



Fresno-Madera Ombudsman Program

Advocates for Residents in Long-Term Care Facilities

Choosing a Skilled Nursing Facility

Thank You for contacting the Fresno-Madera Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program, an advocacy group who helps protect and ensures the quality of care of seniors (*residents*) living in long-term care facilities. Ombudsmen educate residents and their families about their rights in these facilities, help resolve complaints, and address other issues of concern. As per your request, attached is a current listing of Skilled Nursing Facilities in Fresno and Madera counties.

Choosing a Skilled Nursing Facility can be a difficult and overwhelming task. To help you through this process, please find below, some tips compiled by our program and Bet Tzedek Legal Services (www.bettzedek.org), a non-profit public interest law center which provides free legal services to low-income residents of Los Angeles County.

- If possible, pick a nursing home located near family members and friends.** Residents with frequent visitors generally do better physically and emotionally than residents without visitors.
- Visit to determine quality of care – Look, Listen, and Smell.** If possible, visit during meal times, weekdays and weekends (day and evening), to obtain a complete picture of the facility. Look at rehabilitation rooms because some therapies require particular equipment. Talk to current residents and/or visitors about the facility.
- Examine nursing home’s inspection records prepared by the Licensing and Certification Division of the California Department of Public Health.** Nursing homes are required to make available their most recent inspection to the public. History of complaints and penalties can be obtained by calling Licensing at 437-1500. If you have access to the internet, check out the following websites which also compares nursing homes:
 - www.medicare.gov/NHCompare
 - www.canhr.org
 - www.calnhs.org
- Talk to the Administrator, Director of Nursing, and Social Services Director.** Ask who will report to family members or accept inquiries or complaints, how the facility provides rehabilitation as well as the qualifications and specializations of the therapists, availability of religious, social, and community activities for residents, and access to services of physicians and dentists.
- If you have limited financial resources, check if the nursing home is certified to accept Medi-Cal reimbursement.**
- Never sign an agreement you do not understand.** You have the right to take a copy of the agreement home to study, to ask questions about its terms and, if necessary, to seek changes.
- Do not automatically rely on a discharge planner’s or placement agency’s judgment.** Discharge planners may be under pressure to place at “first available” and placement agencies receive money from certain nursing homes.