

Step 1: Why Move?

Many choose retirement or assisted living arrangements for the freedom and convenience long before any health concerns arise. Time that you would have spent laboring with household chores can now be enjoyed pursuing your interests and favorite pursuits. Your loved ones will appreciate your new-found freedom as they enjoy their time with you more and worry about you less.

Consider the following questions:

How much of your time is consumed by chores like preparing for the day, cooking, laundry, housekeeping, etc.?

How many of these things take considerably longer than they used to?

Do any of these activities seem overly tedious?

Do you require special assistance from a loved one or professional?

How much time or money does this assistance cost?

Do you or your loved ones experience stress/worry over your current situation?

If you feel moving to a care facility is the right decision, the following pages will provide a guide to help you and/or your loved one make the right choice.

Step 3: List and Rank Your Priorities

One of the best ways to achieve your goals is to clearly define them. Take a moment to consider what is most important to you during this process.

Examples of Common Priorities:

- close proximity to family and friends
- a walking path
- a beautiful view

Baptist Homes' Priorities:

- providing quality care and attention
- respecting the autonomy of each resident
- maintaining a loving, Christian environment
- making sure Baptist Homes feels like home

Use the space below to list your Top Priorities and "Wish List" Priorities, and then rank them by importance. Each time you visit a care center on your list, ask yourself, "How well does this option meet each of the priorities on my list?"

Rank	Your Top Priorities
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Step 2: Beginning the Search

The proper research of your options requires an investment of time, and this decision is too important to rush. The following plan will help you invest your time wisely.

Make the Right Decision the First Time

If you are hospitalized, it is worthwhile to seek Medicare coverage for extra hospital days, to pay for those days yourself or even to stay temporarily with loved ones until you find the right place. It is better to find the right home the first time than to "try out" a facility only to have to relocate later. Remember: You are shopping for a new home so it should be a place you want to live.

Make a Potential Home List

By considering these questions, you will get a sense of what is most important to you and begin the process by evaluating a few options on your list. Begin with your personal experiences:

What facilities have you visited in the past?

What did you like and dislike about each one?

Do you have friends living in a care center?

How do they feel about their homes?

How comfortable are you during your visits with these friends?

If you are researching on behalf of a loved one, make a special effort to keep them involved as much as possible. Ask for their opinions and do your best to view the options from their perspective.

Complete Your List

It is always a good idea to seek the suggestions of other trusted sources. These outside opinions may lead you to a wonderful option you were unaware of. Make the most of your efforts by talking to people with unique insight and experience such as friends and family, your doctor, fellow church members, church staff, etc.

EVALUATING YOUR OPTIONS

Once you have compiled a list of potential new homes you are ready for the visitation and inspection stage.

Begin with an unannounced visit during regular business hours to each location on your list. With an unscheduled visit, you get an indication of how they will respond to you as a resident or to a family member with an unexpected need. Baptist Homes welcomes visitors with or without an appointment; you should expect the same elsewhere.

Do not allow fancy decorations, lush gardens and other “curb appeal” features to disrupt your focus. Instead concentrate on what is most important, the residents and their care.

Take note of the following:

Resident Appearance

- Are the residents dressed in clean clothing that is appropriate for the season?
- Are they well groomed?
- Are they involved in activities or do they seem bored?

Staff Appearance

- Are they pleasant and helpful or do they look overworked and on edge?
- Does the staff treat each resident with equal respect, kindness and affection?
- Do they seem to really like being around the residents?

Facility Appearance

- Is the facility clean and well maintained?
- How does the facility smell? Are there lingering, unpleasant odors? An organization dedicated to maintaining a clean home is one dedicated to taking good care of its family.
- Do you detect the heavy use of deodorant sprays to cover up or mask odors?
- Is the floor well kept and free of litter?
- Are there handrails along the walls?

Remember, the residents are experts on their home. If you have questions, ask them.

To help you track your impressions and experiences of each visit, use the Facility Evaluation Form provided on page 3. By printing and completing one for each visit, you will ensure that you have evaluated each facility using the same criteria. Having specific things to evaluate will allow you to be better focused on your surroundings and take in more of what you are experiencing. Don't forget to take pictures to help refresh your memory when you are in the Decision Making stage.

Facility Administrator Questions

In addition to your observations, you will want to learn some background information. The following is a list of important questions that can be answered by the Administrator, either during your visit or through a follow-up phone call.

- Is the organization licensed for the level of service you currently need, as well as the levels of service you may need in the future? Specifically is the facility licensed for Assisted Living and Nursing Care?
- Who owns and manages the facility? Is it part of a national or regional chain or locally owned? Is it a not-for-profit or for-profit? Is it supported by or affiliated with a religious organization?
- What is the organization's philosophy of care? What is the difference between their chosen method and other options? (Part of Baptist Homes' philosophy of care includes Validation Therapy.)
- Are Medicaid and Medicare residents accepted? Does the organization restrict acceptance to private-pay residents only? What happens to private-pay residents when their funds run out? At Baptist Homes when a resident's funds are exhausted, the Baptist Homes absorbs their resident care costs without dependence on government funding such as Medicaid.
- What are the basic costs and what do they include? Are there additional charges for special diets, equipment, transportation, laundry, hair care and/or physical therapy? Is there an entry fee?
- How soon could the facility accept you? What is their acceptance process?

After completing your initial visits, comparing your notes you will be able to narrow the list of potential homes down to just a few that you really like.

EXPERT ADVICE

Below is advice given by Baptist Homes residents and staff when asked:

“What should potential residents and families look for in a facility?”

Staff:

- Observe the attitude of the staff and how they interact with residents and their families. This is especially noticeable during mealtimes.
- Look for a list of planned activities: Are there enough options? Are the options appealing?

Residents:

- Are the residents happy and content? Are their spiritual needs met?
- Ask the visiting family members how they feel about their loved-one's new home.
- Do the residents have their own, private living space?
- Do not be afraid to visit with residents about their feelings and experiences.
- Look for a place where you are treated as an individual, not as a number or a private in the army.

Facilities:

- A pretty facility does not matter if its staff does not love the residents.
- When you move be prepared to make this your new home.
- Is there a Chaplain on staff? Is it a Christian facility?
- Be sensitive to smell, cleanliness, noise level and the atmosphere in general. Is there a sense of peace or of chaos?
- Look for a record of state inspection deficiencies to discover how they have been addressed. (These should be available to the public.) Go to www.medicare.gov for additional information.
- Remember, appearance does reflect on type of care and you cannot necessarily gauge quality based on price.
- Ask to see the kitchen.

Visiting:

- Make an unannounced visit at an odd time. (Evening, Weekend, etc.)
- A quality care facility should have open-door visiting hours; you should feel you are being welcomed into a home when you visit.
- Do not be afraid to ask questions.
- Sit down with your family and listen to each other to get their feelings.

Facility Name: _____

Date of visit: _____

Resident Appearance

Are the residents dressed in clean clothing that is appropriate for the season? Yes No

Are they well groomed? Yes No

Are they involved in activities or do they seem bored?

Staff Appearance

Are staff pleasant and helpful or do they look overworked and on edge?

Does the staff treat each resident with equal respect, kindness and affection?

Do staff seem to really like being around the residents?

Facility Appearance

Is the facility clean and well maintained?

How does the facility smell? Are there lingering, unpleasant odors? An organization dedicated to maintaining a clean home is one dedicated to taking good care of its family.

Do you detect the heavy use of deodorant sprays to cover up or mask odors?

Is the floor well kept and free of litter? Yes No

Are there handrails along the walls? Yes No

Your Experience

Were you at peace during your visit? Did you feel at "home"?

Which items on your list of priorities were present?

Which items on your list of priorities were *not* present?

Facility Administrator Questions

Administrators Name:

Phone Number:

Email Address:

Good time of day to call:

In addition to your observations, you will want to learn some background information. The following is a list of important questions that can be answered by the Administrator, either during your visit or through a follow-up phone call.

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Who owns and manages the facility? Is it part of a national or regional chain or locally owned? Is it a not-for-profit or for-profit? Is it supported by or affiliated with a religious organization?

What is the organization's philosophy of care? What is the difference between their chosen method and other options? (Part of Baptist Homes' philosophy of care includes Validation Therapy.)

Are Medicaid and Medicare residents accepted? Does the organization restrict acceptance to private-pay residents only? What happens to private-pay residents when their funds run out? At Baptist Homes when a resident's funds are exhausted, the Homes absorbs their resident care costs without dependence on government funding such as Medicaid.

Was the Administrator helpful and easy to talk to? Did he or she seem genuine and interested in the well-being of the residents? Was he or she easy to reach and/or return your call in a timely manner?

What was your overall impression of the facility, residents and staff?

Overall Grade for Facility: Pass Fail

Your Rank: _____ out of _____ facilities

MAKING A DECISION

The final phase in selecting a good care provider involves a careful examination of legal, safety, social and spiritual issues. You will want to learn the following important information during your final inspection visit. Schedule this visit in advance to ensure you will have the Administrator's undivided time and attention.

Scheduled Visit Evaluation Form

Facility Name: _____

Date of visit: _____

Legal Issues:

Is a statement of resident's rights clearly posted? How are their rights protected? Is there an internal process to report potential rights violations? What are the follow-up procedures to such a report?

When was the latest state inspection report posted? Take time to read it. If it is not posted, request a copy including any deficiency statements and the facility's plan of correction.

Request a copy of their admission agreement and patient care policies. Are there any other agreements, contracts, forms or legal documents you must complete before being admitted?

Request a written copy of the refund policy if a resident is discharged, goes to the hospital, or dies.

Request a list of the basic cost of care, additional services costs and the entry fee. How does the organization help residents find available financial resources such as Medicaid, Medicare, Veterans benefits, cash grants and benevolent grants?

Spiritual Issues:

Do the residents have opportunities to attend religious services and activities of their own faith? What is their policy for visiting ministers or church groups?

Does the facility have an in-house chaplain? Do they have on-site worship services?

Social Issues:

Look for a schedule of recreation and social activities? Are a variety of interesting social, recreational, and cultural activities planned? Is there a lounge or community room for residents and their families to use?

Is the dining room clean, comfortable and attractive? What is the schedule for meals? What kinds of foods are included in the menu? Is the menu posted? Are visitors and family members allowed to eat with the residents?

What are the policies concerning visitors? Are the visiting hours clearly posted?

Is the family encouraged to assist in the residents' care? Are they involved in developing a resident's plan of care?

Safety Issues:

Is there an emergency evacuation plan posted in a visible place? Look for safety devices such as smoke/carbon dioxide detectors, a sprinkle system, fire extinguishers and fire doors. How often are these devices tested?

How often are fire and disaster drills practiced? Where will the residents be taken in case of full evacuation due to fire, hurricane, or other disaster that renders the facility uninhabitable?

What are the procedures for medical emergencies? What hospital are residents taken to in an emergency? How do they communicate with the family in such cases?

What was your overall impression of the facility, residents and staff?

Additional Questions that still need to be answered:

Overall Grade for Facility: Pass Fail

Your Rank: _____ out of _____ facilities