

Differences Between Long-term Care Facilities

The term “nursing home” is often used as a catch-all for the different types of long-term care facilities. Although they are sometimes referred to interchangeably, assisted living facilities, nursing homes and other community residential homes provide a variety of unique services that differentiate them from one another statutorily. Families can guarantee that their loved one is being provided the care and services needed in a community or home that can best serve them. Below is a brief description of the different long-term care facilities.

Assisted Living Facilities

Assisted living facilities (ALFs) are residential community homes that care for disabled and elderly individuals in the least restrictive and most homelike environment. ALFs provide supportive services such as meals, medication assistance and assistance with the activities of daily living. ALFs also may coordinate third-party services such as home health, hospice care and various therapies. The services available in these facilities are intended to help residents age in place and remain as independent as possible. A number of facilities provide specialized environments for people with Alzheimer’s or dementia-related diseases. Others have add-on licenses such as a Limited Mental Health license for facilities that provide care and services to residents with a mental health diagnosis and are on Medicaid Optional State Supplementation (OSS) funding. A limited nursing or extended congregate care license allows the facility to provide a limited scope of nursing services. ALFs are not medical or nursing facilities and do not provide 24-hour nursing care.

Adult Family Care Homes

Adult family care homes (AFCHs) provide housing and personal care for disabled adults and frail elders who choose to live in a private home. This type of long-term care facility replicates a family-style living arrangement with a maximum licensed bed capacity of five disabled adults or frail elders. The licensee must live in the home with the residents. The personal care provided in AFCHs is intended to help residents remain as independent as possible to delay or avoid placement in a nursing home or an ALF.

NOTE: Licenses are not required for an ALF or AFCH if the homeowner lives in the home, if there are no more than two residents and if the residents do not receive OSS. Reference the exemption criteria in its entirety in Chapter 429.04(1)(d), Florida Statutes.

Nursing Homes

Nursing homes (NHs) provide medical nursing care, personal care, or custodial care. NH residents require these services and overall a higher level of care than those in ALFs due to illness, physical infirmity, or advanced age. As more tests are conducted in general, we will see an increase in cases nationally. The number of people infected (including those who are asymptomatic) is going to increase everywhere – it’s just that in Florida, the governor has made long-term care centers a priority for testing. So, it stands to reason that it is the first place numbers will increase. It’s not necessarily because infection is spreading or because facilities are not doing everything possible to prevent or contain COVID-19. To make this testing most effective and maximize the ability to care for or transfer infected residents, if necessary, we need help. More tests everywhere will reveal more cases. Testing is the only way to know how pervasive coronavirus is, how to measure when the curve flattens, and discover new approaches to managing.

Intermediate Care Facilities for Persons with Developmental Disabilities

Intermediate care facilities for persons with developmental disabilities are residential facilities certified by the federal government and offered as an optional Medicaid benefit. These facilities provide services such as medication management, social skills development and custodial care to people who have developmental disabilities.

NOTE: Reference Chapter 400, Part VIII, Florida Statutes for Intermediate Care Facilities for Persons with Developmental Disabilities regulations in their entirety.