

## ASSISTED LIVING PROGRAM CHECKLIST

Assisted Living Program Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

**GETTING STARTED:** Call several assisted living programs and ask the director or administrator the following questions to help narrow your search. If you do not like the answers to any of these questions, it may save you a visit!

Question	Yes	No	Comments
What is the size of your program? (How many Beds? How many units?)			
What types of living units are currently available?			
If none, do you have a waiting list?			
What is your monthly fee? Do you charge additional fees for the common areas or are these fees included in the monthly unit cost? Are any such fees refunded if I move?			
Do you require a deposit?			
Does your program participate in the Medicaid waiver program?			
What services are provided?			
What services are included in the monthly fees?			
What services are extra? Do you provide the services or do you contract with an outside agency to provide services? If so, which agency?			
Can I choose my own home health provider or am I required to use your program's provider?			
Is staff on-site at all times?			
What level of training do the direct care workers possess? What are the qualifications of the program administrator and what experience does he/she have?			
Do you have a full-time nurse? Is the nurse an RN or an LPN?			
Who dispenses medication? What are his/her qualifications?			
Do you pay referral fees to outside agencies? If so, who?			

**JUDGING QUALITY:** Assisted living programs are required to be inspected by the Department of Inspections and Appeals (DIA) every other year. The monitoring reports of assisted living programs can be accessed by the program or through the DIA. You may find it useful to obtain copies of these reports before you visit a site. The programs must provide copies of the reports to you upon your request.

To retrieve a previous monitoring report, visit the DIA website at [https://dia-hfd.iowa.gov/DIA\\_HFD/Home.do](https://dia-hfd.iowa.gov/DIA_HFD/Home.do), click on “Entity Search” and type in the name of the program. You may also call the DIA at 515.281.4115. You may wish to review more reports than just the most recent (i.e., the last three) to establish a program history.

Quality Inspection	Yes	No	Comments
When was the program most recently inspected?			
Were any violations found? If so, what were they?			
Have the problems been corrected?			
Does the administrator have any comment on identified violations?			

The Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman may also have information about whether the program has received complaints and how those complaints were resolved. You may reach the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman by calling 866.236.1430. Local Long-Term Care Ombudsmen are also available to answer questions and provide consumer information.

**REVIEW DOCUMENTS:** Assisted living programs are required by law to provide copies of their occupancy agreement upon request. If you do not already have them by the time you visit, be sure to get a copy of the:

Documents Obtained	Yes	No	Comments
Occupancy Agreement			
List of services offered			
List of all costs and fees			
Any other documents to be signed during the admission process			

**COSTS AND OCCUPANCY AGREEMENT:** This is the document that will determine how much you will pay to the assisted living program, what services you will be paying for and other issues related to occupancy. If you have not received a copy of the Occupancy Agreement before you visit, you may request a copy of the document during the visit. With a copy in hand, be sure to take this opportunity to follow-up on the questions below and any other questions you may have. In Iowa, landlord-tenant law does apply to assisted living programs.

Occupancy Agreement	Yes	No	Comments
Is the print large enough to read?			
What services are provided for the basic fee?			
Is there a refund policy in case of transfers, discharges, changes in ownership or closing?			
When will any refunds be paid?			
What behaviors, conditions or other circumstances can result in termination of services?			

Occupancy Agreement	Yes	No	Comments
What type of living unit will I have?			
What are the rights of the tenant?			
What is the provider's grievance procedure?			
What is the provider's policy on relocating tenants in the program? If they become Medicaid eligible?			
If I am away from the program for a period of time (e.g., visiting family, in a hospital), do any fees stop?			
What are the criteria to hold a unit during an extended absence? Is there a charge?			
How long will you hold a unit for me? (Tenant-landlord law applies)			
When, how often and why can the fees be changed?			
When fees are changed, who is informed and how?			
How much advanced warning is provided of fee changes?			
When and for what reason may a member of the provider's staff enter my unit?			
How are damages to the unit assessed and charged?			
If I choose not to follow my doctor's orders, will this be counted against me?			

**PERSONAL AND HEALTH-RELATED CARE:** Take into consideration that you may need more care in the future than you need now. Assisted living is intended as only a temporary level of care until you exceed the services the program is able to provide. In any event, you will want to ask the questions below:

Meeting Individual Needs	Yes	No	Comments
How often will my level of care be reassessed?			
How will the provider meet my current care needs?			
What happens if my needs change (e.g., I need more help, become incontinent, become confused)?			
How does the provider tailor schedules for preferences of tenants (e.g., bathing or walking times)?			
How does the provider help tenants maintain their ability to toilet, dress and eat?			
Is there a schedule for staff to check on each tenant's whereabouts and well-being?			

Meeting Individual Needs	Yes	No	Comments
What resources does the provider have to address difficult behavior?			
Are bedrooms, hallways, doorways, bathrooms and common areas fully accessible to people with walkers or wheelchairs?			
If rooms are shared, what does the provider do if there are problems between roommates?			
Is there a resident council?			
How does the program solicit consumer satisfaction?			

**SERVICE PLAN:** It is very important that you or your legal representative clearly understand what is involved in your service plan, as it specifies precisely what services you will get, when you will get them and how. Your service plan should include your identified needs, your requests for assistance and your expected outcomes, as well as who will provide the services.

Written Service Plan	Yes	No	Comments
What professionals/staff members will be involved in the development of my written service plan?			
How often is the plan revised?			
How will my family or others I choose be involved?			
What involvement does a confused tenant have?			
What happens if I do not agree with the service plan?			

**STAFFING:** Staff must be trained to meet your identified needs at all times. A key indicator of a quality assisted living program is trained and competent staff.

Staffing	Yes	No	Comments
How many staff are there for each shift?			
What are their responsibilities?			
What is the training/certification of the people who care for tenants?			
Are there direct care staff who are fluent in my native language?			
How often is an RN or LPN onsite?			
Is there special training for staff about dementia and Alzheimer's disease?			
How are staff trained to deal with aggressive individuals?			

Staffing	Yes	No	Comments
How are staff trained to deal with confused individuals who may wander?			
What if I do not like the staff person assigned to me?			
What is the staff turnover rate?			
How long has the administrator been in this position?			

**MANAGEMENT OF MEDICATIONS:** You may manage your own medications unless your physician's prescription states otherwise, or you may delegate the program to administer your medication. This should be specified in the occupancy agreement and your service plan, as some programs may charge for this service.

Medications	Yes	No	Comments
What safeguards are in place to ensure I get the appropriate medications on time and in the correct dosage? How is this documented?			
Who is responsible for filling prescriptions?			
Who administers medications?			
If not a nurse, how are staff trained and supervised when administering medications?			
If I delegate the administration of medication, what is the fee?			
Does the program need to know about my medications if I administer them myself?			
May a family member administer medications?			
Under what conditions would the program insist that I delegate the administration of medications?			

**TRANSPORTATION:** Assisted living programs vary in how accessible transportation may be to tenants.

Transportation	Yes	No	Comments
Is any transportation provided?			
If so, how often (daily, weekly, evenings, weekends)?			
Is transportation wheelchair accessible?			
To where is the transportation provided (e.g., grocery store, shopping mall, medical appointments)?			
Will the provider call and arrange for transportation it does not provide? Is there a fee for this?			
Is transportation available if I want to go to an event by myself or with a friend?			
Are there fees for using the provider's transportation?			

**ACTIVITIES:** Look at a monthly activity schedule to see if the activities appeal to you. Inquire about the following:

Activities and Socializing	Yes	No	Comments
How often are activities in the community scheduled?			
Will staff attend with me?			
Are there protected or enclosed walking areas for tenants?			
Does programming provide opportunities for a variety of interest types and levels of involvement?			
Who develops and supervises recreational activities?			
How often is an activities schedule provided to me and how far in advance is this schedule provided?			
How do tenants have input into the activities offered?			
Is there a pet policy?			
Is there a visitor policy?			

**MEALS:** A great way to check out the food offered by the program is to sample a meal during your visit. Questions to ask include the following:

Dining	Yes	No	Comments
What times are meals served?			
What happens if I am late, miss a meal or decline a meal?			
How will any special dietary needs I have be met?			
When can I have a tray delivered to my room?			
Is there an additional charge for tray service?			
If I do not like a meal, what are the alternatives?			
When are snacks available?			
May I see the printed menu for the past month?			
How do you make sure each tenant is taking in adequate nutrition?			
Does a dietitian review the menus?			
How do you charge for meals? Is there a refund if I miss a meal?			

**HOUSEKEEPING AND LAUNDRY:** To understand what chore services are provided by the program, ask the following questions:

Housekeeping and Laundry	Yes	No	Comments
How often will my unit be cleaned?			
What cleaning services will be included?			
Can I choose to clean my own unit?			
How often will my linens be changed?			
Will the provider do my personal laundry?			
Are washing machines and dryers available for me to use?			
If so, is there any cost to use them?			

**LIFE SAFETY AND CHOICE:** Assisted living providers emphasize independence and choice. They also have rules and procedures designed to protect tenants from harm. It is important to match your abilities with the extent of choices and opportunities offered by a provider, as well as the limitations those choices will impose upon you.

Safety and Emergencies	Yes	No	Comments
What safety measures are in place to protect tenants' personal property from being stolen?			
What safety measures are in place to protect tenants from wandering away?			
Are exit doors alarmed?			
Are floor coverings made of non-skid material?			
Is there a fire emergency plan? Are staff trained in the plan and able to articulate/execute the plan?			
What safety arrangements are in place for people in wheelchairs or others who need assistance to escape in case of fire or other emergency?			
How often are there fire drills?			
How do tenants with limited mobility participate in fire drills?			
Are emergency plans publicly displayed?			
What kind of emergencies are staff expected to handle and how are they trained for them?			
Who decides whether to call 911? May I have a copy of any written policies about how that decision is made?			
Will my family or legal representative be notified immediately if 911 is called?			
If there is a fire or other natural disaster, where will tenants be temporarily located?			

**SELF-DIRECTION:** Assisted living programs encourage family involvement, tenant self-direction and tenant participation in decisions that emphasize choice, dignity, privacy, individuality, shared risk and independence.

Individual Choice	Yes	No	Comments
What if I want an exception to a policy (e.g., smoking, or eating foods that are not on a prescribed diet)?			
Is there a policy on smoking?			
Will the provider require that I participate in any particular activity or program?			
Does the program require a signed statement on managed (or negotiated) risk?			

**MANAGED RISK CONSENSUS AGREEMENT:** The Iowa Administrative Rules require every assisted living program have a managed risk policy. The assisted living program is required to provide the managed risk policy to the tenant along with the occupancy agreement. The managed risk policy shall include the following:

1. An acknowledgment of the shared responsibility for identifying and meeting the needs of the tenant and the process for managing risk and for upholding tenant autonomy when tenant decision-making results in poor outcomes for the tenant or others; and
2. A consensus-based process to address specific risk situations. Program staff and the tenant shall participate in the process. The result of the consensus-based process may be a managed risk consensus agreement. The managed risk consensus agreement shall include the signature of the tenant and the signatures of all others who participated in the process. The managed risk consensus agreement shall be included in the tenant’s file.

**INVOLUNTARY DISCHARGE:** The occupancy agreement must explain the circumstances under which the assisted living program may discharge you. This is referred to as an involuntary transfer. The answers to the following questions will help you clarify an assisted living program’s ability to care for people with health and behavior conditions that can be difficult to manage. It will also help you determine if you have recourse if you are asked to leave. In the event of an involuntary discharge, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman is a valuable resource and may be reached at 866.236.1430.

Involuntary Transfers	Yes	No	Comments
What are the possible reasons for discharge?			
Is there an appeal process?			
What is it?			
How many days’ notice is given and to whom? (Tenant-landlord law applies)			
Is there a refund if there is an involuntary discharge?			
May a waiver be obtained to prevent a transfer or discharge? If so, what is the process?			
What happens if I’m not able to find alternate placement by the discharge date?			

**DEMENTIA UNITS:** This section is directed to legal representatives, family members or other interested persons because it would be unusual for the person who needs a special care unit to be asking these questions.

Dementia Care	Yes	No	Comments
Is there a separate area specifically for people experiencing dementia?			
How do services in the dementia unit differ from services in the rest of the assisted living program?			
What is the difference in staff training?			
What is the staff-to-tenant ratio?			
Is there a special outdoor area for tenants with dementia to use? How is it secured?			
What techniques do you use to ensure that tenants with dementia are getting proper nutrition?			
Do you offer decaffeinated drinks throughout the day?			
Does the calendar of activities look appropriate for the tenant?			
What is the provider's policy on restraints, both chemical and physical?			
How much space is there to walk around on the unit?			
What is the cost difference between special care and regular units?			