



## NURSING HOME TOOLKIT

### EVALUATION CHECKLIST

*The following checklist is designed to provide you with a general idea of the quality of care your loved one is receiving. Each section of questions instructs you to examine specific areas of care. When visiting a nursing home, ask to see the entire facility, not just the nicely decorated lobby and the wing or floor where you loved one lives. Remember that appearances can be deceptive. In addition to the physical environment, try to get a feel for how staff interacts with residents.*

#### **RESIDENT APPEARANCE**

- Are residents up and dressed for breakfast? Does staff get them up hours before breakfast (too early) or just before lunch (too late)?
- Are the residents well-groomed (shaved, clothes clean, hair combed, nails trimmed and clean)?
- Do residents appear alert, content and occupied? Or are they lethargic, listless or dazed?
- Are residents comfortably positioned in comfortable chairs? Are they restrained in their chairs or beds? Are they in chairs that have a tray or “lap buddy”?

#### **STAFF**

- Is there adequate staff? What is the staff-to-resident ratio? Are resident requests responded to in a timely manner (five minutes or so)?
- How does the staff address residents? Is the staff courteous to residents? Do they treat residents with dignity and respect? Or is the staff attitude condescending? Are childish or otherwise inappropriate nicknames used when speaking with residents? Does staff talk about residents as if they were not present?
- Do the administrator/manager and director of nurses appear to know residents’ names and personalities?
- Is privacy respected? For example, does staff knock on doors before entering rooms? Do they keep privacy curtains drawn while care is being given?
- Does staff wear nametags?
- Are there therapists on staff or does the facility contract out for therapy?
- Is there a licensed social worker on staff? Full-time?
- Does the facility have permanent fulltime nurses and certified nurse assistants (CNAs), or are registry nurses and aides used?

## FACILITY ENVIRONMENT

- Is there an obvious odor in the facility? Strong urine and body odors may indicate poor nursing care or poor housekeeping. Heavy air freshener, deodorants, and other temporary chemical cover-ups may be substitutes for conscientious care and maintenance.
- Is the facility clean, well-lit and free of hazards? Do you see soiled linen? Is there adequate linen?
- Are floors clean and non-slippery?

## RESIDENT ROOMS

- How many residents share a room? Generally, rooms should have no more than four beds, at least three feet apart, with privacy curtains around each bed.
- Is there a bedside stand, reading light, chest of drawers and at least one comfortable chair for each resident? Is there adequate storage space? Is it separate from other roommates?
- Are the beds easy to reach? Is there room to maneuver a wheelchair or Geri-chair easily?
- Are call buttons accessible to residents?
- Is there fresh drinking water at the bedside?
- Are residents allowed and encouraged to bring their own belongings or furniture? Have residents personalized their rooms?

## HALLWAYS, STAIRS AND LOUNGES

- Are halls free of obstacles and debris?
- Are stairways and exits clearly marked?
- Are there handrails in all corridors?
- Are fire extinguishers visible? Is there a disaster plan posted? Does the facility have fire drills?
- How many lounge areas are available for residents and visitors? Are they clean and comfortably furnished? Is there sufficient room for visiting?

## BATH AND SHOWER ROOMS

- How many residents share a bathroom?
- Do bathrooms have handgrips or rails near all toilets and bathing areas?
- Are bathrooms conveniently located?
- Do residents have a choice between a shower or bath?



## KITCHEN AND DINING AREAS

- Is the kitchen clean and well-organized?
- Is the food handled and stored in a safe and sanitary manner?
- Is the dining area pleasant, clean and comfortable?
- How many residents eat in the dining area? Is it large enough to accommodate most of the residents? Are there shifts for meals?
- Do chairs fit under tables so that residents are comfortably close to their food?

## MENUS AND FOOD

- Try to visit the facility during a meal. Observe the way the food is served, how residents are assisted with eating and what their reaction is to the food. You can probably buy a meal to sample the food.
- Are meals served at appropriate temperatures?
- Does the food appear and smell appetizing? Is it nutritious? Are fresh foods used, or is it mostly canned or frozen? Do residents enjoy the food?
- A menu for the current and following week should be posted. If a menu is not posted, ask to see one. Is the meal listed on the menu actually the food being served? How often are meals repeated?
- Who plans the meals? Is a professional dietician on staff? How are special dietary needs met?
- Are dishes and silverware used, or are disposable plates and utensils used?
- Do those residents receiving assistance with eating finish their meals and eat at their own pace? Are assistive devices available to those who may be able to feed themselves with a little help?
- What provisions are made for patients who are unable to eat in the dining room?

## ACTIVITIES

- Are activity calendars posted? If not, ask for a description of the activity program. Meet or arrange to meet with the Activity Director.
- Do the activities cover a broad range of interests?
- Are activities tailored to individual preferences?
- What activities are available to residents confined to their rooms?
- Do volunteers visit the facility?
- What arrangements are made for residents to participate in religious services of their choice?
- What is done for holidays and birthdays?
- Is there a resident council? When does it meet, and what is its function?



