

What Is “Long Term Care”?

We hear that phrase all the time: “long term care.” What does that mean, anyway? Many of us think “nursing home.” And we are partly right. But actually “long term care” means many kinds of care delivered on a long term basis, in many types of places including your own home, by many different providers.

Home Health Care

Home is where most people want to remain for as long as it is safe to do so. Home health care can make that possible. Home health care is provided through the Visiting Nurses Associations, certified home health agencies, and private home-care agencies and includes skilled and non-skilled services provided in the home. Other services that help people remain at home include: homemaker services, home delivered meals, chore services, live-in aides, respite care, care management, money management, and transportation services.

Adult Day Care Centers

These centers provide care on a daily basis for adults who need help with their activities of daily living (eating, toileting, etc.). The participant lives at home, but comes to a supervised center setting during the day for care, meals, and interaction with others. Programs are usually available 5-6 days per week. Transportation is provided. Many adult day centers have special programs for people with Alzheimer’s Disease.

Adult Foster Care

A person is no longer able to safely live alone in his/her own home but does not yet need the continuous 24 hour skilled care of a nursing home may still be able to live in the community by moving in to someone else’s home. Adult foster care consists of room, board, companionship, and assistance provided for an elder by a host family in their home. Host families help with meal preparation, diet, bathing, dressing, shopping and/or medication management.

Assisted Living

Designed for people who are no longer able to live safely at home, but do not require the level of assistance provided by a nursing home, and who wish to maintain independence, assisted living facilities are becoming increasingly popular as a transition from home. Personal care and household services including meals are offered to elders needing some assistance with daily living. The level of services available is extensive.

Nursing Homes

A nursing home is a facility for people who, for various reasons, are unable to continue to live alone. Staffed 24 hours a day with nurses, aides, and with physicians on call, nursing homes provide care at different levels depending on patient need: custodial care, intermediate care, and skilled care.

Hospice

Hospice care is for people suffering from a terminal illness. Emphasis is on care rather than cure. Indeed, most people enter hospice when it has been decided that further medical treatment will not be provided. Hospice care can be provided at home, or in a hospice facility.