

Navigating Care for your Loved Ones

The Parish Health Ministry recognizes that changing living arrangements for our loved ones who can no longer safely stay or care for themselves at home can be overwhelming. Here are some tips to assist in this process:

- Involve your loved ones in the decision process as much as possible. This can help them work through the change and still feel in control when they are a part of the decision process. Change is hard, especially when moving from independent living to assistance with daily activities.
- **Be proactive in making decisions to find caregiving services before an event happens.** If a choice has to be made quickly, like after a hospitalization, please realize that your options will be based on what is available and probably not what you would have chosen otherwise. Taking steps before there is a crisis will benefit everyone involved including your loved ones, care givers, and families.
- If moving family members into a memory care unit, here is a link that will provide some tips on how to manage the transition: [Alzheimer's: Smoothing the transition on moving day - Mayo Clinic](#).

The Senior Service Directory, provided by the Knoxville-Knox County CAC Office on Aging is an excellent resource. Their website is located at: [Home Health Care – Office on Aging \(knoxseniors.org\)](#)

Everyone will have different circumstances and there is no one size that fits all when deciding about caregiving options. Whether you start with having someone come into the home, senior independent living, or assisted living communities, you will need to determine what kind of care is needed at present and what care may be forthcoming.

Determine basic care needs:

1. What type of care is needed?
 - Personal care
 - Safe access to bathing and toileting
 - Dressing and personal grooming
 - Medications, medication reminders
 - Do they have a pill reminder set up?
 - Do they accidentally forget to take their medications regularly as prescribed?
 - Meals and meal preparation
 - Are they able to shop and prepare nutritious meals?
 - Ambulation
 - Difficulty walking without assistance
 - Transferring (from chair to bed, in and out of bath, etc.)
 - Transportation (appointments, grocery, etc.)
 - Housekeeping, laundry
 - Companionship
2. How many hours per day and how many days per week will be needed?
3. What financial resources are available?
4. Emergency alert call systems (usually a pendant) are available.

What to ask if hiring someone to come into the home:

Some of these questions below came from the Senior Service Directory at [Senior Service Directory – Office on Aging \(knoxseniors.org\)](#). When hiring someone or a company into your home, you will assume some risk as well as the person hired.

1. Does the company provide the workers or is it subcontracted? Who will do the work?
2. Who supervises the employees or subcontractors?
3. How much experience does the company have doing in-home personal care and how long have they been in business?
4. Does the company run a background check on employees or subcontractors and what is the policy for hiring someone with a criminal record?

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5. Does the company have a governing agency? Do they require a license by the state?
6. Does the company have workman's compensation? Is it current?
7. What is the hourly rate? Is there a minimum number of hours/day or week?
8. Will the same person be coming each visit?
9. What is the policy if the employee is not a good fit for your loved one?
10. What happens if the employee does not show? Do you send another employee?
11. What services do you provide in the home?
 - a. Light housekeeping
 - b. Laundry, assistance with making the bed
 - c. Medication reminders
 - d. Assistance with making meals and feeding if necessary
12. Who do you contact for questions or concerns?

What to consider when looking at assisted living or senior independent communities:

Whenever possible, your loved one should participate in the choice. Early planning allows them to look at available options and choose what they feel best suits them.

1. Location is important. Choosing a facility near your loved one will be beneficial to both of you.
2. Consider the size of the apartment or living space, closet space, and access to the bathroom.
3. Does the facility provide furnishings for the room?
4. What activities do they provide? Do they have an activities director?
5. Is physical therapy available by an outside provider?

What about payment at Assisted Living facilities?

Consider what services you will need as some facilities charge according to the level of care. Do you need help with bathing, dressing, and medications? Assisted living facilities may charge based on the level of care based on their assessment or some facilities have all-inclusive fees for all services. This is important as your costs may go up as your loved one needs more assistance.

1. What is the monthly cost?
2. What does the monthly cost cover?
 - a. Meals, snacks
 - b. Laundry services
 - c. Dressing and grooming
 - d. Bathroom, bath assistance
 - e. Medication administration
 - f. Transportation assistance (to meals and to doctor appointments)
 - g. Activities and programs
3. Do you have Long Term Care insurance?
 - a. What does this policy cover?

Other Resources: [Senior Home Care Services | Elderly Home Care & In Home Caregiving \(seniorliving.org\)](https://www.seniorliving.org)