

Tips on Choosing a Long-Term Care Home

Choosing an appropriate long-term care home for a loved one takes time and research, but you're already off to a great start.

Long-term care homes, also sometimes still referred to as Nursing Homes and Homes for the Aged, can be privately owned and operated, or operated by municipalities or charitable organizations on a non-profit basis. All long-term care homes are licensed and regulated by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. The Ministry pays for the programs and services provided by long-term care homes and residents are responsible for paying the cost of accommodation at rates that are set annually by the Ministry.

You should arrange to visit the long-term care homes 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 residence:

- Is the home in a convenient location for visiting friends and relatives?
- How clean and well-maintained is the home?
- 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? What are the hours of visitation?
- Is there a safe place for residents to keep personal belongings?
- Is there a volunteer program in place?
- Are personal belongings such as furniture allowed? What about pets?
- What happens if the resident requires hospitalization?
- Can the home meet your loved one's religious, cultural and language needs?

Here are some other ideas to help you choose the home that can best suite your loved one's needs and preferences:

- 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.

Application to a Long-Term Care Home must be made through your local Community Care Access Centre or CCAC where an assessment of the individual's needs is undertaken to determine eligibility for placement. Placement Coordination Staff at the CCAC will provide you with information and advice, application forms and explain the entire process. There may be a waiting list at some Long-Term Care Homes.

Feel free to contact us at 1-800-311-CARE or info@thecareguide.com should you have any questions or require further assistance.

Source: The Care Guide (www.thecareguide.com)