



SENIOR SERVICES
Helping Our Elderly Live With Dignity

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ELDER CARE CHOICES

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HOUSING OPTIONS

Independent Living for Seniors: Retirement Communities & Senior Apartments

Independent living for seniors offers a choice of congregate housing designed especially for older adults. Age requirements of 50, 55 or 62 and older apply.

Independent living retirement communities (ILRC) provide many amenities such as restaurant style meals, housekeeping, security, laundry, transportation, social activities, a beauty/barbershop and more. Some may offer personal care services at an additional cost to the resident, as long as the resident is able to continue to function adequately in his/her environment.

Monthly lease terms vary among independent living retirement communities. An admission or registration fee may be charged. Monthly fees are based upon the size of the room and what additional services are provided. There are usually no entrance or endowment fees.

Senior apartments offer modern one units and some may have two bedroom units. There are also apartments for the handicapped. Senior apartments may offer many amenities like security, laundry facilities, an exercise room, and gardens, but they do not provide meals, housekeeping or transportation.

Continuing Care Retirement Communities

Continuing care retirement communities (CCRC's) offer independent living, assisted care, and skilled nursing in a campus-like setting. Some CCRC's have a religious affiliation, while others are owned and operated by a company or corporation. A minimum age requirement is necessary for admission.

Residents must be in good health upon admission to the independent level of care. As a person's health requires more assistance, the resident is moved to an assisted living unit and then on to the skilled nursing unit when necessary. Many continuing care retirement communities offer care in the assisted living and skilled care facilities for others in the area that are not members of the retirement community.

Services include meals, medical care, housekeeping, 24-hour security, social activities, and perhaps even pools, tennis courts and golf courses. Many have exercise facilities, a library, beauty/barbershop, a branch bank and other amenities.

Payment is a combination of entrance fees or buy-ins, monthly rent and medical fees. Resident contract arrangements will vary with the community.

Subsidized Senior Housing

Subsidized senior housing is available to individuals over the age of 55 years. These apartments may be publicly or privately owned, and offer rent (30% of adjusted income) that is affordable to those with low to moderate income. Apartments are handicap accessible and offer many safety features such as grab bars and emergency call buzzers or lights. Some apartments offer a security system. Apartments may provide a service coordinator on staff to provide links to community resources when a resident needs assistance with activities of daily living.

Assisted Living

Assisted living facilities (ALF) are communities that provide daily assistance with resident's activities of daily living (bathing, dressing, medication reminders, etc.), but offer less intensive care than skilled nursing facilities. Meals and snacks are provided. Assisted living facilities may offer more than one level of care or offer special care units for residents with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. All are currently licensed by the state as adult care homes.

Payment arrangements vary among assisted living facilities. All facilities accept private pay residents and some accept Medicaid reimbursement. For more information about the Special Assistance Program through Medicaid, contact the Department of Social Services, Medicaid office, at 703-3502.

Skilled Nursing Facilities

Skilled nursing facilities (SNF) offer 24-hour skilled nursing care to individuals who are either recovering from serious injuries, surgery or trauma, or have a chronic illness. Basic services include meals, assistance with eating, bathing, grooming, and toileting. Skilled care includes changing a dressing, monitoring catheters, treating bedsores, administering medications, and receiving intensive therapy services.

Medicare will assist with the cost of a short-term stay following hospitalization. In addition to Medicare, skilled nursing facilities accept private pay, Medicaid and VA contracts.