

Searching for a Residential Care Facility for the Elderly (RCFE)

A. Medi-Cal vs. Medicare

Consumers often contact us for assistance in selecting a long term care facility. CANHR does not provide referrals to specific RCFEs or other long term care facilities, but there are several resources to assist consumers in searching for an RCFE.*

1. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM FAMILY, FRIENDS AND PROFESSIONALS

Consumers should seek information about facilities from people they trust. Relatives, friends, clergy, local senior groups, Alzheimer's support groups, elder law attorneys, hospital discharge planners, doctors and other professionals may have recent experiences with RCFEs, or know someone else who has helpful information.

2. COMMUNITY CARE LICENSING FACILITY SEARCH WEBSITE

Consumers can search online for information regarding RCFEs on the [Facility Search website of Community Care Licensing \(CCL\)](#), the division of the Department of Social Services (DSS) that regulates assisted living facilities. The website can generate a list of all facilities within a particular city, county or zip code, or provide facility-specific information. Consumers can view inspection reports created after April 16, 2015, and complaint investigation reports approved after January 11, 2016. Unfortunately, to review inspection and complaint reports generated prior to these dates, consumers will have to contact DSS regional offices to review a facility's paper file, or request that the report be sent to them via fax or mail. Click here for a list of DSS regional offices - <https://cdss.ca.gov/Portals/9/CCLD/ASC.pdf>.

3. LONG TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM

The Ombudsman Program provides free advocacy services for residents of RCFEs and other long term care facilities, and assists residents in resolving concerns about care and resident rights. Ombudsman Programs cannot provide referrals to specific facilities. However, some Ombudsman Programs have listings of local facilities, information about specific facilities based on personal observation and public records, and copies of CCL inspection and complaint reports. Click here for a list of local ombudsman programs - http://www.aging.ca.gov/Programs_and_Services/Long-Term_Care_Ombudsman/.

4. CARE MANAGERS/SOCIAL WORKERS

Consumers can hire trained professionals to assist in finding long term care facilities. Care Managers and Social Workers specializing in elder care can provide assistance with assessing level of care, searching for facilities to meet resident needs, and completing necessary paperwork. The cost for these services is generally based on an hourly rate. Some organizations offer sliding scale fee arrangements.

5. PRIVATE REFERRAL/PLACEMENT AGENCIES

Private referral or placement agencies also assist consumers in finding RCFEs, but these agencies should be used with caution. Most offer consumers their services for free, because they are paid a commission by RCFEs and other facilities for any placement. The agencies may steer prospective residents to facilities with whom they contract, although other facilities may provide better care. Consequently, prospective residents should not automatically rely on a referral or placement service.

6. PERSONAL VISITS

Once you have identified an RCFE that seems to be affordable and has the necessary services, **visit the facility**. Ask to see the entire facility, not just the nicely decorated lobby or a designated unit. Try to get a feel for the quality of care and how residents are treated by the staff. Resident appearance, residents' rooms, quality of food and activities are all important factors in evaluating an RCFE. However, nothing is more important than the proximity of the facility to the resident's family, friends and health care professionals, and the quality and quantity of staff. Do comparative shopping. Use CANHR's [RCFE Evaluation Checklist](#) and [Dementia Care Checklist](#) to help you evaluate facilities under consideration.

*In general, consumers can use the above resources in searching for any type of long term care facility, including nursing homes. Note, the internet search tools specific to nursing homes differ from RCFEs. For information on choosing a nursing home, including websites with nursing home ratings, see CANHR's fact sheet at http://canhr.org/factsheets/nh_fs/html/fs_howtochoose.htm. Additionally, private referral agencies do not generally assist Medi-Cal beneficiaries with nursing home placement.