

Whether you're searching for a residential care facility, nursing facility, or intermediate care facility for the developmentally disabled, CalQualityCare.org can help you make the best choice.

Print this checklist to help you evaluate a facility during a tour and to compare more than one facility. Some of the answers will be obvious; others may require you to do some digging. Don't be afraid to ask questions of residents, visitors, and staff.

Do not trust your memory during these visits. Write down your observations and answers to your questions, as well as the names of people you meet. Not all the questions below will apply to your situation. But the more information you collect, the better you will be able to compare facilities to make the best choice.

The Facility

- Is your first impression of the facility a positive one?
- Does it meet your standards for cleanliness?
- Are there unpleasant odors, such as urine or chemical disinfectants?
- Do the common areas offer adequate light and ventilation, comfortable temperature, and relative quiet?
- Are there obvious safety hazards, such as cluttered doorways or hallways, upturned carpets, or slippery floors?

Resident Rooms

- Are residents allowed to add personal touches and furnishings to their living spaces?
- Is there sufficient space to live in comfortably?
- Is adequate storage provided for personal belongings?
- What is the facility's policy for matching roommates?
- If rooms are shared, are residents able to secure privacy for themselves?
- Is there a way to block roommate's noises that may be disruptive?

Medical Care

- Who is involved in setting up a resident's plan of care, and how often is that plan reviewed?
- Are residents and family members or outside caregivers encouraged to participate in the resident's care?
- Can residents receive care from their personal doctors and health care professionals?
- Can residents store and administer their own medication if able?
- If not, who dispenses it and how is that person trained and supervised?

Activities

- Ask to see the calendar of events and activities.
- Are activities offered in which the potential resident would be interested?
- Are residents taken on trips outside the facility?
- Is adequate transportation available?

Meals

- Check facilities at various times, but make a special effort to observe during a meal.
- Ask to see a recent menu plan.
- Are meals nutritious and served hot or cold?
- Are residents enjoying their food?
- Does the facility offer ethnic food preferences?
- Can residents choose their own mealtimes?
- Are there choices at meals?
- Are residents given enough time and encouragement to finish eating?

Residents and Staff

- Ask residents what they like and dislike about living there.
- Do staff members seem to know residents and interact with them easily?
- How many staff members are available to take care of the residents during the day, evening, and overnight shifts?
- How are staff members trained?
- What are their work hours?
- What licensed health professionals are available? What are their roles and responsibilities?
- What is the staff turnover rate?

Ownership

- Who owns the facility?
- Who manages it?
- What is the management's past experience?

Financial Status

- Can the facility produce proof that it is financially sound?
- If there is substantial debt, what is the plan for paying it?
- Are there adequate reserves to cover emergencies?

Community Involvement

- Are outside community members involved in activities at the facility?
- Are residents encouraged to participate in activities in the community?
- Does the provider participate in community activities? What are some examples?