

## CHOOSING A NURSING HOME

### Find out about nursing homes in your area

- ✓ Call (800) 510-2020 for a list of nursing homes listed by City.
- ✓ Ask people who you trust (doctor, family, friends, neighbors, clergy) for any recommendations they may have.

### Find out how nursing homes compare in quality

- ✓ Go to [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov) and select “Nursing Home Compare” and you can compare inspection reports. You can search by city or zip code.
- ✓ Call The Department of Health Services - State Licensing at (714)456-0630 to see if they have reports on the facility.
- ✓ Call the Long-Term Care Ombudsman at (714) 479—0107. They visit all nursing homes and help solve complaints. You can ask them general questions about quality of care.
- ✓ Check to see if the nursing home is accredited by the Joint Commission on the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) as this means they meet certain standards of care.
- ✓ Check to see if the facility is Medicare and Medi-Cal (Medi-Cal) certified.
- ✓ Ask friends and other people you know if they are or were satisfied with the quality of care they received.

### Visit the nursing homes you are interested in, or have someone visit for you

- ✓ Make sure they provide the special services you may need, i.e. dementia care, ventilator, rehabilitation, etc.
- ✓ Understand the fees involved. Medicare only pays for a short time (usually 2 weeks) for specific conditions that will improve. For custodial care, the patient pays out of pocket or, if the person is very low income and qualifies for Medi-Cal, then Medi-Cal will pay.
- ✓ Have the facility show you their most recent surveys conducted by Federal or State surveyors. (They must give you this information).
- ✓ Take a “formal” tour, then drop by again, unannounced, on another day and time (weekends or midday). See the residents when they are out of bed, eating and going to activities. See if things feel different on your informal visit (they should not).
- ✓ On your visits, talk with staff, residents and family members and ask them if they are satisfied with the nursing home and its services.
- ✓ Take in the general feeling you have about how the facility smells, its cleanliness and how people are being cared for.
- ✓ If you have any questions, ask staff to explain things to you. If they are reluctant, this is a red flag.

### Choose the nursing home that best meets your needs

- ✓ If you are helping another person to choose a facility, include them as much as possible in making the choice.
- ✓ Think of the location to see if it is easily accessible so family and friends can visit.
- ✓ Check to see if your primary language is spoken at the facility by staff and residents.
- ✓ Check to see if the facility offers the religious or cultural support you need.
- ✓ Most of all trust your feelings. The only way to make a good choice is to visit several facilities and compare them.