



## ***TIPS FOR CHOOSING AN ASSISTED LIVING COMMUNITY***

Making the decision to move to an assisted living community can be difficult—even if you and your loved one are aware of the benefits. To make the transition easier, we are pleased to provide the following guidelines.

### **Personal Care Needs**

- Is there a written care plan for the care of each resident outline their personal care needs for the day/week?
- Is there an ongoing process for assessing a resident's need for services? How often are those needs evaluated?
- How does the community accommodate residents with changing needs?
- Is staff available to provide 24-hour assistance with activities of daily living (ADLs)?
- Does the residence have programs for Alzheimer's, dementia, and other special needs?
- How often does a staff member check on a resident's whereabouts and well-being?
- If a resident's behavior changes and becomes verbally or physically abusive, what is the community's course of action?
- Are there additional fees for incontinence care?

### **Health Care Needs**

- Does a nurse make regular checkups? To what extent is medical care available?
- Will the staff set up medical appointments and transportation for each resident?
- Does the residence's pharmacy provide delivery, consultation, and review of medicines?
- Does staff supervise/assist residents in taking medicine? May residents take their own medications?
- What health care services are available at the community? Physical therapy? Wound care? Hospice care? Social services?
- Does the residence have a clearly stated procedure for responding to medical emergencies? Is there an arrangement with a nearby hospital?
- Under what circumstances does the community call the family, or the resident's doctor?
- Where are the resident's medications kept? Are there any medications that the community cannot assist with?

### **Resident Services**

- What resident services are available onsite?
- Are housekeeping, linen service, and personal laundry included in the fees?
- Does the residence provide transportation to medical appointments? What is the geographic area they will travel?

**Location**

- Do you like the community's outward appearance?
- Is the community convenient for frequent visits by family and friends?
- Is the community near shopping centers and other entertainment?
- Can the resident access a medical complex easily?

**Living Environment**

- Is the decor attractive and homey?
- Are doorways, hallways, and rooms accommodating to wheelchairs and walkers?
- Are elevators available for those unable to use stairways?
- Are hand rails available to aid in walking?
- Is the residence clean, free of odors, and appropriately heated/cooled?
- Does the residence have good lighting, sprinklers, and clearly marked exits?
- What is the community's means of security if a resident wanders?
- Is there an emergency evacuation plan?
- Does the community hold fire drills?

**Accommodations**

- How many living units are in the community?
- Are there different sizes and types of units available with optional floor plans?
- Is there a waiting list?
- Does the residence have furnished/unfurnished rooms?
- May residents decorate their own rooms? Paint?
- Is a 24-hour emergency response system accessible from the unit?
- Are bathrooms private with handicapped accommodations for wheelchairs and walkers?
- Do all units have a telephone, cable TV and wireless internet and how is billing handled?
- Does each kitchen unit have a refrigerator, sink, and cooking element?

**Meals**

- Does the residence provide three meals a day, seven days a week?
- Does a qualified dietitian approve menus?
- Are residents involved in menu planning, and may they request special foods?
- Are meals provided at set times? Are snacks available?
- If a resident becomes ill, is tray service available?
- Can residents have guests dine with them for an additional fee?
- Is there a private dining room for special events and occasions?
- Can residents eat meals in their units? Is there a tray service fee?

**Social and Recreational Activities**

- What kinds of activities are offered?
- Is there an organized activities program with a posted daily schedule of events?

- Do volunteers and family members come into the residence to participate in or conduct programs?
- Does the community schedule trips or go to other events off premises?
- Are religious services held on the premises or are arrangements made for nearby services?
- Are there fitness facilities as well as regularly scheduled exercise classes?
- Are pets allowed in the residence? Can pets visit?

### **Other Residents**

- Do residents socialize with each other and appear comfortable?
- Can you picture your family member content at this residence?
- Are visits with residents welcome at any time?

### **Staff**

- What are the hiring procedures and requirements for staff eligibility? Are criminal background checks, references, and certifications required?
- Is there a staff training program in place, and what does it entail?
- Is the Executive Director available to answer questions or discuss problems?
- What is the staff-to-resident ratio?
- Does the staff seem courteous to residents and to each other?
- How does the staff respond to your questions?

### **Licensure and Certification**

- Does the residence have a current license/certification?
- Is the community a member of a trade or professional association?
- What reputation does the community have in the community? How long has it been in business? Is it in good financial health?
- Is the community sponsored by a nonprofit organization and managed under contract with a commercial firm?
- Is there a resident council or organization through which residents/family have a means of voicing their views on the management of the community?

### **Contract and Costs**

- Are residents required to purchase renters' insurance for personal property in their units?
- What is the monthly fee? What is the history on monthly fee increases?
- What are the specific costs for various levels of services? Is the monthly fee inclusive?
- When may a contract be terminated?
- Are there any subsidy programs available to help cover costs?

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