

ASSISTED LIVING IN FLORIDA

The Florida Agency for Health Care Administration is the chief health policy and planning group for the state and licenses and regulates health care facilities and health maintenance organizations (HMOs) in Florida. The Agency also manages the Medicaid program that provides health care to Florida's low-income and disabled citizens. The mission of the Agency is better health care for all Floridians. As part of this mission, we publish the *Consumer Awareness Series*, a variety of brochures to help the public make informed health care decisions.

This brochure provides information about programs that help the elderly or adults with disabilities live as independently as possible while also receiving support and care.

Note: This brochure is not designed to offer medical or legal advice. Please talk with your doctor for medical advice and an attorney for legal advice.

Information in this brochure is current as of December 2010.

Introduction

Some elderly persons or adults with a disability need support and care, like help with meals, personal care, and other activities, but they do not need the intensive level of care provided in a nursing home. A person, 18 years or older, can keep their independence while enjoying additional services provided in an assisted living facility, adult family care home, or an adult day care center.

This brochure will help you learn more about these residential facilities and adult day care centers.

Adult Day Care Centers

Adult Day Care Centers provide programs and services for adults who need a protective setting during the day. Participants live in their own homes, which can be a private home, assisted living facility, adult family care home, or another type of group home, and come to the day care center during certain hours of the day.

An adult day care center can be a freestanding program or services can be offered through a nursing home, assisted living facility, or hospital.

The basic services include, but are not limited to:

- Leisure and social activities
- Self-care training
- Nutritional meals
- A place to rest
- Respite care (temporary supervision of an adult, giving relief to the primary caregiver)

A center might choose to offer additional services such as health assessments; counseling; speech, physical and occupational therapy; modified diets; transportation; and referrals for follow-up services. If you need these types of services, ask the adult day care center if they are provided.

Adult Family Care Homes

Adult family care homes provide full-time, family-type living in a private home for up to five elderly persons or adults with a disability, who are not related to the owner. The resident may have their own room or may share with another person. The owner lives in the same house as the residents.

The basic services include, but are not limited to:

- Housing and nutritional meals
- Help with the activities of daily living, like bathing, dressing, eating, walking, physical transfer (moving from a bed to a chair, etc.)

- Give medications (by a nurse employed at the home or arranged by contract) or help residents give themselves medications
- Supervise residents
- Arrange for health care services
- Provide or arrange for transportation to health care services
- Health monitoring
- Social and leisure activities

A resident can also contract with a licensed home health care provider for nursing and other health care services, as long as the resident does not become more ill than is allowed in an adult family care home.

Assisted Living Facilities

Assisted living facilities provide full-time living arrangements in the least restrictive and most home-like setting. Facilities can range in size from one resident to several hundred and can include individual apartments or rooms that a resident has alone or shares with another person.

The basic services include, but are not limited to:

- Housing, nutritional meals, and special diets
- Help with the activities of daily living, like bathing, dressing, eating, walking, physical transfer (moving from a bed to a chair, etc.)
- Give medications (by a nurse employed at the facility or arranged by contract) or help residents give themselves medications
- Supervise residents
- Arrange for health care services
- Provide or arrange for transportation to health care services
- Health monitoring
- Respite care (temporary supervision of an adult, giving relief to the primary caregiver)
- Social and leisure activities

An assisted living facility may employ or contract with a nurse to take vital signs (blood pressure, pulse, respiration, and temperature), manage pill organizers and give medications, give prepackaged enemas from a doctor's order, and keep nursing progress notes.

A resident can also contract with a licensed home health care provider for nursing and other health care services, as long as the resident does not become more ill than is allowed in an assisted living facility.

Along with a standard license, there are several special licenses an assisted living facility might have.

Extended Congregate Care (ECC): An assisted living facility with an ECC license allows a resident to age in place by providing the basic services of an assisted living facility as well as:

- Limited nursing services and assessments
- Total help with bathing, dressing, grooming and toileting
- Measurement and recording of vital signs and weight
- Dietary management, including special diets, monitoring nutrition and food and fluid intake
- Supervise residents with dementia and cognitive impairments
- Provide or arrange for rehabilitative services
- Provide escort services to medical appointments
- Educational programs to promote health and prevent illness

Limited Nursing Services (LNS): An assisted living facility with a LNS license provides the basic services of an assisted living facility as well as additional, specific nursing services. Some of the limited nursing services are:

- Nursing assessments
- Care and application of routine dressings
- Care of casts, braces, and splints
- Administration and regulation of portable oxygen
- Catheter, colostomy, and ileostomy care and maintenance
- Application of cold or heat treatments, passive range of motion exercises, ear and eye irrigations, and other services as defined in law

Limited Mental Health (LMH): This type of license must be obtained if an assisted living facility serves three or more mental health residents. Services must be provided for the special needs of these residents, along with the basic services of an assisted living facility. A facility with this license must consult with the resident and the resident's mental health case manager to develop and carry out a community living support plan.

Choosing a Facility or Center

If you or a loved one decided it is time to move into an assisted living facility or adult family care home, or to use the services of an adult day care center, you may want to visit several facilities or centers and speak to the staff and residents or participants. This will help you learn about the providers, see where you feel most comfortable, and choose the one that best serves your needs. The following resources can help in your search:

- Find a list of licensed adult day care centers, adult family care homes, and assisted living facilities on the website [FloridaHealthFinder.gov](https://www.floridahealthfinder.gov) (click "Find Facilities or Providers").

After you have a facility or a list of facilities, click on a facility name to find the address, phone number, and driving directions. This profile page also includes the administrator and owner, the number of beds (for residential facilities), emergency actions (where applicable), and a link to inspection reports. Additionally, assisted living facilities will list the types of beds and specialty licenses. If you are looking for a particular bed type (private, extended congregate care, or optional state supplementation) or for specialty licenses (extended congregate care, limited mental health, or limited nursing services) you can choose this in your search option on the first page of Facility Locator by clicking Advanced Search before clicking the Search button.

- Get referrals to health care facilities and other elder services in your local area by calling the toll-free Elder Care Services Helpline at (800) 963-5337.
- Find information about adult family care homes and assisted living facilities at FloridaAffordableAssistedLiving.org. The site includes a variety of information, including financial resources and “Find-a-Facility” where consumers can do a search based on location, cost, services provided, and housing preference.
- If you want to learn more about a particular facility or center you can find inspection reports in the following ways:
 - Ask the facility or center to show you results from the most recent inspection conducted by the Florida Agency for Health Care Administration.
 - You can view these same inspections on FloridaHealthFinder.gov (click “Find Facilities or Providers”). When you have a facility or list of facilities, click on a name to view the profile page and click the link to “Inspection Reports.”

Questions You May Want to Ask

When you visit a facility or center you may want to ask some of the following questions, along with any other questions you might have.

Is the facility or center licensed by the state of Florida?

Ask to see the current license issued by the Agency for Health Care Administration. It should indicate if it is an assisted living facility, adult family care home, or an adult day care center. It should have an effective date and an expiration date. If the assisted living facility has a special license, as mentioned previously, this will be included on the license. Or you can check the license on FloridaHealthFinder.gov (click “Find Facilities or Providers” as described previously).

What are the fees and what services are provided?

Ask that the fees and all of the services be clearly explained. The facility or center may have one fee for certain basic services provided to everyone and a second fee to cover

additional services you may want or need. Think about additional services you might need in the future, not just your current needs.

What types of payment are accepted?

Payment for adult day care centers, adult family care homes, and assisted living facilities are most often paid with private funds. However, if you are eligible for some government help or you are covered by long-term care insurance, or other types of assistance such as veteran's benefits, ask the facility or center if these will be accepted.

For example, if you receive Optional State Supplementation (OSS), an assisted living facility or adult family care home must be eligible to accept OSS residents. (OSS is a cash assistance program to help pay for room and board costs at an assisted living facility or adult family care home. For application information, see "Financial Resources" later in this brochure.)

What paperwork will I need to complete?

Before choosing a facility or center, ask for printed information on the services, a copy of a contract or residency agreement, or any other paperwork you can take home with you. You can read these at home and write down questions you might have. You can also share the paperwork with a friend or family member.

Then make an appointment to discuss your questions and concerns. If possible, take a friend or family member with you, to help you gather information and help you think about your choices. If you ask a question, but do not understand the answer, ask that it be more clearly explained to you.

Before you sign any papers, read them carefully, make sure you understand them and that all of your questions have been answered. When you do sign paperwork, ask for a copy for your own records.

Examples of the paperwork include:

- A resident in an assisted living facility will sign a contract.
- A resident in an adult family care home will sign a residency agreement.
- A participant in an adult day care center will be given a written statement with the center's policies and procedures.

This paperwork lists the services to be provided and the charges. In addition, a contract and a residency agreement includes the housing to be provided, optional services and charges, refund and discharge policies, bed hold policy (described later in this brochure), and other important information.

A resident with behavioral health issues in an assisted living facility with a limited mental health license will have a community living support plan. A cooperative agreement is

established between the assisted living facility and the mental health provider. A resident living in an assisted living facility with an extended congregate care license will have a service plan. These will describe the specific needs and services for the resident as well as directions for meeting those needs.

Is there a limit on the amount a monthly rate can be increased?

Check the contract (for an assisted living facility) and the residency agreement (for an adult family care home) to see if the rate is guaranteed, for how long, and under what conditions a contract or residency agreement can be changed or ended. If you are given a verbal guarantee, be sure to get it in writing. A facility is required to give a 30 day written notice of an increase in the monthly rate.

What activities are offered?

Ask to see a schedule of activities. Are there a variety of activities you would enjoy? Is there transportation available to go to community activities that you choose? Are there planned trips?

What meals and snacks are provided? Are special diets available?

Ask how many meals or snacks are provided. Are they provided at certain times of the day or can you make choices about when you eat? Is there a variety of food served? Are special meals or diets available, if needed?

Are some nursing services provided?

Does the facility or center provide some nursing services? What do the services include? Even if you do not need nursing services now, you may require them in the future.

What if I need health care services from a home health care provider?

While you are a resident in an adult family care home or assisted living facility, you can receive services from a home health care provider, if you need them. Ask the facility if they will help you arrange for these services. You can receive these services as long as you do not become more ill than is allowed in the facility.

What if I have a medical appointment?

Will the facility or center help make appointments for medical care and provide or arrange for transportation to medical appointments? Is there an extra cost for transportation services?

Are special services offered for persons with dementia (like Alzheimer's disease)?

Ask what special services and activities are available for persons with dementia. Is the staff trained to handle the special needs of these residents or participants? Is there equipment to assure the person does not wander off?

What is the facility's bed hold policy?

If an assisted living facility or an adult family care home agrees in writing to reserve a bed for a resident who is admitted to a nursing home or some other type of health care

facility, the agreement should include a bed hold policy and provisions for ending the agreement.

The resident will be required to continue to pay the monthly fee until the bed hold is ended, as described in the written agreement; or until the resident or their legal representative tells the facility in writing that the resident will not return; or if a medical condition prevents the resident from telling the facility and the resident has no legal representative to speak for them.

Other questions for an assisted living facility or adult family care home:

Am I able to choose my room (or apartment) or is it assigned to me?

Will I have my own room or share it with another person?

Will I have a private bathroom or will I share with others?

Will I have a full kitchen or a kitchenette (in an assisted living facility)? If so, what will it include?

What are the living room, dining room, and other common areas like?

Can I bring my pet or pets?

Financial Resources

Services in an adult day care center or residency in an adult family care home or assisted living facility are most often paid by private funds. Some long-term care insurance may pay or a person might qualify for some help from government programs. Following is contact information where you can learn more:

- If you have a long-term care insurance policy, or are considering buying one, find out exactly what it covers, under what conditions you can receive coverage, any restrictions that might apply, and what you need to do when coverage is needed. The Florida Department of Financial Services regulates insurance in Florida. For questions or to request their consumer materials, call the toll-free number (877) 693-5236 or from out of state call (850) 413-3089 or view the website MyFloridaCFO.com.
- The CARES Program (Comprehensive Assessment and Review for Long Term Care) provides assessment of seniors or persons with disabilities to see what services they need and what programs are available. To learn more call the Florida Department of Elder Affairs toll-free number (800) 963-5337 or view their website elderaffairs.state.fl.us/english/cares.php.
- The SHINE Program (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders) is for seniors and people with disabilities and provides counseling on Medicare, Medicaid, long-term care insurance, prescription assistance programs, and other health insurance issues. To learn more call the Florida Department of Elder Affairs toll-free number (800) 963-5337 or view their website FloridaShine.org.

- The Florida Department of Children and Families takes applications and determines who is eligible for Medicaid, Medicaid Waiver programs, and Optional State Supplementation (OSS). Call the toll-free number (866) 762-2237 or view the website dcf.state.fl.us.

Some residents in assisted living facilities and adult family care homes may be eligible for Medicaid and financial assistance from OSS or a Medicaid Waiver program.

- The Florida Agency for Persons with Disabilities helps people with developmental disabilities and resources can include supportive living and Medicaid waiver. View the website APD.MyFlorida.com, which includes a list of area offices, or call the toll-free number (866) 273-2273.
- The Clearinghouse on Disabilities provides referral to state and community based programs for persons with a disability. Call the toll-free number (877) 232-4968 (voice and TTY).
- The Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs provides information and services and operates an assisted living facility and nursing homes. Call them at (727) 319-7400 or view the website FloridaVets.org.

Moving into an Assisted Living Facility or Adult Family Care Home

When you move into your new home you will be leaving behind the familiar and adjusting to new surroundings, new people, and new routines. You will also receive supportive services and care and have the opportunity to have daily contact with other residents and employees at the facility.

You will need to make decisions about what to bring with you. Ask the facility what furniture will be provided and what furniture you can bring. Ask if you can decorate your space.

Visit the apartment or room where you will be living, take measurements and see what closet or storage space you will have.

If possible, take time to carefully go through your personal belongings. Decide what you want to take with you and if you want to store, sell, or give away anything.

It may be helpful to temporarily store some of your personal belongings with a loved one or in a storage unit. Once you have been in your new home for some time, you may want to bring additional things from storage or exchange items.

Ask friends or family members to help you with packing, moving, and setting up at your new home. Ask if someone at the facility will help you move into your apartment or room. Be sure it is clear what day you are moving in.

You may want to label the things you bring with you and, if your laundry is going to be done by the facility, ask if you need to label your clothing.

If possible, ask if you can participate in a few activities or have a meal with the residents before you move in. This will help you meet new people and get familiar with your new home. Ask for a schedule of activities and choose some you will attend once you move in.

Important Phone Numbers and Websites

If you are concerned about the care or treatment you (or a loved one) are receiving in an assisted living facility, adult family care home, or adult day care center, you can contact one or more of the following:

Advocacy Center for Persons with Disabilities – Is a non-profit organization that provides protection and advocacy services in Florida. Phone them toll-free at (800) 342-0823 or TDD (800) 346-4127 or view the website AdvocacyCenter.org.

Agency for Health Care Administration – To file a complaint against an adult day care center, adult family care home, or an assisted living facility call the toll-free number (888) 419-3456 or find a complaint form at AHCA.MyFlorida.com/contact/what_happens.shtml.

Florida Abuse Hotline – To report abuse, neglect, or exploitation of children, elderly, or adults with a disability call the toll-free Abuse Hotline at (800) 962-2873 or view the website dcf.state.fl.us/abuse.

Long-Term Care Ombudsman Council (Department of Elder Affairs) – Helps residents who live in assisted living facilities, adult family care homes, and nursing homes with their concerns and civil rights. Call them toll-free at (888) 831-0404 or view the website ombudsman.MyFlorida.com.

Resource Directory

American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging
(202) 783-2242
aahsa.org

Florida Adult Day Services Association
(877) 342-3858
fadca.net

Florida Agency for Health Care Administration
(888) 419-3456
AHCA.MyFlorida.com, FloridaHealthFinder.gov, MyFloridaRx.com

Florida Assisted Living Association

(850) 383-1159

falaus.com

Florida Association of Homes and Services for the Aging

(850) 671-3700

faha.org

Florida Health Care Association

(850) 224-3907

fhca.org

National Adult Day Services Association

(877) 745-1440

nadsa.org

National Center for Assisted Living

(202) 842-4444

ncal.org

Additional consumer brochures include:

- A Patient's Guide to a Hospital Stay
- End-of-Life Issues – A Practical Planning Guide
- Florida Medicaid – A Reference Guide
- Health and Human Services Programs
- Health Care Advance Directives (available only online)
- Home Health Care in Florida
- Long-Term Care
- Patient Safety
- Understanding Prescription Drug Costs

For additional copies of this brochure, or others in the series, contact our Agency's toll-free number (888) 419-3456. To view or print any brochure in the *Consumer Awareness Series*, visit FloridaHealthFinder.gov.

This brochure may be copied for public use. Please credit the Agency for Health Care Administration for its creation.

If you have comments or suggestions, call (850) 412-3730.

The Agency for Health Care Administration created the following websites to help Florida residents be well informed health care consumers.

FloridaHealthFinder.gov

This website provides search tools to compare hospitals, ambulatory surgery centers, emergency rooms, hospices, health plans, and nursing homes. The site includes the A.D.A.M. Health Encyclopedia with thousands of articles and illustrations. The site also provides a list of health care facilities; information about insurance, medications, seniors, medical conditions, and resources for the uninsured; a variety of consumer publications; information for health care professionals; and much more.

MyFloridaRx.com

This website compares prices for the most commonly used prescription drugs in Florida.

fhin.net/eprescribe

Some doctors can send a drug prescription electronically to the pharmacy. To learn more visit the website or ask your doctor about e-Prescribing.

ahca.MyFlorida.com

This website includes information on health care facility regulation and licensing, the Florida Medicaid program, managed care (HMOs), and other topics related to the Agency for Health Care Administration.