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- Can family and friends eat with you? Can food be brought from the outside?
  - Are pets allowed? Can visitors bring pets?
  - How do they provide news to you and your family? Do they have a newsletter, website, or use social media?
  - What are your rights and responsibilities? Are they written down? Can you get a copy? Can they be explained to you?

#### QUESTIONS ABOUT QUALITY

- Is there a quality improvement program? Do they have results they can show you?
- Is there an emergency plan? What happens if there is a power failure or natural disaster? How is care provided in an emergency?
- How are complaints handled?
- Are they accredited? This means the center follows guidelines for safety and quality. Go to [Quality Check®](http://www.qualitycheck.org) at [www.qualitycheck.org](http://www.qualitycheck.org) to find a Joint Commission-accredited nursing care center.



#### RESOURCES

[Nursing Home Compare](#) – information about Medicare and Medicaid-certified nursing homes in the U.S.

*The Helping You Choose series is published by The Joint Commission, the largest health care accrediting body in the United States that promotes quality and safety.*