

## **ASSISTED LIVING CHECK LIST**

### **Quality of Care and Service**

- Do residents appear well cared for?
- Are residents up, clean, and dressed by 10 AM?
- Are the residents well groomed, e.g., (shaved, clean clothes, nails trimmed and hair done)?
- Is there a written plan of care for each resident? How often is the care plan reviewed and changed? By whom?
- Does the facility offer programs and/or services which meet your particular care needs, e.g., dementia unit, etc.?
- What is the system for distribution of medication? Who does it? What is their level of training?
- Does the facility have access to doctors, hospitals, home health agencies and adult day health care services?
- Does facility provide transportation to medical services? Charges?
- Are there clear procedures for responding to medical emergencies?

### **Quality of Food**

- Does the food appear and smell appealing? Are fresh ingredients used?
- Do residents seem to be enjoying the food?
- Are residents receiving the assistance needed in eating?
- Are meals served at appropriate temperatures?
- Do menus offer choice? How often are menus changed? (Ask to see a copy of the week's menu.)
- Can the facility meet special dietary needs? Ethnic preferences?
- Are nutritious snacks available?
- Is fresh drinking water available?
- Can residents prepare meals in apartments?
- Does the facility make provisions to serve residents in rooms? Costs?

## Quality of Social Interaction

- Are residents interacting with staff and/or each other?
- Are residents occupied in meaningful activities?
- Does the facility have a planned activities program? Are activity calendars posted? On weekends?
- Is there a designated staff who coordinates activities? Are activities individualized or only done in large groups?
- Do volunteers and outside groups regularly visit the facility?
- Are there planned trips outside the facility?
- Is transportation provided for shopping and personal errands? Charges?
- Are pets allowed? Does the facility have pets?
- Are religious services offered at the facility?

## Quality of Participation

- Are residents and family members involved in assessment and care planning?
- Are residents and family members involved in roommate selection?
- Do residents have an opportunity to provide input into menu and activity planning?
- Are there procedures for responding to requests for information and complaints?
- Is the Ombudsman Program's poster and telephone number posted?
- Does the facility have a residents' council? Does the facility have a family council or support group?

## Quality of Staff

- How long have the current owner/s been operating the facility?
- How long has the key staff been working at the facility, i.e., administrator and assistant administrator, activities coordinator, cook, and nurse consultant?
- Has there been a recent turnover in key staff?
- How many direct care staff are there for each shift?
- What is the staff to resident ratio? What is the ratio on the night shift? Weekends?
- What is the turnover rate among direct care staff?
- Does direct care staff understand and speak English?
- What special training do staff receive in working with persons with dementia?

- Do the administration and staff know the residents by name?
- Does staff take time to talk with residents?
- Do administration and staff interact with residents in a respectful way?
- How long does it take for staff to respond to a resident's request for help or to a call bell?
- Does staff respect residents' privacy by knocking on doors or announcing themselves before entering rooms?
- Does the staff wear name badges?

### **Quality of Environment**

- Is the overall décor pleasant and homelike?
- Is the environment clean and odor free?
- Is the facility quiet or noisy?
- Is the temperature comfortable?
- Does the building seem safe and free from dangerous hazards? Cluttered?
- Are the residents' rooms, hallways, and common areas well lighted?
- Are floors of non-skid material and are carpets firm to ease walking and to prevent falls?
- Is the dining room pleasant and inviting?
- Are common areas, bedrooms and bathrooms accessible to wheelchairs and walkers?
- Are bathrooms conveniently located?
- How many residents share a bathroom?
- Do all bathrooms, showers and bathtubs have handgrips or rails?
- Are call bells accessible to residents? By bed? In bathrooms?
- Is there privacy in residents' rooms, especially in shared rooms?
- Is there any place to have a private conversation?
- Are residents encouraged to bring in some of their own furnishings?
- Is there a bedside table, reading light, chest of drawers and at least one comfortable chair for each resident?
- Is there a locked drawer to store valuables? If not, does facility make provisions to store valuables?
- Is there adequate space for clothing and personal belongings in each room?
- Does the facility have extra storage space for residents' belongings?

- Are there outside sitting and walking areas for residents? Are any covered to protect from sun or rain?
- Is there a fenced yard? Locked?
- Are there enough fire and carbon monoxide detectors?
- Is there a designated smoking area? Inside? Outside?
- Is there a disaster plan posted? How often does the facility hold drills?

## Practical Dimensions

### Accessibility

- Is the facility close to family and friends who will be visiting most frequently?
- Is the facility near public transportation?
- Is there adequate parking for residents that drive, and residents' family and friends?
- Is the facility in an area where it would be safe to visit at night?
- Is the facility convenient to the resident's doctor? Home health agency?
- Is the facility close to a hospital?
- Are family and friends welcome at any time or are there strict visiting hours?

### Suitability

- Does the facility have a good reputation in the community?
- Will they give you a list of references?
- Are residents and/or family members willing to talk with you about the facility?
- How did the administrator and staff treat you when showing you around?
- Did they answer all your questions to your satisfaction?
- Did they show you around the entire facility? Were any areas or sections not shown to you? Why?
- Do you feel that the administrator and staff are people you can work with and communicate with honestly?
- How would you or your loved one fit in? Is this facility compatible with your lifestyle?
- Can you imagine yourself or your loved one living here?
- How did you feel when visiting the facility?

## **Affordability**

- Are Supplemental Security Income (SSI) residents accepted?
- Do the estimated monthly costs (including extra charges) compare favorably with other facilities?
- Are there any upfront fees, e.g., assessment, community fees?
- What services are included in the basic rate?
- What is the cost for extra services? Levels of care? How is the need for extra services or higher levels of care determined?
- What are the costs for specialized services, e.g., dementia unit?
- Will the facility continue to charge a resident who is transferred to a nursing home or hospital and does not return to the facility?
- Are the costs and payment schedule clearly described in the admission agreement?
- Ask the facility for a copy of the most recent rate increase disclosure statement to find out the average monthly rate increases (actual amount and percentage) for each of the previous three years.
- Are the total monthly charges affordable over time?
- Will the facility give you a copy of the admission agreement to take home and study before making a final decision?

***Prepared by California Advocates for Nursing Home Reform (CANHR)***

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