

**Arizona Department of Health Services
Division of Licensing Services
Bureau of Long-Term Care Licensing
150 North 18th Ave, Suite 440
Phoenix, AZ 85007
602-364-2690**

A Consumer's Guide to Nursing Homes

I. General Information

All Nursing Homes in Arizona (with the exception of tribal) are licensed by the state through the Bureau of Long-Term Care Licensing in the Division of Public Health Services, under the Arizona Department of Health Services. State law requires that a nursing home conspicuously post its license. The law also requires that nursing home administrators be licensed. Nursing homes provide services to residents who require continuous medical and nursing care and supervision due to physical and/or mental disability.

In addition to state licensing, nursing homes may be certified to provide services to eligible Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries and in order to do so nursing homes must meet federal regulations. The Bureau of Long Term Care Licensing ensures compliance for state and federal regulations of nursing homes by conducting regular surveys and complaint investigations.

II. Choosing a Nursing Home

When choosing a nursing home, it is important to decide on the location and types of services that will be needed by the prospective resident. Locating a nursing home that provides the services and atmosphere a person needs and prefers, takes time and effort, as well as information. When you consider that the facility becomes a person's home and community for as long as the person remains there, the search is necessary and worthwhile.

Discuss the situation with other family members, including the person needing the care. If you are faced with having to move someone from a hospital to a nursing home, talk to the hospital's discharge planner or social worker. Other sources of information include your physician, the clergy and religious organization, volunteer groups that work with the elderly and chronically ill and nursing professional associations, the nursing home comparison website located at Medicare.gov, and the Bureau of Long Term Care Licensing.

Using the nursing home comparison website will assist you in making a list of nursing homes in your area that seem to fit the needs and preferences of the person needing care. The more choices you have, the better your chances of making the best selection. The nursing home compare website also lists whether the facility participates in Medicare or Medicaid. Homes can be eliminated from your list by making a few telephone calls to determine whether a nursing home actually provides the kind of care that is needed. Please note not all facilities will have vacancies for new residents.

Nothing is more important in choosing a nursing home than visiting those under consideration. When you visit, make sure you are aware of sights, sounds, smells, and trust your instincts. It is important to observe how staff and residents interact with one another, how residents relate to one another, whether or not the environment is “homelike” and how clean and safe the home appears.

It is preferable to visit the facility more than once and at different times of the day. One visit should be during late morning or midday so you can observe the noon meal being served. Another visit should be during the afternoon to observe the activities being offered. Another time to visit would be during the evening meal. Plan to spend at least one hour at each visit. It may be best to make an appointment to meet the administrator the first time you visit the facility to explain the purpose of your visits. Following a guided tour, talk to residents and observe conditions by yourself without facility staff being present. Ask to see the latest state survey (inspection) report and the facilities plan of correction.

III. Obtaining A List/ Comparing Nursing Homes

Access the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Health Care financing Administration website at <https://www.medicare.gov/nursinghomecompare/search.html> to obtain a list of all nursing homes by State. Once you have pulled up Arizona, you can refine the search by choosing the entire state, county, city, zip code, or a particular nursing home. When the list has been narrowed, you may then specify one of the following in English or Spanish; 1.) General Nursing Home Information: the number of beds and type of ownership 2.) Resident Overview: the percent of residents with pressure sores, urinary incontinence etc. 3.) Nursing Home Inspection Results: summary of results from the last inspection 4.) Staff: Number of Registered Nurses, Licensed Practical or Vocational Nurses, and Certified Nurses Assistants.

IV. Public Files

Please visit <http://azdhs.gov/licensing/index.php#azcarecheck> as AZ Care Check is a searchable database containing information about deficiencies found against facilities/providers by the Arizona Department of Health Services. To search by facility or provider name, address, city, zip code, provider type, or enforcement actions select the appropriate facility link (Long Term Care).

The files contain: facility license, quality rating, statement of deficiencies, list of services provided, staffing information, fire and food inspection reports, as well as general information such as facility ownership, permits, and waivers.

V. Your Rights As A Resident In A Nursing Home

The following summarizes rights you have as a nursing home resident as provided by Federal and Arizona State statutes, rules and regulations.

Basic Rights:

- To be treated with respect and dignity in full recognition of your individuality
- Dignified existence and self-determination
- Freedom from interference, coercion, discrimination, and reprisal

Admission Right:

- The nursing home must inform you or your representative of all of your rights in a language or manner which you understand.
- The nursing home must inform you of its rules governing your conduct and your rights in a language or manner which you understand
- The nursing home must provide written notice of your entitlement to Medicare benefits and information on how to apply for and use Medicare and Medicaid benefits.
- The nursing home must provide you with written information on your right to make advance directives and its policies of implementation of the advanced directives.
- You cannot be required to pay cash deposit or pay a pre-payment, if you are covered by Medicare or Medicaid.

Freedom from Restraint and Abuse:

- Be free from chemical and physical restraints that are not used to treat medical symptoms but for the purpose of discipline or staff convenience.
- Be free from verbal, sexual, physical, and mental abuse, corporal punishment and involuntary seclusion.
- Be free from interference, coercion, discrimination and reprisal from the facility in exercising your rights.

Visits-Privacy-Confidentiality Rights:

- Privacy in your room and during medical treatment.
- Privacy during your visits or meetings, in making telephone calls and with your mail.
- Confidentiality of financial and medical records and the release of such records only through written consent unless permitted by law.
- Access to those who provide health, social, legal, or other services.

Quality of Life in the Nursing Home Rights:

- Submit grievances to facility staff and outside representative without restraint.
- Contact and receive information from client advocates
- Immediate access to and communication with any individuals, organizations or agencies
- Choose activities, schedules and health care consistent with your interests and assessments.
- Organize and participate in facility resident and family groups.
- Participate in social, religious, political, and community activities.

Living Accommodations and Care Rights:

- Share a room with your spouse, if space is available and both parties agree.
- Be informed before a room or roommate change.
- Refuse a transfer to another room for relocation purposes.

Protect Your Money and Possession Rights:

- Manage your own personal financial affairs.
- The nursing home may not require you to deposit your personal funds with the nursing home.
- Authorize the nursing home to manage your personal funds and to receive regular accounting of those funds.
- Retain and use personal possessions.

Medical Care and Treatment Rights:

- Receive services which accommodate, within reason, your individual needs and preferences.
- Be fully informed of your health status and medical conditions.
- Choose your personal doctor.
- Participate in planning or changing your care and treatment.
- Refuse treatment or withdraw consent for treatment.
- Refuse to participate in experimental research.
- Have access to all of your records within 24 hours.
- Select a pharmacy in compliance with facility standards.
- Purchase copies of your facility records within 2 working days' notice.

Transfer and Discharge Rights:

- Be notified in writing 30 days prior to transfer or discharge from the nursing home.

Other Rights:

- Examine the results of the most recent facility survey and any plan of correction in effect.
- Perform or refuse to perform services for the facility.

VI. Help In Protecting Your Rights – The Long Term Care Ombudsman Program

The Long Term Care Ombudsman Program's primary purpose is to improve the quality of life, care and environment for long term care residents. This includes education as to your legal rights and maintenance of your dignity and personal freedom. In addition, the ombudsman program identifies problems and concerns of elderly persons receiving long-term care services and recommends changes in the long term care system, which will benefit these individuals as a group.

The function of the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program is specifically to assist consumers of long-term care services toward resolution of complaints related to the provision of such services. Often residents of long-term care facilities have problems, large or small that can be readily resolved, but do not know how to voice them. They are unaware of what services are available or exactly what their rights are so they remain silent. The Long Term Care Ombudsman Program is an attempt to provide residents a method by which their complaints can be heard and resolved, if possible. The ombudsmen serves as a companion, mediator, broker, educator, and advocate in his/her role in an attempt to resolve complaints as the programs goals are accomplished through a cooperative approach among providers, regulators, residents, families and the ombudsman.

Certified ombudsmen visit long-term care facilities. They establish relationships with staff and residents in order to help resolve problems that arise in the course of daily living. Anyone may initiate a complaint on behalf of a resident as often times residents are unable to do it themselves. Only as mutually agreed upon between the ombudsman and the resident or the residents legal representative will the ombudsman make every reasonable effort to assist, represent and/or intervene on behalf of the resident.

To Contact the State Long Term Care Ombudsman:

If you have any concerns or would like additional information about the ombudsman program. Contact the State Ombudsman at:

Arizona State Long Term Care Ombudsman
1789 West Jefferson – 950A
Phoenix, Arizona 85007
(602) 542-6454

VII. Contact Information

1.) Licensure, certification, regulation, complaint investigations:

Bureau of Long-Term Care Licensing
Arizona Department of Health Services
150 North 18th Ave, Suite 400
Phoenix, Arizona 85007
(602) 364-2690
Website: <http://www.azdhs.gov/>

2.) Additional Information on Nursing Homes:

Arizona Association for Homes and Housing for the Aging
3839 North 3rd Street, Suite 201
Phoenix, Arizona 85012
(602) 230-0026

Arizona Healthcare Association
1440 E Missouri Ave, Suite C102
Phoenix, Arizona 85014
(602) 265-5531
Email: admin@azcha.gov
Website: <http://www.azhca.org/>

3.) Elder Abuse Complaints:

Arizona Department of Economic Security
Aging and Adult Administration
Adult Protective Services
Toll Free: 1-877-SOS-ADULT (877-767-2385)
Website: <https://des.az.gov/services/aging-and-adult/adult-protective-services/adult-protective-services-central-intake-unit>

4.) Complaints against Nursing Home Administrators:

Nursing Care Institution Administrators, Examiners, and Assisted Living Managers
1400 W Washington Street, Room 230
Phoenix, Arizona 85007
(602)542-3095

5.) Complaints against Health Professionals:

Nurses or Certified Nursing Assistants working in a nursing home:

Arizona State Board of Nursing
4747 North 7th Street, Suite 200

Phoenix, Arizona 85014
(602)771-7800

Arizona Division of Health Services
Division of Licensing Services
Bureau of Long-Term Care Services
150 North 18th Ave, Suite 440
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Physicians/Physicians Assistants

Board of Medical Examiners
9545 East Double Tree Ranch Road
Scottsdale, Arizona 85258
(480) 551-2700

Pharmacists:

Arizona State Board of Pharmacy
1616 W Adams Street, Suite 120
Phoenix, Arizona 85007
(602) 771-2727

6.) Taskforce Against Senior Abuse (TASA) – Attorney General

The Attorney General's Office coordinates TASA, and its advisory board comprised of leadership from the public and private sector that work to support Arizona seniors. It was formed to:

- Advise Attorney General Brnovich and members of TASA in matters concerning the senior citizens of Arizona, including identifying statewide abuse issues and establishing goals for TASA to combat the issues.
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Contact Info or to file a complaint:

Phone: (602) 542-2124 / 844- 894-4735
Website: <https://www.azag.gov/seniors/TASA>

7.) Arizona Alzheimer's Association:

Website: <http://www.alz.org/10-signs-symptoms-alzheimers-dementia.asp>

Local Chapters:

Central Arizona Region:
1028 East McDowell Rd.

Phoenix, Arizona 85005
(602) 528-0545

Northern Region:
3111 Clearwater Dr Suite A
Prescott, Arizona 86305
(928) 771-9257

Tucson:
1159 N Craycroft Rd
Tucson, Arizona 85712
(520) 322-6601