

# Nursing Home Visit Checklist

## Things to Observe

- \_\_\_\_\_ Is the facility free of overwhelming unpleasant odors? (Keep in mind that temporary odors are sometimes unavoidable; they should dissipate within 10-15 minutes.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Is the facility well lighted?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Is the facility clean and well maintained?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do chairs and other furniture seem sturdy and difficult to tip? Are they attractive and comfortable?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Does each resident's bed have a privacy curtain? Is it clean and free of rips or tears?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Are activity schedules and menus posted for the week?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Are handrails in hallways and grab bars in bathrooms?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Are toilets convenient to bedrooms and easy for wheelchair-bound residents to use?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Are call bells near each toilet and bed?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Are the hallways wide enough to accommodate passing wheelchairs?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Are the rooms large enough to allow a wheelchair to maneuver easily?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Is the temperature comfortable? (Remember that many seniors prefer warmer environments.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do all residents have closets or separate drawers for clothing?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do you see personal health information about residents posted?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Is the atmosphere generally friendly and welcoming?

## Staff and Residents

- \_\_\_\_\_ Are staff actively using the privacy curtains to protect the dignity of residents receiving treatments?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Are staff answering call lights promptly?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do staff appear happy and content in their jobs?

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- \_\_\_\_\_ How do staff members interact with residents? Are they courteous and friendly? Do they smile and address residents by their names?
- \_\_\_\_\_ How do staff members interact with you? Are they friendly to family members and willing to interact and answer questions?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do residents appear well groomed?

### Medical Services

- \_\_\_\_\_ Is the facility licensed by the state of West Virginia? Does the nursing facility administrator have a current license from the state? If not, do not use the facility.
- \_\_\_\_\_ If you have Medicare and/or Medicaid coverage, ask whether the home is certified to provide such care?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Does the facility have an operating agreement with a nearby hospital for emergency services?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Is a physician available in an emergency?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Are personal physicians allowed?
- \_\_\_\_\_ How often does a physician see a resident?
- \_\_\_\_\_ How are residents and families involved in treatment planning?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Are other medical services available (i.e., from dentists, podiatrists, optometrists)?
- \_\_\_\_\_ What services does the facility provide for terminally ill residents and their families?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Does the facility work with a local hospice?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Does the facility have programs for residents with Alzheimer's disease or dementia?
- \_\_\_\_\_ How does the facility address pain management?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Is a licensed nurse always available?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Does a pharmacist review patient drug regimens?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Is there a physical therapy program available under the direction of a qualified physical therapist?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Are services available from an occupational therapist or speech pathologist?

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\_\_\_\_\_ Is a social worker available to assist residents and families?

### Dining and Food Service

\_\_\_\_\_ Do meals appear tasty and attractive? Ask to sample a meal. Does it taste good to you?

\_\_\_\_\_ Do posted menus feature a variety of foods throughout the week?

\_\_\_\_\_ Does the food being served match the description on the posted menu?

\_\_\_\_\_ Are residents who need help eating being given that assistance?

\_\_\_\_\_ Are snacks available?

\_\_\_\_\_ How are residents' food preferences handled? Can residents substitute for foods they don't like?

\_\_\_\_\_ Does a dietitian plan menus for patients on special diets?

### Activities

\_\_\_\_\_ Are arrangements made for residents to worship or attend religious services?

\_\_\_\_\_ How are residents encouraged to participate in activities?

\_\_\_\_\_ How are residents' activity preferences respected?

\_\_\_\_\_ Are group and individual activities available?

### Admission and Financial Practices

\_\_\_\_\_ Are beds currently available? If not, is there a waiting list?

\_\_\_\_\_ Are all services covered in the basic daily charge?

\_\_\_\_\_ If not, does the facility provide a list of services not covered in the basic rate? (Some homes have schedules covering linens, personal laundry, beauty/barber services, pedicures, incontinence briefs, dental care, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Will the facility directly bill insurance companies and other payers?

\_\_\_\_\_ Are advance payments returned if I leave the facility?

\_\_\_\_\_ If I am a private paying resident at the time of admission and later become eligible for Medicaid, will I be able to stay in the same bed and receive the same level of care?

## Nursing Home Visit Checklist

### Facility Policy/Procedures

- \_\_\_\_\_ Does the facility conduct criminal background checks on all of its employees?
- \_\_\_\_\_ What are the facility's policies on the use of physical and chemical (drug) restraints?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Does the facility regularly survey residents or family members to find out how satisfied they are with the quality of services the facility provides? If so, are they willing to share the results?
- \_\_\_\_\_ How does the facility match roommates?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Does the facility have a "visiting-hours" policy? Are family members welcome to visit at any time?
- \_\_\_\_\_ How are disputes, problems or complaints with the quality of care resolved?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Does the facility have a resident or family council?
- \_\_\_\_\_ How does the facility protect medical health information?

### Questions to Ask Yourself

- \_\_\_\_\_ Do I feel comfortable at the facility. Does my family feel comfortable coming to the facility?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Is the location of the facility convenient for frequent visits by my family and friends?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have I expressed my wishes regarding end-of-life care through a Living Will or Medical Power of Attorney?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have I appointed someone to handle my money through a Durable Power of Attorney?