

Transportation- fees involved, transportation to medical appointments, wheelchair accessibility, shopping and social activities

Staff- training, certifications, background check, retention history, resident to staff ratio, training with elderly confusion

Diet- special diets offered, fees for room delivery, dietician availability

Activities and Services- beauty parlor, laundry, church services, social activity schedule, resident voice in activities, and any fees involved

Changes in condition- what is the policy for changes in physical and or mental condition

Facility Visit

- Meet the administrator and discuss policy and plan of care.
- Look for safety and assistive devices in all areas of facility along with cleanliness.
- Talk to staff members and other residents, residents' visitors about likes and dislikes.
- Observe staff with residents.
- Eat a meal at the facility.
- Attend an activity.
- Obtain a copy of contract and detailed cost data. If possible review with an attorney who specializes in elder law.
- Determine what behaviors, conditions and circumstances are reasons for discharge, for example, confused states, bed-bound with caregiver
- Learn of any restrictions on visitors or overnight guest
- Determine if Medicaid payment is accepted
- Learn about the policy on retention of room if hospitalized

Resources

Excerpts from April 2005 Consumer Reports *Assisted Living*

Excerpts from *Explore Your Options - A Kansas Guide to Information and In-Home Services*, Johnson County Area Agency on Aging

Research Options

www.aging-parents-and-elder-care.com

Kansas Hospice & Palliative Care Organization (KHPCO)
Life Project 888-202-5433 or www.LIFEproject.org
Provides specialize care for terminally ill residents.

Better Business Bureau: 800-856-2417 or www.wichita.bbb.org
(Southeast, Central and Western Kansas)
Better Business Bureau :785-232-0454 or www.topeka.bbb.org
(Northeast Kansas)
National Better Business Bureau web site: www.bbb.org
Receives and reports complaints on business for questionable practices.

Kansas Adult Care Executives: 785-273-4393 or
www.k-a-c-e.org

Kansas Advocates for Better Care: 800-525-1782 or
www.kabc.org
Compiles information on nursing homes and will provide fact sheet on specific home for small fee.

Kansas Association of Homes and Services for the Aging: 785-233-7433 or www.kahsa.org

Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS) 800-432-2326, 888-369-4777 or
www.srskansas.org
Determines financial eligibility for Medicaid services.

Kansas Department on Aging: 800-432-3535 or
www.agingkansas.org/kdoa
Complaint hotline for nursing home services:800-842-0078.

Kansas Health Care Association: 785-267-6003, www.khca.org

Kansas Hospital Association: 785-233-7436 or www.kha-net.org

Kansas Long-Term Care Ombudsman: 877-662-8362,
www.da.state.ks.us/care
Advocate for nursing home residents.

For more information, contact the Kansas Department on Aging for a copy of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services booklet entitled "Your Guide to Choosing a Nursing Home."

Elder Care Assisted Living



Information and Options

*"Listen to me, O house of Jacob,
all you who remain of the house of Israel,
you whom I have upheld since you were
conceived, and have carried since your birth.
Even to your old age and gray hairs
I am he, I am he who will sustain you.
I have made you and I will carry you;
I will sustain you and I will rescue you.
Isaiah 46:3-4*

provided by Christ Lutheran Church
11720 Nieman Road
Overland Park, Kansas 66210
913-345-9700
www.clctogether.org

The prospect of aging can be a frightening one. Left to face it on our own we might be overcome with fear and sadness. But Isaiah 46:3-4 reminds us that we are not alone. Our God is with us through this as every challenge we face in life.

Whether recognizing you are entering the season of life where you must turn to others for some assistance in care or seeing your aging parents reaching this season, it may be time to research assisted living as an option.

Maintaining independence in as many areas as possible while having services available for assistance in areas of need will allow you or your family member to enjoy the days as safely and comfortably as possible.

There is much to consider when choosing assisted living. The time taken to investigate the options will be well worth the energy. The goal for both you and the facility in your search should be an environment that helps manage health care needs while encouraging the natural aging process through services and activities.

Housing Options to Consider

Senior Apartment Living – a complex providing kitchen, laundry facilities, security. Meals may/may not be included.

Continuing Care Retirement Community – offers full range of services, including nursing care when or if needed, Continuing care often includes everything in one package and changes as your health care needs change.

Assisted Living – offers support services that help to maintain privacy, freedom and independence, They also offer easy access to transportation and health services, housekeeping, assistance with bathing, etc. They must be licensed.

Residential Health Care Facilities – provide six or more residents with an individual living unit with a private bathroom, but not necessarily a kitchen, provide same services as Assisted Living Facilities. They are also licensed.

Boarding Care Homes – provide room, meals, laundry, cleaning, 24-hour supervision and may provide some other assistance depending on their license, does not include medical or skilled nursing care. Residents must be able to walk and be able to take medication on their own or with little supervision. Most do not care for more than 10 individuals and must be licensed.

Home Plus – private residences offering 24-hour care and supervision for five people or less, provide room, meals, 24-hour supervision, personal care, housekeeping, laundry and some group activities. Nursing may be extra.

Steps to Finding the Right Place

Construct a list of potential facilities.

Contact Johnson County Area Agency on Aging at 913/894-8811 www.agingkansas.org/kdoa
11875 S. Sunset, Suite 200
Olathe, KS 66061

If searching for other areas in the U.S., call 800/677-1116 or www.eldercare.gov

Obtain referrals from friends, family, your doctor, church or other health care providers.

Call the Kansas state's long-term-care ombudsman at 877/662-8362. They can give you information about complaints about facilities you are interested in and information on how to obtain inspection reports if there are any.

Access the Medicare website, www.medicare.gov/NHCompare/Home.asp which provides information and survey findings on nursing homes participating in the Medicare and Medicaid programs. Call 1-800-Medicare.

Consider location of facilities to family and friends, religious and cultural preferences.

Consider meeting with a geriatric-care manager. Their services are from \$300-\$800 initially. Go to the website of the National Association of Professional Caregivers at www.caremanager.org.

Visit the top four or five choices.

It is crucial to evaluate both the services provided and environment.

Services provided

It is often difficult to see ourselves or our loved one decline in physical and mental abilities. Successfully choosing an assisted living home must involve looking at each facility in terms of today and future needs that will occur as a result of the natural decline with aging.

It is important as services are considered and discussed to continually determine what is included in the basic fee and also the amount for services that are charged as separate fee.

Personal Care – if needed, what assistance is provided in bathing, toileting, dressing, eating, and walking

Medications- ask for policies on medications, what are their limitations on administering, fees, regulations on staff and family administration and what pharmacies are used.

(continued on next page)