

## TIPS ON CHOOSING A LONG-TERM CARE CENTRE

Managed by the Regional Health Authorities (RHA), admission to the continuing care system in Alberta, which includes long-term care centres, is based on a functional assessment of the individual's need, using the Alberta Assessment and Placement Instrument (AAPI). The Single Point of Entry (SPE) process, which is currently in use, was developed to provide a single point of access to individuals seeking facility or community-based long-term care.

Referrals for home and continuing care services come from many sources including family members, friends, doctors and the person themselves. Once the referral is made, the RHA's home care nurse meets with the individual, usually in his/her own home. On the basis of assessed need, a service plan is created for eligible individuals identifying the professional and support services required.

If a facility placement is contemplated, the AAPI is submitted to the Long-Term Care Facility Placement Committee of the region for approval and the individual's name would be placed on the list for admission to an appropriate facility. Clients are asked for their preference of up to three long-term care centres to be considered for placement. If the situation is urgent, the client could be asked to take the next available bed and would remain there until a bed became available at their preferred location(s). If the client requests placement in another region, the home region contacts the requested region to jointly co-ordinate the transfer.

Long-term care centres are funded by the Provincial government which pays for all care costs and residents are responsible for accommodation charges. Low-income seniors are eligible for financial assistance through the Alberta Seniors Benefit program. For information, please call 1-800-642-3853.

In order to make a fully informed decision about the long-term care centres to include on your preferred list, you should arrange to visit long-term care centres of interest since each has its own unique characteristics. The following is a brief list of things to look for and some questions to ask when you tour a long-term care centre:

- Is the home in a convenient location for visiting friends and relatives? What are the hours of visitation?
- How clean and well-maintained is the residence?
- Does it appear as though the needs of the residents are being well met?
- How much input and participation do family members have in the individual's care?
- Is there a safe place for residents to keep personal belongings?
- Are personal belongings such as furniture allowed? What about pets?
- What happens if the resident requires hospitalization?
- Can the residence meet your loved one's religious, cultural and language needs?

Here are some other ideas to help you choose a long-term care centre:

- While touring a home, ask if you can wander around on your own to get a better feel for the place.
- After a scheduled visit, drop-in another day at a different time of day to see if there are any differences.
- Ask for resident family references who you can contact for their opinions.

Feel free to contact us at 1-800-311-CARE (2273) or [info@thecareguide.com](mailto:info@thecareguide.com) should you have any questions or require further assistance.

Source: The Care Guide ([www.thecareguide.com](http://www.thecareguide.com))