

Selecting a Retirement Community

In recent years, many attractive options for retirement living have emerged. One popular option is the continuing care retirement community, or CCRC. This type of community is different from other housing and care options because it provides for housing, services and nursing care, usually all in one location.

At the same time, CCRCs offer some distinct advantages, including physical and financial security, independence and access to health care, companionship of friends and neighbors of similar age and access to community facilities and privacy. The CCRC's emphasis on the individual, coupled with a supportive environment, allows you to continue to pursue your lifelong interests.

There are many different options in the CCRC industry. Consider the community size when making your decision; do you prefer a large community with many options and services, or something smaller and more individualized? Would you prefer a more "formal" environment, or are you a casual person at heart? There are CCRCs of all types and sizes, and you should find one where you will feel most at home. Use the list below as a starting point for asking questions when visiting or contacting communities.

If you have decided that a CCRC is the best option for yourself or a family member, it is best to visit a few facilities. Here is a checklist of things to keep in mind and questions to ask as you decide what facility is best for you:

What kinds of services do you offer and which ones are included at no extra cost?

What kinds of contracts are available to me?

Do you have licensed nursing staff on site 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, or are they limited to certain hours?

Are you accredited by CARF-CCAC, the only accrediting body for CCRCs?

Can I talk to other people who have used your services?

How do the staff members respond to the people receiving services?

Are people treated with dignity?

Are the premises well maintained, clean, and safe?

How will the services be individualized to meet my needs?

How will I be involved in planning my services?

Are their opportunities for my family or others to participate?

What can I do if I am unhappy about the way I am treated or the services I receive?

How will my privacy be protected?

Are people you serve, and those who work there, involved in planning for the future of your organization?

Are staff members licensed, certified, or credentialed for the work they do?

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