



Tips for Choosing Long-Term Care

Visit the center or home. Visit unannounced several times, including evenings and weekends. The facility should look and smell clean. Observe activities, speak to current residents, and ask to taste the food.

What are the staffing levels? Ask what the staff-to-resident ratio is for daytime and nighttime. The fewer residents that each staff member has to care for, the better! Ask if the same aide will be assigned to you each time. Consistent assignments have been shown to result in better care.

What services are provided? Ask for a list of exactly which services are included. Also ask for the cost of other add-on services that are not included in the base rate. Do the best you can to “drill down” and get details.

What's in the fine print? Ask for a copy of the contract and read it before you sign. The contract is often the only way to really know what is provided and how much it costs.

What are their ratings? Star ratings of facilities are based on federal and state inspections. Ratings can provide useful information but should not replace evaluating the facility yourself to see how it meets your individual needs.

Nursing home ratings are available at <http://www.medicare.gov/NHCompare>

Adult Care Home ratings are available at <https://info.ncdhhs.gov/dhsr/acls/star/index.html>

How will they honor your requests? Ask the provider how they will accommodate your preferences and choices. Ask who determines when you need a higher level of care - you or the facility?

Will they obtain your informed consent? How will they obtain your consent before administering psychoactive drugs, such as sedatives or anti-psychotics? Will the provider obtain consent from your legal guardian or power of attorney if you lack capacity to give consent?

Do they have good references? They should be willing to provide at least three references from residents or family members.

About FOR

Friends of Residents in Long-Term Care (FOR) seeks to improve the quality of life for the 100,000+ individuals who receive long-term care services in both residential and community settings throughout North Carolina. We accomplish our mission by helping consumers and their families become educated and effective self-advocates.