

DEFINITIONS

Assisted Living - A residential setting that offers choices in personal care and health related services in an apartment setting.

Residential Care - A residential setting that offers choices in personal care and health related services in a congregate setting, most commonly used by those with mental illness or mental retardation. Although some Residential Care options for seniors do exist in Oklahoma.

Independent Living - Residential living setting for elderly or senior adults that may or may not provide hospitality or supportive services. Under this living arrangement, the senior adult leads an independent lifestyle that requires minimal or no extra assistance. Generally referred to as elderly housing in the government-subsidized environment, independent living also includes rental assisted or market rate apartments or cottages where residents usually have complete choice in whether to participate in a facility's services or programs.

Continuing Care Retirement Community - (CCRC) A community that offers several levels of assistance, including independent living, assisted living and nursing home care. It is different from other housing and care facilities for seniors because it usually provides a written agreement or long-term contract between the resident (frequently lasting the term of the resident's lifetime) and the community, which offers a continuum of housing, services and health care system, commonly all on one campus or site.

Nursing Home - Provides 24-hour skilled care for the more acute patients. Patients generally rely on assistance for most or all daily living activities (such as bathing, dressing and toileting). The Assisted Living Federation of America (ALFA) defines an Assisted Living residence as a special combination of housing, personalized supportive services and health care designed to meet the needs -- both scheduled and unscheduled -- of those who need help with activities of daily living.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the philosophy of Assisted Living?

ALFA members subscribe to a 10-point philosophy of care:

1. Offering cost-effective quality care that is personalized for individual needs
2. Fostering independence for each resident
3. Treating each resident with dignity and respect
4. Promoting the individuality of each resident
5. Allowing each resident choice of care and lifestyle
6. Protecting each resident's right to privacy
7. Nurturing the spirit of each resident
8. Involving family and friends, as appropriate, in care planning and implementation
9. Providing a safe, residential environment
10. Making the Assisted Living residence a valuable community asset

Who lives in Assisted Living residences?

Currently, more than a million Americans live in an estimated 20,000 Assisted Living residences. Assisted Living residents can be young or old, affluent or low income, frail or disabled. A typical resident is a woman in her eighties and is either widowed or single. Residents may suffer from Alzheimer's disease or other memory disorders. Residents may also need help with incontinence or mobility.

What does an Assisted Living residence look like?

Assisted Living residences can range from a high-rise apartment complex to a converted Victorian home to a renovated school. Residences may be free standing or housed with other residential options, such as independent living or nursing care. They may be operated by non-profit or for-profit companies. Facilities have between 6 and 120 units. There is no single blueprint, because consumers' preferences and needs vary widely. Units may vary in size from one room to a full apartment.

How is Assisted Living regulated?

Assisted Living in Oklahoma is regulated by the Oklahoma State Department of Health. Residences must comply with local building codes and fire safety regulations. ALFA believes the most successful regulations are consumer driven, balancing the safety concerns we all share with the consumers' desires to retain their independence and freedom of choice.

What types of services are offered in Assisted Living residences?

Services provided in Assisted Living residences usually include:

- Three meals a day served in a common dining area
- Housekeeping services
- Transportation
- Assistance with eating, bathing, dressing,
- Access to health and medical services
- 24-hour security and staff availability
- Emergency call systems for each resident' s apartment
- Health promotion and exercise programs
- Medication management
- Personal laundry services
- Social and recreational activities

FACTS ABOUT ASSISTED LIVING

According to the Assisted Living Federation of America, factors contributing to the growth and popularity of the assisted living industry include:

- The aging of the American population, including the dramatic increase in the number of persons aged 85 and older. According to information summarized from the U.S. Bureau of Census, the population of people 85 and older is expected to increase by 33.2 percent between the years 2000 and 2010.
- According to census figures, about 6.5 million older people need assistance with daily living activities. As the number of older Americans continues to increase, that number is expected to double by 2020.
- The continued increase in the number of older people who live alone. Women continue to outlive men, and the likelihood that either men or women will live alone increases with age. Societal factors, such as rising divorce rates and the growing numbers of people choosing not to marry, also contribute to this trend.
- Changes in the role of women, who traditionally have been the primary caregivers of older people. The number of women in the work force grew from 20.5 percent in 1915 to more than 50 percent in 1995.
- The increased net worth of older people. The number of persons 80 or older with incomes sufficient to afford Assisted Living has increased; over 57 percent had incomes topping \$15,000 in 1999, and over 38 percent had incomes of at least \$25,000.*
- The emergence of managed care and integrated delivery healthcare systems. As the nation looks for ways to make health care more affordable, Assisted Living stands as a less costly alternative to nursing homes or home health care. On average the per-diem rate for Assisted Living in a private room is about two-thirds that of an equivalent room in a nursing home.

*Source: Claritas, Inc., a demographics firm