

QUESTIONS & CONSIDERATIONS FOR CHOOSING A SKILLED NURSING FACILITY OR A MEMORY CARE UNIT WITHIN A SNF

Is there a specialized dementia care unit? Is it dementia certified?

Other than being a secure unit, how is it different from the other units?

Can residents make choices about their daily routine if they are mentally capable?

Is there an outdoor area for recreation?

Are there nutritious snacks available throughout the day and evening?

How do they handle “behaviors”?

Is there psychiatric support available?

Turnover: How long has the director of nursing been there? Average length of employment for nurses and aides?

Staff

Do residents have the same caregiver on a daily basis?

Does the staff have special training to deal with dementia? Are staff on other units trained in dementia care? They will often need to fill in for staff in memory care.

Are background checks conducted on all employees?

What is ratio of aides to patients? Ask about day, evening and night shift. Also ask about weekends— Do they have ample caregivers on weekends? How many shifts were not fully staffed this past month?

Does the facility have an abuse prevention training program?

Administration

Does the facility have any complains or lawsuits filed against it?

How does the facility monitor for abuse?

What kind of communication is shared between families and administrators?

Does the nursing home have an active family council?

Are the care planning meetings held at times that are easy for residents and their family members to attend? How frequently are they held?

Are residents’ rights posted?

Does the staff knock before entering a resident’s room?

Are the doors shut when a resident is being dressed or bathed?

Does the staff respond quickly to calls for help? What is the protocol for time allowed to answer a call bell?

Is there an emergency generator or alternate power source?

What to look for:

Are stairs and hallways well-lighted and clutter-free?

Do the hallways have handrails?

Are residents clean and well groomed?

Are staff members interacting well with residents?

Are residents participating in activities and exercise?

Is the staff friendly, considerate and helpful?

Is there fresh water available in the rooms?

Does the food look and smell good?

Are the residents offered choices of food at mealtimes?

Compare SNFs—State Survey

<https://www.medicare.gov/nursinghomecompare/search.html>

Private vs Agency Home Care

https://www.aginglifecare.org/ALCA/About_Aging_Life_Care/ALCA_White_Papers_and_eBooks/ALCA/About_Aging_Life_Care/White_Papers_and_eBooks.aspx?hkey=b09b001a-fc74-4a35-97e7-1c67a093e49b