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FAITH
IN ACTION

EVALUATING A NURSING CARE CENTER

A Nursing Care Center is a live-in facility where the needs of your loved one (medical, emotional, spiritual) are met by trained and qualified personnel. While most often, people enter this facility for long term care, sometimes people will need to be placed here temporarily for rehabilitation purposes (i.e., learning how to walk after a hip replacement, or dealing with the effects from a stroke).

1. Is the center profit- or not-for-profit?
2. What is the web site and/or e-mail address?
3. Would they mail information to out-of-state family members?
4. How long has the business existed?
5. Has this center ever had its IDPH License suspended? What for? What is its IDPH rating? All nursing homes are now evaluated on a web site although the data is very poor. If they don't report, they look good.
6. BUILDING and GROUNDS:

Look at the building grounds – are they attractive, well cared for?

Judging from outward appearances, how would you feel coming to visit?

Is there adequate and convenient parking?

7. Reception desk: Attractive, and staffed with knowledgeable staff member?
8. Do residents have easy, safe access to the outdoors? Are there walking paths, benches?
9. INTERIOR:

As you tour the center, is it clean and odor free? (This is very important – must not have a strong fragrance, smell covering up others!)

Are the furnishings attractive, homey?

10. LOCATION:

Is the location convenient for family and friends?

Close to doctors, near a hospital?

WHICH hospital would your loved one go to if needed?

11. STAFF:

Was the staff friendly; do they know the residents by name?

How do the staff interact with residents during your tour?

What is the longevity of the staff, rate of staff turnover?

Is the staff licensed, certified in CPR, personal care, decubiti, dementia care?

How many, and WHAT LEVEL of staff members are on each shift?

What is the typical staff-resident ratio on the various shifts? How many RN's are available at all times?

How do your social workers typically interact with residents and their families?

12. CARE PLAN:

Will the center complete and administer an individual assessment for The resident?

What is the family input?

13. MEDICAL STAFF:

Is there a physician available 24 hours a day?

How often will a resident be seen by the house physician, or can the current attending physician continue care?

Is a podiatrist on staff? What are the fees and frequency of these visits?

How do you handle visits with an audiologist, optometrist, or other specialists?

14. What type of rehabilitation services are available if needed (physical, occupational, etc.?) What equipment is available? Are the therapists licensed?

This is especially important if your loved one is going to a nursing home for short-term rehabilitation.

15. MEDICATIONS:

Is there an on-site pharmacy? Are we required to use it, or can we use our own pharmacy?

Will the staff assist in dispensing medications?

16. SPECIAL NEEDS:

Is there a special unit for Alzheimer's or dementia? What are the requirements for admission?

Is there an isolation room for contagious diseases?

What is their wound care protocol?

What are their fall precautions?

17. ROOM:

Is the room large enough? Does it have adequate closed space?

Is the bathroom wheelchair accessible, and does it have adequate grab bars?

Can residents decorate according to their own tastes? Can they bring in their own furnishings, and if so, what particular pieces?

What about bedding, radio, V.C.R., CD/tape player?

How are the resident's possessions catalogued and safeguarded, including cash?

18. MEALS:

Is the menu created by an on-site dietitian?

Is the menu available for review by the family?

Are the meals served at correct temperatures?

Where would my loved one eat? Will you feed my loved one in his or her room if not able to dine with others?

What are the policies and charges for having a meal with my family member?

What facilities are available for family celebrations, meals, etc.?

ASK FOR A SAMPLE MEAL.

19. LAUNDRY:

Is laundry service provided and included in the room charge?

Are there options for doing my loved one's laundry at home?

Will linens be changed immediately for episodes of incontinence?

20. ACTIVITIES:

What activities/programs are addressed to the emotional/psychological needs of the residents or their families? (i.e., programs dealing with guilt, fear, loneliness, etc.)

What are the other types scheduled activities?

Inside events?

Are there outside activities?

Excursions?

Are there worship services on-site? What type and how frequent?

Chaplain visits?

Visiting regulations for pet?

Hair salon/barbershop? What are the fees?

21. FINAL DECISION:

What are the steps leading up to and including admission?

Have you reviewed and understood everything in the residency

agreement?

What will the monthly costs be?

Is an initial deposit required? If so, what is the exact amount?

What options are there for payment?

Do they accept Medicaid? What are the requirements?

What institutional affiliations exist between this nursing center and hospitals, hospices, and home health agencies? Name them.