

*Your family ... our focus*

Valley VNA  
Senior Services

Assisted Living • In-Home Care



## HOW TO CHOOSE AN ASSISTED LIVING COMMUNITY

We all have different needs, so it's important to learn about assisted living options that are available in your community. Take the time to visit several for tours at different times of the day and different days of the week to get a feel for the community. We offer this tool for you to use as you research assisted living options.

**GENERAL INFORMATION** - It's important to learn about the organization. Each assisted living community varies in their level of business experience.

- Who owns and operates the assisted living community? How long has it been in business? Is it in good financial health? What reputation does the organization have in the community?
- Is the facility convenient for frequent visits by family and friends? Can the resident access a medical complex easily? Is public transportation available/accessible?
- Are you welcomed with a warm greeting from the staff? Are visits with the residents encouraged and welcome at any time?
- Is there a waiting list? If so, how long do they estimate it will take for an opening?

**LOCATION/LIVING ENVIRONMENT** - Location, household size, and style vary. Base decisions on your preferences.

- Are the rooms private with private baths?
- Are doorways, hallways and rooms accommodating to wheelchairs and walkers? Are elevators available for those unable to use stairways and handrails to aid in walking?
- Does the residence have good lighting, sprinklers and clearly marked exits?
- Is the residence clean, free of odors and appropriately heated/cooled?
- What is the facility's means of security? Is there an emergency evacuation plan?
- Is a 24-hour emergency response system accessible?

**MOVE-IN PROCESS, CONTRACTS & COSTS** - Assisted living communities should conduct an assessment before you move into the community. There may be income and asset requirements. Typically there are two types of pricing structures used by assisted living communities - all-inclusive pricing and a la carte. Be sure to ask if there are additional costs such as admission, endowment or enrollment fees, and security deposit.

- What's involved with the moving in/out process? How is the initial needs assessment done?
- Is there a written plan for the care of each resident and is there an ongoing process for assessing a resident's need for services and how often are those needs evaluated?
- Will your room be held for you should you require a hospital/nursing home stay and are there charges for your room while away?
- Is there a written statement available of the resident rights and responsibilities?
- Is a contractual agreement available that clearly discloses healthcare, accommodations, personal care and supportive services, all fees, and admission and discharge provisions?
- How much is the monthly fee? How often can it be increased and for what reasons? Is there a limit on the amount of increase per year? What is the history on monthly fee increases?
- What are the specific costs for various levels or categories of services?
- What additional services and staff are available if the resident's needs change?

- When may a contract be terminated and what are the policies for refunds and transfers? Is there an appeals process for dissatisfied residents?
- What happens if funds are depleted and full payments can no longer be made? What types of financial assistance are accepted at the facility?
- Are residents required to purchase renters' insurance for personal property in their residences?

#### **PERSONAL AND HEALTH CARE SERVICES** -

- Are residents and families involved in developing the independent service plan (ISP)?
- Is staff available to provide 24-hour assistance with activities of daily living (ADLs) if needed? ADLs include dressing, eating, mobility, hygiene, grooming (bathing, toileting, incontinence)?
- Does Assisted Living Community have programs for Alzheimer's, other dementias and other specialized areas?
- How are medical emergencies handled? Does the residence have a clearly stated procedure for responding to medical emergencies?
- Does staff supervise/assist a resident in taking medicine? May resident take own medications?
- Are housekeeping, linen service and personal laundry included in the fees, or are they available at an additional charge? Are on-site laundry facilities available and convenient?
- Does the residence provide transportation to doctors' offices, the hairdresser, shopping and other activities desired by residents and can it be arranged on short notice?
- What happens if the resident's health care needs change?
- What about special diets?
- Are common dining areas available and when can residents eat meals in their home/apartment?
- Are meals provided only at set times or is there some flexibility? Are snacks available?
- Can residents have guests dine with them for an additional fee? Is there a private dining room available for special events and occasion?

#### **SOCIAL AND RECREATIONAL** - Social events should be geared toward the needs of the residents offering a variety of activities to choose from. A memory care setting needs a consistent routine of activities.

- What kinds of group/individual recreational activities are offered and who schedules them?
- Is there an organized activities program with a posted daily schedule of events?
- Are religious services held on the premises or arrangements made to attend nearby services?
- Are residents' pets allowed in the residence? Does facility have pets or offer pet therapy?

#### **STAFF** - The CBRF license requires hiring Resident Assistants who receive 15 hours of in-service training annually. The RCAC registration does not have specific requirements for hiring and training. Additional training varies from place to place. An RN on site has the ability to manage complex medical situations that may arise day to day.

- What is the ratio of staff to residents?
- Is there an RN available? If so, when?
- Is there a staff-training program in place and what does it entail?

#### **LICENSURE AND CERTIFICATION** - The state of Wisconsin has two licensing categories that regulate all assisted living communities: Community Based Residential Facility (CBRF) – 24-hour assistance per day; and, Residential Care Apartment Complex (RCAC) – Up to 28 hours assistance per week. It is important to review your needs now and in the future to make the best choice for your care options.

- What type of license does the facility have? Is the license/certification current? Is it displayed?
- Is there a resident council, organization or means of communication through which residents/family may voice their views on the management of the community?

