

A CHECK LIST IF YOU ARE SHOPPING FOR A RETIREMENT HOME



Cost:

- How much is the rent? Are phone, cable and hydro included?
- How much do you have to pay for meals and care services as a condition of living in the home? Exactly what services and how many hours of services do you get for that amount?
- If some meals and care services are optional, how much will they cost? Do you have to pay for meals or services if you are away from the home?
- How often are charges for meals and services increased? When was the last increase? Is the home willing to freeze the cost of meals and services for a period of time?

Environment:

- Is the home clean and attractive? Does it need repairs? Is the kitchen area clean?
- Do you have privacy? Does the staff knock and ask permission before entering a room?
- Is it easy to get around in the home if you use a walker, wheelchair, or scooter? Are the fixtures and facilities easy to use if you have a disability?
- Are there grab bars in the bath area? Can you add grab bars or other assistive devices?
- What security arrangements does the home have? Is the home quiet?

Amenities and Services:

- Does the home have the kinds of facilities you want (such as recreational facilities, garden plots, lounges, reading rooms)?
- Are the rooms properly equipped? Are there kitchen facilities in the rooms or apartments?
- Is there a dining room where you can take a visitor for a meal?
- Are there adequate fire safety measures such as sprinklers, alarms, fire drills and automatic door closers? Is there an emergency response system such as a call bell system?
- What care services are available and how much do they cost?
- Are any of the following services available: housecleaning, meals, personal support care, nursing care, supervision of medications, recreational activities?
- Does the home have a registered nurse or registered practical nurse on staff? Is a doctor available on a regular basis at the home?

Staff and Management:

- Is the staff courteous and respectful? Is the staff properly trained to deal with medical emergencies and fires? Is there enough staff at all times to ensure the safety of all tenants?
- Are your questions answered fully or do staff/management avoid questions?

Location:

- Is the home near to relatives and friends who may want to visit? Do you like the neighbourhood? Do you feel safe going out of the building? Is it quiet? Are there other services nearby that are important to you?

Other Tenants:

- Talk to other tenants and try to find out if they are happy with the home. Is there a tenants association? If so, talk to the President or Chairperson and find out whether there are on-going problems at the home.
- Are other tenants satisfied with the quality of the meals, with how the staff act towards them, with the management, with the quality of care services?

Legal Requirements:

- Have you been given a written tenancy agreement as required by law? The tenancy agreement must say what you must pay for rent and what you must pay for meals and care services. Does the agreement say that you have the right to cancel it by written notice to the landlord within five days?
- Does the agreement say you have the right to consult an outside party about the agreement?
- Has the home given you a care home information package as required by law? The care home information package (CHIP) tells you helpful things about the home, such as:
 - how to make a complaint,
 - whether there is an emergency response system,
 - what kinds of rental units are available and the cost of each,
 - what kinds of services are available and the cost of each,
 - the minimum number of staff that must be in the home,
 - what qualifications members of the staff have, and
 - what optional services are available and the cost of each.



If you have any legal questions about retirement homes, you can contact the Advocacy Centre for the Elderly at (416) 598-2656, 2 Carlton Street, Suite 701, Toronto, Ontario, M5B 1J3.