

## Choosing a long-term care facility

Involving a shift away from independence and from familiar surroundings of home, choosing a long-term care facility is likely one of the most challenging decisions that a resident and family will make. When it becomes necessary, prospective residents and their families should work to become as informed as possible, and the Office of Long-Term Care Ombudsman can help.

### **Review as much data as possible.**

- ✓ There is considerable information in the public domain about each long-term care facility in Oregon, including licensing inspection (survey) reports, protective service investigation reports, and possibly sanctions/civil penalties.
- ✓ Nursing Home Compare, an online service offered by Medicare, provides a summary of the licensing survey for nursing facilities in each state.
- ✓ Nursing Home Compare information on “Quality Measures.” The measures are formulated using information taken from quarterly assessments of individual residents. There are ten quality measures, and include data such as the percentage of residents whose activities of daily living have declined since admission, or the percentage of residents with bed sores.

### **Review disclosure statements carefully.**

- ✓ When considering an assisted living or residential care facility, there is a legal obligation that the facility provide a disclosure of the facilities policies to the prospective residents. Billing method, policies for fee increases, and staffing plan, for example, would be included in the disclosure statement and can be compared to other facilities under consideration.

### **Attend a resident or family council meeting.**

- ✓ Most long-term care facilities have organized monthly meetings to solicit and respond to resident and family concerns for each facility. We recommend talking with other residents and families about the quality of care they receive.

### **Visit the facility--often.**

- ✓ While the logistics of admission to a facility usually take place during business hours, there is value in making off-hours visits to get a different picture of how the facility operates on an evening or weekend.

### **Ask questions of key facility staff.**

- ✓ Before making this critical decision, get your questions answered about the facility and the quality of care they agree to provide. Several organizations have developed lists of questions that may illuminate the quality the facilities you are considering.

1. National Citizens' Coalition for Nursing Home Reform  
([http://nccnhr.newc.com/public/50\\_155\\_3274.CFM](http://nccnhr.newc.com/public/50_155_3274.CFM))
2. Medicare's Nursing Home Checklist  
(<http://www.medicare.gov/Nursing/Checklist.asp>)
3. LTC-Resources.com  
(<http://www.ltc-resources.com/Choosing.html>)

**Keep the Long-Term Care Ombudsman's Office phone number handy!**

- ✓ The Long-Term Care Ombudsman's Office maintains files on nursing, assisted living, and residential care facilities in Oregon, and can review licensing surveys, protective service investigations, and sanctions over the phone with you. If you have narrowed your search down to five or fewer facilities, please contact us at **800-522-2602**.