



CHOOSING A CARE FACILITY OR HOME

A Guide to Choosing
a Licensed Residential Care Facility
or Residential Care Home



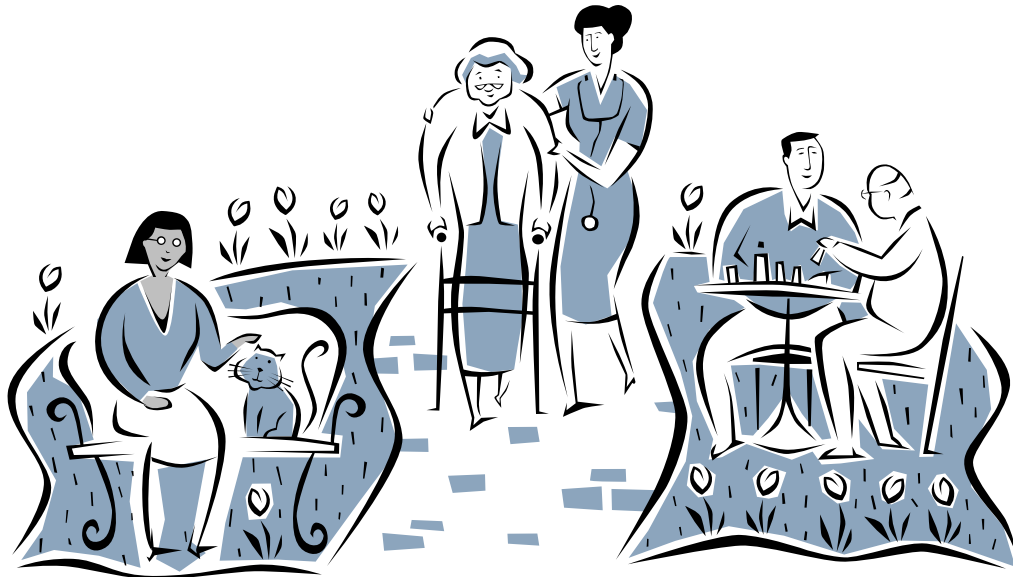
BRITISH
COLUMBIA

Ministry of Health and
Ministry Responsible for Seniors



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Introduction

Selecting a residential care facility or home is an important and personal decision that requires time and thought.

This booklet is intended to help people choose a residential care facility or home that is licensed under the *Community Care Facility Act*. In British Columbia you have several choices.

Licensed residential care facilities and homes provide care and supervision for persons who are unable to live on their own. Many of these facilities and homes are for elderly people who cannot live on their own. However, there are also facilities and homes which provide short or long term care to younger adults with either physical or developmental disabilities, substance abuse problems, or with a mental health illness.

A residential care facility provides care and supervision for 7 or more persons. Residential care homes provide care and supervision for 3-6 persons. Family homes that provide care for 1-2 persons do not require a community care facility licence.

While most care facilities are large, and may have over 100 residents, there are also facilities which are smaller and provide care to a much smaller number of people. Both large and small facilities work hard to provide pleasant and inviting atmospheres. Please remember there is no “perfect” size for a facility or home. Choose one that best matches your needs and lifestyle preferences.

In some residential facilities or homes, residents stay for only a short time, and then return to their previous home in the community. In others, this is a person’s home for many years.

Whether you are looking for yourself, or you are helping someone find a care facility or home, this booklet has been designed to help you in your efforts. It contains a number of questions you may wish to

consider. Although you may not have time to complete all of these questions, it is important for you to select the questions that are most important to your own personal situation.

Visiting a Licensed Care Facility or Home

Care facilities and homes have policies and procedures regarding admission and pre-admission visits. Check with your worker or long term care case manager (if you have one), and the facility or home before arranging a visit. You may be able to refer yourself to some facilities and homes, whereas visits and admissions to others are only by referral by the Ministry or Health Authority that funds or co-funds the facility.

If possible, it is best to visit each facility or home that you are considering. In some communities there may be several facilities or homes which can provide the care you need. However, there are also communities that may have only one suitable facility or home. When visiting a facility or home you may want to visit more than once so you can see what kinds of routines or special activities are taking place at different times of the day. Phone ahead and make an appointment to make sure someone will be available to show you around when you visit. You may want to take a trusted friend or relative along. You may be required to visit together with your worker.

Many facilities and homes have an information brochure or package that provides an overview of their philosophy and services. A good information package will answer many of the questions listed in this booklet.

Ask for the admissions agreement. An admission agreement will clarify what services are provided, what services are not available, and any extra charges that may apply.

Your local health authority or another ministry has to approve clients for waitlisting in government-funded facilities or homes, and can also tell you how many persons are on the waitlist. They may also maintain a list of private pay (non-funded) facilities or homes available in your area.

If you are considering “private pay” (non-funded), please ask the manager or Director of Care at the facility about the length of their waitlist.

This booklet contains enough space and tick boxes to survey 3 facilities or homes.

Name:

1

2

3

Questions to Ask & Things to Observe

SUGGESTED MARKING = YES = NO

1. First Impressions



- Is the facility or home clean, tidy and well maintained?
- Is there a pleasant atmosphere? (For example, pictures on walls, plants, open areas, gardens)
- Are residents clean and well groomed?
- Are they appropriately dressed?
- Are there any offensive odours?
- Do residents appear comfortable and at home with their surroundings?
- Is there convenient access to public transportation, stores, banks, restaurants, library, family and friends?
- Will family and friends be welcome at any time?
- Is there a private area where you can meet with your family and friends?
- If there is a reception desk, is it staffed during the evening and on weekends?
- Is your language spoken? If not, how will the staff communicate with you?

2. Licensing, Accreditation, and Quality Improvements

- Is the facility or home licensed under the *Community Care Facility Act*?
- Can you see a copy of the latest licensing inspection report?
- Is the facility or home accredited?
- Can you see a copy of the latest accreditation report?
- Is there a quality improvement plan?
- Does the facility conduct a residents' satisfaction survey?
- Can you see a copy of the results?

How will residents and their families be involved in accreditation and quality improvement activities?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

3. Resident Rooms



- Will you have a private room?
- If there are double rooms, can you choose your roommate?
- If you have to start with a double room, and there are single rooms in the facility, is there a waiting list to get into one of these single rooms when one becomes available?

How is this waiting list managed?

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____

- Do the rooms make you feel at home? Are they comfortable, bright and cheery?

How much storage and closet space will you have?

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____

- Is there a cupboard or drawer that locks for your personal items?

- Can you bring some of your own possessions (for example, pictures, furniture, television)?
- Can you have a small appliance in your room (electric blanket, kettle, mini-fridge, toaster, microwave, etc.)?
- Is there room for a wheelchair or walker in the bedroom and washroom area if needed?
- Is there a phone you can use that is private and accessible?
- Can you have a phone in your room?
- Who pays for basic phone service?
- Can you have food in your bedroom?
- Can you have alcohol in your bedroom?



4. Dining Arrangements

- Is there a central dining room?
- Is the dining room within easy walking distance from residents' rooms?

What time are meals served?

1 Breakfast _____ Lunch _____ Dinner _____

2 Breakfast _____ Lunch _____ Dinner _____

3 Breakfast _____ Lunch _____ Dinner _____

- Are the meal times flexible?
- Can you choose where you will sit in the dining room?
- Is the menu displayed?
- Is there a choice of menu items?
- Do you have input into menu items?
- Are meals provided that are compatible with your special diet, cultural or religious background?
- Will healthy snacks be provided?
- Can you eat in your room if it is necessary, or if you choose to?

Will you be allowed/expected to help in cooking or clean up as part of your care plan?

Are dietary supplements provided if your doctor/health care provider orders them?

Who pays for dietary supplements?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

If you have trouble eating, will staff be able to help you?

Can you invite guests to a meal?

How much will this cost and how is this arranged?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Is there an area where you or your family can make a cup of coffee, tea, or a snack?

Will you be given a packaged lunch if you are away during a meal?

5. Resident Care

- Can your own doctor/health care provider/clinician continue to care for you in the facility or home?
- Will you be able to stay at the facility or home if your care needs increase?
- Are rehabilitation services such as physiotherapy available?
- Will facility/home staff help you with daily care of your teeth or dentures (flossing, cleaning etc.) if needed?
- Does a dental hygienist, denturist, or dentist visit the facility? If so, who arranges and pays for these services?
- Are hairdressing and barber services available?
- Does a podiatrist (foot doctor) visit?
- Will you and/or your family be involved in planning and regular reviews of your care?

If you need extra health care services, how can you access them?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

6. Special Care Programming

Is there a separate care area for persons with dementia/Alzheimer Disease?

Is there an eating area specifically for persons with dementia/Alzheimer Disease?

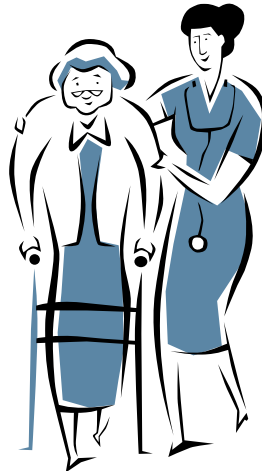
Are there special or integrated social and recreational activities for persons with dementia/Alzheimer Disease?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Are safe indoor and outdoor walking areas provided?



7. Bathing

Can you have a bath or shower when you wish?

Is there any special equipment available,
such as lift equipment or wheelchair showers?

Can you use your own soap and shampoo?

How many people share each washroom?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

How will your privacy be assured during bathing?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Who will help you if you can not bath/shower or toilet yourself?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

8. Lounges, Activity Areas, Outdoor Areas

- Is there a lounge or living room where you can socialise or entertain visitors?
- Does it look comfortable and inviting?
- Is there a space for you to have private conversations with family and friends?
- Is there an area or special room for crafts and other activities?
- Is there a garden or patio?
- Can you go outside when you wish?
- Is there outdoor shelter to protect you from the wind and rain?



9. Social, Recreational, and Spiritual Activities

Is there an activity director?

What kinds of activities, musical programs, entertainment, outings, and crafts are available?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

How is the schedule of activities, programs, and outings communicated to residents?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Are there a variety of craft activities?

Are there extra charges for craft materials?

Do residents have a role in planning activities?

Will you be able to pursue your own hobbies (gardening, bridge, etc)?

Are activities scheduled during evenings and on weekends?

- Is there a pet at the facility or home?
- Does the facility or home have a pet visitation program?
- Can you bring your pet to live at the facility or home?

What religious or cultural holidays are celebrated?

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____

- Are religious services or pastoral care available?
- Are birthdays celebrated?

How are residents transported to appointments, activities, religious services etc.?

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____

- Is there a wheelchair-accessible van or bus (if applicable) to transport residents to outings?
- Is there a charge for this transportation?
- Are you encouraged to use public transportation?

10. Laundry



What laundry facilities are available if you would like to do some of your own laundry?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Are laundry supplies provided?

What items of personal clothing may be sent to the laundry?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Who is responsible for mending your personal clothing?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

If you are responsible for mending your personal clothing, will staff help if you can not do your own?

Does all clothing need to be labelled?

If you have a lot of laundry will there be any extra charges?



11. Incontinence Supplies

What types of incontinence supplies are available?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Are incontinence supplies provided without charge?

What is the policy if you prefer to use a type of incontinence supply that differs from the type provided?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

12. Pharmacy Services

Who is responsible for administering medication?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

For facilities or homes where you pay privately for your own room and care, how is medication paid for?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

What is the procedure if you want to give yourself your own medication or take it with you when you are away from the facility or home?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

How are prescription drugs stored?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

What is the policy regarding the use and storage of non-prescription medication?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Are non-prescription medical-related supplies provided without charge?



13. Policies

Are visitors welcome at reasonable times?

Can you have overnight visitors?

Is there a resident council, family council, or a family support group established? If so, what is its role?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Can you go away for weekends and/or holidays?

Who will you or your family approach for information and/or problem solving?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

What is the procedure if you or a family member has a complaint?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

- Is there a resident bill of rights?
- Can you have a copy?
- Do residents and family have access to the policy and procedures manual for the facility or home?
- Do you need to sign out or get permission if you leave the facility temporarily (e.g. for a day trip or visit somewhere)?

Is there a curfew? If so what time?

- _____
- _____
- _____

What are the policies regarding advanced directives (types of medical intervention you may agree to if you become incapacitated) and “do-not-resuscitate orders” (DNR)?

- _____
- _____
- _____

What are the policies regarding the use of restraints?

- _____
- _____
- _____

What are the policies regarding alcohol?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

What are the policies regarding smoking?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Will you be expected to help with the household chores?

Are there posted “house rules”?

Can you be evicted or asked to leave if you break the “house rules”?

What is the eviction/discharge policy?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

14. Staffing

Do staff appear to be happy, responsive and caring?

Do they have a sense of humour?

How many staff are on duty during the day, evening, and at night?
What are their qualifications?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

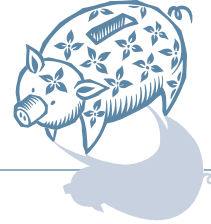
Do staff treat residents respectfully? (For example, do they address residents by name? Do they knock before entering rooms?)

Does the person giving you a tour take the time to say hello to residents and staff?

Are there policies in place to handle emergencies such as inadequate staffing coverage?

15. Financial Arrangements

(See also Appendix B)



If the facility or home is private pay, what is the daily rate?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

If the facility or home receives funding from a Ministry or Health Authority, what accommodation rate/user fee is the resident required to contribute?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Are the rates being charged affordable?

What extra charges can be expected in addition to the daily accommodation rate/user fee. (For example, private phone, cable hook-up, newspaper, special supplies, room differential).

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

What arrangements can you make for payment of extra charges if you do not have enough money?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

What are the policies regarding storage of money and valuables?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

What are the policies regarding the administration of your funds?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Can you do your own banking? If not, where will your spending money be kept?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

What is the refund policy if you move out before the end of a month?
How much notice is required?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Do you continue to pay if you are away from the facility on vacation or in hospital? (See Appendix B.)



16. Security

Can you lock your bedroom door if you wish?

How will your private information be protected?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Who is responsible if any of your valuables disappear or are broken?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Will the outside doors be locked overnight?

What is the policy for dealing with uninvited visitors?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

17. Emergency Management

What policies and plans are in place to handle emergencies such as earthquakes, fires, snowstorms etc?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Is there a sprinkler system for fire safety?

When was the most recent fire drill?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Are emergency exits well marked?

What is the policy on contacting families in the event of an emergency or illness?

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Appendix A: Where do I Start?

If you are having trouble managing in your current accommodation, because home support or supported housing is not available or sufficient to meet your personal or health care needs, you may contact your local Health Authority, Ministry worker or long term care case manager to determine if moving into a care facility or home is an option for you. If you prefer, a friend or relative, or your doctor, pharmacist or social worker can call on your behalf. If you cannot find a phone listing for your Health Authority or ministry responsible, please call Enquiry B.C., and you will be connected with the appropriate person in your Health Authority.

The Phone Number for Enquiry B.C. is:

Victoria	387-6121
Vancouver	660-2421
Elsewhere in B.C.	1-800-663-7867
Email contact	enquirybc@gems3.gov.bc.ca

Enquiry Centre Hours:

8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Monday through Friday

Telephone Device for the Deaf (TDD)

Vancouver	775-0303
Elsewhere	1-800-661-8773

Your Health Authority can provide information about the health care services and facilities or homes in your area, and help you to decide which type can best meet your needs. Many communities have a range of support services such as alert systems, home support, adult day centre programs, bathing programs or supportive housing. These supports may enable you to maintain your independence and remain in your home.

The Health Authority can advise you which services and facilities or homes are funded and which are not funded (private pay).

Appendix B: Financial Information

Funded and Non-Funded Facilities

You will need to be clear about the financial arrangements before choosing a funded or non-funded facility.

In a **funded facility or home**, health authorities or government ministries will pay for a portion of the monthly charges for your accommodation and the residents pay an accommodation rate or user fee.

In a **non-funded facility or home**, you will be responsible for paying the full cost of your accommodation and care. These facilities and homes are sometimes referred to as “private pay” facilities.

Funded Facilities and Homes Financial Policies

Please check with your local health authority, case manager, or worker, as specific financial policies may vary from region to region.

ACCEPTING ADMISSION

When you are notified that a room is available, you may be expected to accept that room within 48 hours. This may mean that you may be required to pay accommodation in two places during the transition period, in your home and in the new facility or home.

CLIENT RATE

Funded facilities or homes provide you with a variety of funding arrangements. In most facilities or homes you are required to pay an accommodation rate or user fee that may vary depending on the level of your income.

ALLOWABLE EXTRA CHARGES

Your local Health Authority may have approved a higher payment (“differential rate”) for single or double rooms of superior quality. The administrator or director of resident care can give you a full list of any such charges that you will be expected to pay in addition to the daily user fee. Ask for a list of the personal items which the facility or home supplies, and a list of those you will be responsible for. For example, you may have to pay for your personal magazine or newspaper subscriptions, dry cleaning, charges for telephone and cablevision in your room, etc.

You may also be responsible for buying, leasing or obtaining the use of any special equipment required for your own use (such as wheelchairs, walkers, and special medication not paid for by Pharmacare).

TIME SPENT AWAY FROM THE FACILITY

You may wish to spend some time away from the care facility or home each year. You may submit a request to your local Health Authority or funding ministry, who may agree to pay the continuing care portion of the daily charge during your absence. You will be expected to continue paying the daily user fee during that time.

HOSPITALIZATION

Usually when your room is held during a hospitalization, you must continue to pay the daily accommodation rate during the time you are in the hospital.

MEDICAL COVERAGE

The Ministry of Health and Ministry Responsible for Seniors, or other funding ministry through your local Health Authority, covers professional nursing and health care services in care facilities or homes. Recipients of certain government income assistance, disability benefits or income supplements (e.g. Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS), BC Seniors, Supplements) do not have to pay the Medical Service Plan premiums for medical coverage.

Appendix C: Regulations and Licensing

Any person providing residential care to three or more adults who are not related to them must be licensed under the *Community Care Facility Act*. Please note, however, that Hospitals are exempt from this requirement as they are governed by the Hospital Act.

The *Community Care Facility Act* sets out specific regulations — the Adult Care Regulations — which set minimum legal standards for:

- Health and safety
- Building requirements
- Staffing
- Food Service
- Administering medications, and
- Resident Care

All facilities and homes should have their licence (or interim permit) posted for your information. This licence (or interim permit) will tell you how many persons it can provide care for.

The *Community Care Facility Act* and the Adult Care Regulations are available through:

Crown Publications
521 Fort Street
Victoria, B.C. V8W 1E7
Phone: (250) 386-4636
Fax: (250) 386-0221

They are also available on the Internet at: <http://www.hlth.gov.bc.ca/ccf>

Appendix D: Questions, Complaints, or Concerns

If you have a question or concern about a particular residential care facility or home, please speak with the Manager, Director of Care or Administrator of the facility or home. If your question or concern can not be resolved, please contact your local Health Authority worker or long term care case manager. If it is a serious issue regarding the health, safety or well being of a person in care, you should immediately contact your local Health Authority and ask to speak to a licensing officer. If the facility or home is not required to be licensed under the *Community Care Facility Act*, the licensing officer can direct you to the appropriate authority which is responsible for monitoring the facility.

The address and phone number of Community Care Facility Licensing in your health authority is:



This booklet may be viewed on the
Ministry of Health's Internet site, at
<http://www.hlth.gov.bc.ca/ccf/adult/index.html>

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