

Nursing Home Checklist

A. Using your senses of sight, hearing, smell, and touch

Strong Weak Neutral

1. Is there cheerful, warm interaction between staff and residents?
2. Does the administrator seem to know the residents and enjoy their company?
3. Do staff and administration seem comfortable with each other?
4. Do the residents have their rooms decorated?
5. Are residents using the common rooms – for example the activity lounge?
6. What is the noise level of the facility? Are there quiet places for residents?
7. Is the home free from unpleasant odors?
8. Do residents look clean and well groomed?
9. Is the dining room atmosphere relaxed and conducive to pleasant meals?
10. Do the meals look appetizing? Are residents eating most of their food?
11. Are there pleasant areas for family visits?
12. Do residents appear to be engaged in meaningful activities by themselves or with others? (as opposed to staring at the wall or TV)

B. Things you can ask the staff

Strong Weak Neutral

1. What kinds of activities are residents involved in?
Is there access to books, community activities, and pets, to retain former interest?
2. Does the facility have a wheelchair-accessible van?

3. What kinds of activities are there for residents with dementia?
4. Are there permanent staff assignments to residents?
5. Does the staff accommodate the family's schedule to assure participation in care planning meetings?
6. What happens if a resident refuses to take medication?
7. How are smokers and nonsmokers accommodated?
8. What does the facility do for residents who are depressed?
9. What is the facility's policy toward missing clothing and other possessions?
10. Does the facility have a relationship with the local hospital? How far is it to the hospital?
11. What does the staff do to encourage employee retention and continuity?
12. What percentage of the residents are private pay? What percentage are on Medicaid?
13. Does the facility provide transportation to community activities?
14. What types of therapies are provided to residents on Medicaid?
15. Who is your ombudsman? Does that person visit regularly?
16. What extra charges are not included in the daily rate?
17. How often have private pay rates increased? How much notice is given before an increase? Are there charges for extra care not included in the daily rate?
18. Who decides for each resident how he or she bathes and how often?
19. Who selects roommates? What do you consider when selecting roommates?

Things you can learn from residents and families

Strong Weak Neutral

1. What is your usual routine? Can you get up and go to bed when you wish?
2. Do you have the same nursing assistant most days? (Does this match B4?)
3. Are snacks available at any time? Are they what you want?
4. Do you participate in care planning meetings? Is your opinion valued?
5. Are care planning conferences held at times when family members can attend?
6. What happens when you have missing clothing? (Does this match B9?)
7. Are residents able to get help to the toilet within an acceptable period of time?
8. Whom do you go to with problems? Are you satisfied with the solutions?
9. Do you go outside as often as you wish?
10. What is the best thing about living here? _____

11. What is the worst thing about living here? _____

Information you can obtain

1. Copy of state inspection report – either from the agency that licenses and certifies nursing homes, from the facility itself, or from the ombudsman.