

ALTY

ADDING LIFE TO YEARS

What ALTY New York is doing to change the culture of nursing home care.



Change. For Good.

For many of us, the welcomed prospect of living longer is tempered by the fear and loathing over the possibility of having to spend our final years in a nursing home or other care facility.

For good reason. The system is broken.

Today, even the best care providers fall short in dealing with what the Eden Alternative calls “the helplessness, loneliness and boredom” that often characterize an elder’s daily life.*

ALTY New York believes the time is long overdue to change the way that elders receive care from others – no matter what or how much care they receive.

Chances are, if you are reading this now, you or a family member will soon be facing the need to make a life-changing decision to enter a care facility. But how do you make the choice that’s best for the person in need of care?

The fact is, most people are better equipped to ask the right questions when buying an automobile or personal computer than when selecting a care facility. Often times, families face the added stress of having several days or less to make a decision among limited alternatives when the resident-in-waiting is being discharged from a hospital. It’s easy to feel the entire health care system works against making the right choice.

Sadly, sometimes the challenge is to make the best choice among less than satisfactory alternatives.

Here's the Problem. It Can Feel Like Prison.

There's a reason that many people say they would rather die than live in a nursing home that has nothing to do with the quality of care – most often delivered by competent, caring people. Rather it has everything to do with the loss of their personal identities, dignity and free will. Just as you would find in any correctional facility.

Things we all take for granted in life – when to bathe, when and what to eat, even when to go to the bathroom – are now decided by others. By and large, residents know little about the people who provide their care. And caregivers know only a fragment of what makes each individual unique and special. (Hardly the formula for healthy adult relationships.)

The good news is, it doesn't have to be this way, and ALTY New York is dedicated to ensuring that elder life can be a time of growth and personal fulfillment for all.

Partners in Change

ALTY New York understands that change can only occur when everyone works together – care providers, government, families, and residents – to transform a culture of care that, despite good intentions, often strips elders of their will to live.

And while many care facilities and providers have begun to embrace the need for an institutional makeover, the lack of urgency among some and the magnitude of the challenge among all serve to slow the rate of progress which continues to compromise the quality of elder life.

And that's where you can make a difference. **By expecting more. By demanding more. By asking the right questions.** And by holding everyone accountable to ensure that elders are not prisoners of the system's misguided creation.

To assist you in your personal efforts, ALTY New York has created a comprehensive set of questions to ask care facility administrators during the selection process. Feel free to ask those questions that are of particular importance and relevance to you.

Keep in mind that a care facility's willingness to answer your questions is just as important as the answers it provides. By asking the right questions, we can all look forward to the day when elders can maintain substantial control of their lives and retain their personal identities when being cared for by others.



Name of Facility: _____

1. Number of Residents

- Less than 40
- 40 to 80
- 80 to 120
- 120 to 160
- More than 160

2. Years of Operation

3. Age of Current Facility

4. Type of Organization

(check all that apply)

- Profit
- Not-for-Profit
- Union
- Non-Union
- Accepts Medicaid/
Medicare Patients
- Does Not Accept Medicaid/
Medicare Patients

5. Monthly Rate

6. Included in Monthly Rate

(check all that apply)

- Basic Residency
- Medication
- Transportation
- Equipment/Aids
- Medical Care

Comments

7. What % private pay versus Medicaid?

8. What, if any, are the private pay requirements that must be committed as

- Up to 6 month of the monthly rate
- From 6 to 12 months of the monthly rate
- No private pay requirements

9. Current Staffing

	Full-Time	Part-Time	Weekend	Contract
Audiologists				
Beauticians/Barbers				
Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs)				
Chaplains				
Custodial				
Dentists				
Dieticians				
Geriatrician				
Housekeeping				
LPNs				
Maintenance				
Medical Director				
Nurse Practitioners				
Occupational Therapists				
Optometrists				
Podiatrists				
Physical Therapists				
Psychiatrists				
Psychologists				
Primary Care Physicians				
Recreational Therapists				
Registered Nurses				
Rehabilitation Team				
Security				
Social Workers				
Speech Therapists				
Volunteers				

Resident Council

10. Is there a functioning resident council?

- Yes
- No

11. If yes, how often does it meet?

- Weekly
- Twice a Month
- Monthly
- Quarterly
- Other _____

12. Can family members attend?

- Yes
- No

13. Is volunteer/staff support provided for those requiring assistance to attend?

- Yes
- No

14. Is staff in attendance?

- Yes
- No

Daily Living

15. When are residents awakened?

- 5 to 6 am
- 6 to 7 am
- 7 to 8 am
- 8 to 9 am
- Other _____

16. How often do residents bathe/shower or receive a bed bath (sponge baths excluded?)

- Daily
- Every Other Day
- Once a week
- Twice a Week
- Other _____

17. When do residents bathe/shower?

- Before Breakfast
- Between Breakfast and Lunch
- Between Lunch and Dinner
- After Dinner
- Prior to Bedtime
- Other _____

18. When do residents eat breakfast?

- 5 to 6 am
- 6 to 7 am
- 7 to 8 am
- 8 to 9 am
- Other _____

19. When do residents eat lunch?

- 10 to 11 am
- 11 am to noon
- Noon to 1 pm
- 1 to 2 pm
- Other _____

20. When do residents eat dinner?

- 4 to 5 pm
- 5 to 6 pm
- 6 to 7 pm
- Other _____

21. How are snacks made available?

- Staff served
- Self served
- Café/canteen
- Not provided

22. Do residents pay for snacks?

- Yes
- No

23. Do residents have access to the kitchen to make themselves a snack?

- Yes
- No

24. How many entree choices are offered at mealtime?

- 1 to 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

25. Which is considered the main meal of the day?

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Dinner

26. Are meals cooked on-site?

- Yes
- No

If not, where are they prepared?

27. Can arrangements be made for family members to eat with residents?

- Yes
- No

28. Can family members bring in food?

- Yes
- No

29. Are staff members/volunteers available to assist residents at mealtime?

- Yes
- No

30. How is food served at mealtime?

- Disposable Packaging and Plasticware
- Silverware/Tableware

31. Do residents have a choice of serving size?

- Yes
- No

32. How are birthdays celebrated?

- Monthly
- Weekly
- Individually
- Not Observed by Facility

33. How often is laundry collected?

- Daily
- Twice Weekly
- Weekly
- Other _____

34. How many days to return clean laundry?

- 1
- 2 – 3
- 4 or more

35. Is soiled laundry rinsed before being placed into a laundry bag?

- Yes
- No

36. Which of the following recreational opportunities are offered?
(check all that apply)

	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Other
<input type="radio"/> Arts/Crafts				
<input type="radio"/> Assisted Reading				
<input type="radio"/> Bingo				
<input type="radio"/> Board Games				
<input type="radio"/> Book Club				
<input type="radio"/> Card Games				
<input type="radio"/> Children Visits				
<input type="radio"/> Chorus				
<input type="radio"/> Cooking				
<input type="radio"/> Dancing				
<input type="radio"/> Discussion Groups				
<input type="radio"/> Exercise Class				
<input type="radio"/> Knitting				
<input type="radio"/> Movies				
<input type="radio"/> Music				
<input type="radio"/> Painting				
<input type="radio"/> Pet Therapy				
<input type="radio"/> Sewing				
<input type="radio"/> Wii Activities				

37. Who is responsible for transporting residents to the activity?

- Volunteer
- Staff member
- Unescorted
- Family member

38. Are TVs provided in each room?

- Yes
- No

39. Is there cable TV service available in each room?

- Yes
- No

40. Are phones provided in each room?

- Yes
- No

40b. If not, do residents have access to a phone?

- Yes
- No

41. Are cell phones permitted?

- Yes
- No

42. Do residents have access to a computer and the Internet?

- Yes
- No

43. Are there resident pets on site?

- Yes
- No

44. Does the facility have a library?

- Yes
- No

45. Do residents have access to daily newspapers?

- Yes
- No

46. How are roommates assigned?

- Next Available Bed
- Best Fit

47. How often are off-campus activities/field trips scheduled?

- Weekly
- Twice a Month
- Monthly
- Other _____

48. For those who require assistance, are residents placed on a regular schedule to use the bathroom?

- Yes
- No

48b. If yes, when are they scheduled? (Check all that apply)

- Upon Awakening
- Prior to Meals
- Immediately Following Meals
- Immediately Before Bedtime
- When Requested

49. On average, how long must a resident wait for assistance?

- 0 to 5 minutes
- 5 to 15 minutes
- 15 to 30 minutes
- More than 30 minutes

50. Is there a formal on-site training program for staff members?

- Yes
- No

51. Is staff cross-trained?

- Yes
- No

52. For those who need assistance, are residents given the opportunity to get outside?

- Yes
- No

53. If yes, how often?

- Daily
- Twice Weekly
- Weekly
- As Desired
- Other _____

54. For those who do not require assistance, are residents given the opportunity to get outside?

- Yes
- No

55. If yes, how often?

- Daily
- Twice Weekly
- Weekly
- As Desired
- Other _____

56. Is smoking permitted in a designated area?

- Yes
- No

57. Are residents able to vote?

- Yes
- No

58. Are there organized religious services?

- Yes
- No

59. If yes, for which of the following?

- Catholic
- Jewish
- Protestant
- Other _____

60. Does the facility provide a lock-box to store a resident's valuables?

- Yes
- No

61. Is the facility locked overnight?

- Yes
- No

62. Does the facility employ full-time security personnel 24/7?

- Yes
- No

Administering Care

63. How many residents are assigned to each nursing assistant during the following periods. (insert number)

- Daytime _____
- Evenings _____
- Overnight _____

64. How often is a resident weighed?

- Weekly
- Monthly
- During a Physical Examination
- Other _____

65. When an elder has a medical consult, does the family routinely receive a phone call or e-mail concerning the visit?

- Yes
- No

66. Is there an established protocol for reporting inappropriate behavior of staff members?

- Yes
- No

67. Is there an established protocol for communicating to the family the results of the family's/resident's complaint?

- Yes
- No

68. Is there a whiteboard or other posting in the resident's room that lets family members know who the nurse and aide are during the shift?

- Yes
- No

69. Does the family have the ability to request that a specific nurse or aide not be assigned to care for the resident?

- Yes
- No

70. Most of the time, how is the nursing staff assigned to a specific resident?

- Rotational assignments
- Consistent assignments

Want to Learn More?

ALTY New York invites you to explore the current state of care and the established movements to accelerate culture change.

Suggested readings

1. *Old Age in a New Age*
Beth Baker
2. *A Dignified Life: The best friends approach to alzheimer's care. A guide for family caregivers.*
Virginia Bell and David Troxel
3. *Best Friends Approach to Dementia Care*
Virginia Bell and David Troxel
4. *Treat Me, Not My Age: A doctor's guide to getting the best care as you or a loved one gets older.*
Mark Lachs
5. *The 36 Hour Day: A family guide to care for people with Alzheimer's disease, other dementias, and memory loss in later life. Fourth Edition.*
Nancy L. Mace and Peter V. Rabins
6. *Dementia Beyond Drugs: Changing the culture of care*
G. Allen Power, M.D.
7. *Passages in Caregiving: Turning Chaos into Confidence*
Gail Sheehy
8. *When the Time Comes: Families with aging parents share their struggles and solutions.*
Paula Span
9. *Life Worth Living: How Someone You Love Can Still Enjoy Life in a Nursing Home - The Eden Alternative in Action*
William H. Thomas, M.D.

Rochester-based resources for elders

Alzheimer's Association of Rochester, N.Y.
www.alz.org/rochesterny/

Catholic Family Center Elder Services
www.cfcrochester.org

ElderSource
www.eldersource.org/

The Jewish Family Service of Rochester
www.jfsrochester.org/

LIFESPAN
www.lifespan-roch.org/

Monroe County Human Services:
Office for the Aging (OFA)
<http://www2.monroecounty.gov/aging-index.php>

Rochester Area Association of Services and Homes for the Aging (RASHA)
www.rahsa.org/search.asp

<http://www.compassionandsupport.org/> (Community-Wide End of Life/Palliative Care Initiative)

Greater Rochester Area Partnership for the Elderly (GRAPE)

New York State informational links

The New York State Department of Health
www.health.ny.gov/
www.health.ny.gov/facilities/nursing/rights/docs/your_rights_as_a_nursing_home_resident.pdf
(A document describing your rights as a nursing home resident.)

The Long Term Care Community Coalition
www.ltccc.org

The Long Term Care Ombudsman Program
www.ltcombudsman.ny.gov/whatis/indexwhatis.cfm

Data-based comparison of nursing homes
www.medicare.gov/nhcompare

If you would like to participate in ALTY New York's efforts to help make elder life a time of growth and personal fulfillment, visit ALTYNY.org.

*ALTY is neither associated with nor endorsed by the Eden Alternative.

This brochure is dedicated to the memory of Dr. T. Franklin Williams, ALTY charter member and one of the founding fathers of the field of geriatric medicine.