

Choosing a Skilled Nursing or Rehabilitation Facility

So you've had to endure a hospital stay and you no longer need the amount of care provided in the hospital. At this point, the hospital will begin all of the process necessary to discharge you. *If you are able to go straight home with no additional care needed – wonderful, **BUT*** what if your full recovery is still not complete – who will take care of you and how will it be accomplished and organized?

If your recovery is slower than expected, you may not have people [friends, family, etc.] around who can help you in your recovery process at home. A **Skilled Nursing Facility** provides care for people who are not yet able to care for themselves at home. It's always hoped in the best case scenario, after your stay in the hospital, that you would be able to return home and care for yourself, but if you can't...

IT'S BEST TO PLAN AHEAD!

#1 – If you have the “luxury” of having your surgery planned, it's best to discuss discharge arrangements with your various health care providers in the weeks before this date. These professionals will be able to tell you what to expect after surgery and if going straight home will be best for you.

#2 – If, however, your trip to the hospital was not a planned encounter, it will be imperative that you and your family discuss discharge arrangements with these health care providers as soon as possible during your time in the hospital. Most hospitals have a variety of staff who can help you with all of our discharge planning.

Making the time to plan ahead helps to ensure that you will be able to go to a care facility that provides high-quality care and is located in the best place for you! **A FEW THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND:**

- A NUMBER ONE PRIORITY is to check if your health care insurance will cover your stay in the particular facility that you prefer.
- It's imperative to **choose more than one facility** in the event there are no beds available in your first choice.
 - o The hospital is not responsible for this; you will need to know your options BEFORE hand if possible so the hospital can transfer you to a qualified facility – preferably one of YOUR choosing.
 - o Make sure the hospital staff knows about your top chooses concerning the places you've chosen.

What do YOU Need???

Visiting 2 or possibly even 3 facilities will bring you comfort in the one you choose. Checking out different Skilled Nursing Facilities is ALWAYS a good idea and gives you the time and space to ask the right questions in making a decision. Once you're there is not the time to find out things you could have learned about BEFORE you actually need the facility.

THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING A PLACE:

- The location of the facility will help family and friends be able to watch over your process, so where the facility is located is a good place to start.
- First impressions can be key: how is the facility decorated, how does it smell, how does it look like it's maintained.
- Is the staff friendly and do they answer your questions in a caring and compassionate manner?
- Can you get any feedback as to what the meals are like and will they be able to meet any nutritional needs you may have, ie, low sodium, mainly liquid, etc.?

GET ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS LIKE...

1. Does the facility take care of many people with your medical problem?
 - a. For example, if you are having a joint replacement surgery, how many people with your particular problem have they cared for recently? *A good facility should be able to provide you with data that shows they give good quality care.* Can you check out their performance level at a particular website to gather more information?
2. Does the facility have a set protocol, or group of procedures, for undertaking the care of individuals with your particular medical condition?
3. If you need a therapist, will you be able to see the same one [or more] most days? What's the procedure if you are not happy with a particular therapist assigned to you?
4. Does the facility provide therapy sessions 7 days a week? What happens if you need weekend care – do they provide this?
5. As a general rule, the facility should be able to provide you with information concerning how long the therapy sessions last and what protocols they will follow?
6. Sometimes a primary care doctor or surgeon will not visit a particular facility, and if this is the case, will there be a particular doctor in charge of your care? Will this doctor coordinate care with your primary doctor?
7. Ask questions about the staffing and if the staff will be able to provide time and instructions to train you, a family member or care giver about what is required to care for your needs once you are released to go home.
8. **MOST IMPORTANT:** You will need to research if your health insurance will cover ALL of your expenses? If NOT, what will and will not be covered? It's never good to find this out later and be shocked by the "invoice"!!

[See the CHECKLIST OF TOP 10 QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN RESEARCHING A REHAB CENTER] – hover over this to access the checklist]