



Touring Guide for Senior Living Communities

Since 1997, Senior Care Solutions has been serving seniors in the Sacramento region. Our goal as Family Consultants is to provide our clients with the tools they need in order to select the best possible facility for themselves or their loved ones. Once one of our Family Consultants has helped to identify which potential care settings may be appropriate and provided you with a manageable list of resources, this guide will help you to determine which of the options may be most suitable.

In this tool we will go over:

- *Where to Look*
- *What to Ask*
- *Important Things to Keep in Mind During Your Search*

Prior to your tours, we recommend reviewing the included information and marking the questions you want to make sure are answered during your visits. You can then take notes during each visit and use the tool to compare the facilities once your tours are complete. Please let us know if we can assist you in scheduling appointments or if you would like someone from our office to accompany you on your tours, as we are happy to do so.



SECTION I: WHERE TO LOOK

Location, Location, Location!

One of the main factors most families consider when selecting a facility is location. This is one thing our Family Consultants keep in mind and are sensitive to when helping to identify the settings that will be best suited to meet the needs of our clients. At times, however, due to limited options, budget restrictions or challenging needs, it may be important for families to remain open minded to different potential areas.

- ◆ *Limited Options:* Certain areas of town are more inundated with facilities, while other more remote areas will have limited options.
- ◆ *Budget Restrictions:* Certain areas of town will have higher average rates than others, so if budget is a concern, looking in an area nearby, despite the change in zip code, can help expand the options available to a client.
- ◆ *Challenging Needs:* It is important to keep in mind that not all care settings are comfortable with residents who require special services or high levels of care. If a client has challenging dementia-related behaviors, a medical need (such as assistance with diabetic injections), or requires a higher staffing ratio due to their level of need, the options available to them may be limited. Not all settings will be able to accommodate residents with special needs, so our team will help to identify the settings that are comfortable and experienced in caring for residents who require a bit more assistance.

These are just some of the reasons our Family Consultants may want to know more than one area you are open to. If we feel a setting that is outside of your immediate area of interest could potentially be a great fit, we may still include it, as care is the most important factor at the end of the day.

SECTION II: WHAT TO ASK

Do you know what questions to ask when you tour a care facility? Our team of Family Consultants has created a categorized, comprehensive list of questions so that you will leave a facility informed and with all of your questions answered.

Some of the questions included in this touring guide may be more important or applicable to your situation than others. We recommend reviewing the questions prior to touring and marking those that are most important—that way you can ensure you leave with all of the answers you need to make an informed decision.



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	Facility Name:	Facility Name:	Facility Name:
First Impressions			
<input type="checkbox"/> Does the atmosphere appear friendly, safe and comfortable?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Do the residents seem content and engaged?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Are residents addressed in a respectful manner and treated with dignity by staff?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Does there seem to be enough staff in the facility?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Does the environment appear clean and well-maintained?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Does there appear to be other residents with similar needs to you or your loved one?			
Location			
<input type="checkbox"/> Will it be easy for friends and family to visit?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Is it within a reasonable distance from your loved one's doctors/medical facilities?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Are there local shops, grocery stores, churches, etc. nearby?			
The Safety and Ease of Use of the Setting			
<input type="checkbox"/> Can someone with a wheelchair or walker move around the facility with ease?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Are communal areas easily accessible?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Are there emergency pull cords or call buttons in the bedroom and bathrooms?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Are rooms and corridors suitably lit?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Is there a safe outdoor area for residents to use?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Are outdoor areas wheelchair/walker accessible?			



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Accommodations	Facility Name:	Facility Name:	Facility Name:
Bedroom			
<input type="checkbox"/> Does the apartment or bedroom have a private bathroom? If not, where is the closest restroom located?			
<input type="checkbox"/> If you have to share a room, can you meet the other resident beforehand to see if you are compatible?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Are residents able to bring their own furniture and personal items?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Can a resident hang personal items or pictures on the wall?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Can a resident have their own television in their room? Is cable included? Who handles setting up cable box?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Can you have a telephone installed in your room? Would this be an additional charge?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Does the room or apartment have heating and air conditioning? Are there separate thermostats for each room?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Is there a secure place where personal items and valuables can be kept?			
Communal Areas			
<input type="checkbox"/> Are communal areas set up in a comfortable and functional manner?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Is there more than one room to watch television?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Is there a quiet room with no television?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Are there private areas that family can utilize when they visit their loved one?			
Bathrooms			
<input type="checkbox"/> Are toilets and showers easily accessible and private for residents to use?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Are bathrooms wheelchair/walker accessible and equipped with grab bars for safety?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Are soap and other toiletries provided?			



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Look at the Day-to-Day Life	Facility Name:	Facility Name:	Facility Name:
General Conditions			
<input type="checkbox"/> Are you comfortable with the daily routines and facility policies?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Can you influence what happens in the home or facility? Is there a resident council or another way to voice concerns?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Is there a staff member or resident who assists new residents in familiarizing themselves with the environment?			
Daily Routines			
<input type="checkbox"/> Are residents able to wake up and go to bed at their desired times?			
<input type="checkbox"/> How often are residents' rooms cleaned?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Are residents' beds made daily?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Are daily papers and mail delivered?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Can residents bathe at their desired times or is there a bathing schedule?			
Meals			
<input type="checkbox"/> Do residents have input on the food prepared/served?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Do the menus include foods which you like?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Do the menus give you a choice of dishes?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Do the menus appear to be balanced and nutritious?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Can special diets be accommodated?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Are snacks available throughout the day?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Are meals provided at set times or does the care setting offer anytime dining?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Can a resident have meals in their room?			



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Activities and Programs	Facility Name:	Facility Name:	Facility Name:
<input type="checkbox"/> Is there a variety of social events, activities and outings organized throughout the week?			
<input type="checkbox"/> How frequently are outings offered?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Are there activities that are of interest to you?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Do residents have any input when it comes to the activities offered?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Will the care setting provide escorts to and reminders about activities that interest a resident?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Does the facility offer any religious services?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Does the facility have a community computer available for resident use?			
Transportation			
<input type="checkbox"/> Does the facility offer transportation to their residents?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Is transportation included in the monthly rate?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Is there a maximum distance a resident can be transported?			
<input type="checkbox"/> If transportation is not included, will the facility help to locate and arrange transport for their residents?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Will a facility staff member accompany residents to doctor's visits or on outings?			
Visitors			
<input type="checkbox"/> Can family and friends visit without restriction?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Can visitors stay for a meal or overnight, as desired?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Can you make/offer your guests a drink or snack?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Are visitors welcome to attend activities or facility parties?			



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Most Importantly—Examine the Care	Facility Name:	Facility Name:	Facility Name:
Personal Care Needs			
<input type="checkbox"/> Is the facility able to meet your personal care needs (i.e. dressing, bathing, toileting, transferring, etc.)?			
<input type="checkbox"/> How frequently are a resident's care needs reevaluated and the care plan adjusted?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Aside from prohibitive or restricted health conditions, are there any care services the facility is not willing to provide?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Does the facility have hospice waivers and are they willing to provide end-of-life care?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Can relatives or friends help you or your loved one with personal care if desired?			
<input type="checkbox"/> How often are residents bathed?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Does the facility provide incontinence care and if so, how often are residents changed?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Does a hairdresser or barber visit the facility regularly?			
Health Care Needs			
<input type="checkbox"/> Can you keep the same doctor you have now?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Does the facility offer concierge physician services? If so, is this an additional fee?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Does the facility have a nurse on staff or on-call? If so, how many days/hours of nursing coverage per week?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Do other health professionals visit the facility regularly (i.e. physical therapist, podiatrist, dentist, etc.)?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Does the facility handle prescription refills?			
<input type="checkbox"/> What is the facility protocol should a resident have a medical emergency or a change in medical condition?			
<input type="checkbox"/> If a resident is transported to the hospital due to a medical emergency, does staff accompany them?			



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Facility Operations	Facility Name:	Facility Name:	Facility Name:
<input type="checkbox"/> Who is the acting administrator of the care setting? Are they the owner as well?			
<input type="checkbox"/> How long have they been running the care setting?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Can the administrator be easily contacted?			
<input type="checkbox"/> How are concerns and challenges addressed by the facility?			
<input type="checkbox"/> How many residents currently reside in the facility?			
<input type="checkbox"/> How many staff members are on duty: in the morning, afternoon, evening and at night?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Are night staff awake or on-call?			
<input type="checkbox"/> What experience/qualifications do the staff have and what continuing training do they receive?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Is the care setting in good standing with the state? Does the facility have any citations or probation periods on their record?			
Facility Costs and Agreement			
<input type="checkbox"/> What is the base rent rate? What services are included in this base rate?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Are care charges all-inclusive or an additional charge?			
<input type="checkbox"/> If care is an additional charge, is there a cap on care charges? Do they charge a fee if a resident goes on hospice?			
<input type="checkbox"/> What type of rate increases might a resident expect, annually and/or due to changes in care needs?			
<input type="checkbox"/> How much notice is given when a resident's care charges are being increased?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Does the facility charge a one-time community fee?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Are there any other costs (i.e. incontinence products, cable, phone, etc.)?			
<input type="checkbox"/> How much notice is required, should a resident decide to move out?			
<input type="checkbox"/> In what circumstances might a resident be asked to leave?			



SECTION III: IMPORTANT THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND DURING YOUR SEARCH

Working with families day in and day out, our Family Consultants often see people lose sight of what is most important in finding an appropriate care setting for their loved one: the care. While aesthetics, location, room size, closet space and other items are important, nothing should come before the quality of care. It is important to prioritize and remain realistic in your search, realizing that you may not find a setting that can check every single box.

Additionally, it is important that families look at the bigger picture, not just the here and now, when exploring potential facilities.

- ◆ *Costs:* In many settings, as needs change so will costs, so ensuring that you or your loved one can afford costs over time is vital. When exploring facilities, make sure that you ask how costs might increase over time or if there is a cap on care costs, so you can plan accordingly.
- ◆ *Care:* As chronic health issues worsen or a resident's dementia progresses, often a resident will require additional services. Will the facility be able to grow with those needs over time? Asking the right questions now, can help to prevent having to make multiple moves down the road.

Another thing to keep in mind during your search, is the individual you are looking on behalf of. If your loved one is not physically or cognitively able to be a part of the initial search, it is important for family members to look through the eyes of their loved one when visiting facilities. This seems obvious, but often we find family members pick out a setting that they would want to live in themselves, not one that is necessarily the best fit for their family member.

We always recommend that our clients visit more than one setting, before making a decision. It is important to compare facilities so you understand the options available and can make an informed decision. Touring multiple options can ensure you find the right fit and hopefully avoid unnecessary future moves. At times, due to a rushed hospital discharge or other crisis-driven scenario, it can be difficult to find the time to compare facilities, but whenever possible it is highly recommended.

Finally, remember to lean on the Senior Care Solutions team, as we are here to help, before, during and after the move. Our goal is to help our clients find a lasting solution, not one that requires them to move again a few months later. We are happy to assist you with collecting the necessary physician's paperwork, setting up tours or accompanying you on tours and connecting you with additional resources to help support you and your loved one through the process of making a move. If there are challenges following a move, be sure to communicate this to our office so that we can help you advocate or give some suggestions on how to work through any issues you are experiencing.



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