

Choosing a Nursing Home

Making An Important Life Decision

Choosing a nursing home may be one of the most important life decisions you may have to make for yourself, a family member, or a friend. Often the decision will need to be made during a crisis or immediately after a serious illness or injury. Learning as much as you can about a facility is important to the health and well-being of the potential resident.

Speak With Trusted Sources

To aid you in your search, speak with people you trust who may provide valuable information about a particular facility as well as the needs of the potential resident. Such people include health professionals, social workers, and hospital discharge planners or friends and family members. If you are helping someone find a nursing home, be sure to get them involved in the process, when possible. If the person is unable or unwilling to become involved, keep their preferences and values in mind when making your selection. Planning ahead will make the job of finding the right nursing home much less stressful.

Gather Information

Begin gathering basic information about the nursing homes you are considering. Use a [Nursing Home Checklist](#) (PDF) during your facility tours so you know what questions to ask. In advance of your visit, do research online at [Nursing Home Compare](#) which is an official U.S. government website operated under the Medicare program. There are many nursing homes in Carroll County, so it is wise to narrow down your search.

Visit Multiple Facilities

Visiting one or more facilities will give you the opportunity to go on a formal tour and to meet the nursing home staff and residents. Complete the [Nursing Home Checklist](#) (PDF) and take notes at each facility you visit. After choosing a facility of interest, visit again at different times of the day and on different days of the week to see a complete picture of the services and activities offered to residents. Take special note of how staff interacts with residents and the quality of life for the residents. Observe if the residents are

receiving services and care that will allow them to achieve the highest practicable level of physical, social, and mental well-being.

Before Making a Final Decision

Be sure to obtain a copy of the nursing home contract to take home with you to review. Ask the nursing facility about parts of the contract which are not clear to you. If you still have questions, you may want to consider having an attorney review the contract prior to signing. Be sure the contract is fully completed at the time you sign it. Obtain a full and exact copy of the original document after both you and the facility have signed.

Additional Information

For additional information about nursing facilities and resident rights, the [Maryland Office of Health Care Quality](#) may be of assistance. Or, contact the Carroll County Ombudsman Program by calling the Bureau of Aging & Disabilities at 410-386-3800.