



## The Top 5 Things To Ask When Comparing Assisted Living

### 1. Is there current availability?

Surprisingly, 3 out of 5 adult children conducting an initial search for a parent's daily care fail to ask communities this very simple yet very important question. Although wait lists are possible, most families discover their time-frame for needed care won't accommodate an indefinite delay, even if a particular community is their preferred choice.

### 2. What is the daily rate, and what does this fee include/not include?

Ask to review a copy of the agreement up front. Also, ask if there are various size floor plans available and be clear about any differences in pricing for each. While larger floor plans may seem to offer more comfort, the reality is residents spend much more of their day outside their apartment than families realize. So, be sure to evaluate what's most important to your family. If your parents have long-term care (LTC) insurance, make sure you credit this daily allowance against a community's cost (noting limitations on coverage). Additionally, ask if the community will assist with the filing of LTC claims.

### 3. Does the community have a licensed nurse on duty 24/7?

You may find that some do not have around-the-clock coverage. Ask if the community has an RN/clinical director who oversees the staff and serves as a family resource. The same question applies to the physician who oversees medical care, making sure to ask how often this MD is on-site. You also need to know if you can use your own doctor, specialist and preferred hospital. Other services to inquire about – access to a registered dietitian, therapy and dental services – all helpful for aging in place and all indicative of a community's willingness to invest in top quality care for its residents.

### 4. What are your options should parents need short-term rehab or skilled nursing care?

Many adult children skip this step, focusing on the immediate daily assistance need, but sooner or later parents may require short- and/or long-term skilled care. Knowing, ahead, if there is an on-site facility and having researched the quality and cost of this care will save headaches and stress in an urgent family situation. If higher levels of care aren't available on-site, ask if the community is capable of allowing someone to age in place by providing additional services, thereby minimizing the possible need for skilled nursing at a later date.

### 5. Outside of daily assistance with bathing, dressing, meals and medication management, what other services does the community provide?

For instance, social events and instructor-led activities like art, music, baking and fitness all add to a resident's overall well-being. If, on an initial tour, you don't see these activities taking place, ask when they might be available and ensure they are included in the daily fee. Finally, as you tour, note how you feel about what you see and hear. Do residents look happy, not just content? How does the staff interact with residents? Does their concern and care for residents appear genuine? Note subtleties and, above all, trust your instincts.

*We hope the above is helpful as you research and compare assisted living, personal care and/or memory care communities for a family member. Know, though, this is only a partial list of questions and topics to consider. For answers to your specific questions, including information about The Meadows at Shannondell, call 610.908.3800 or email us at [meadowsinfo@shannondell.com](mailto:meadowsinfo@shannondell.com).*