Community Tour Checklist

Uses Ohio's official visit guidance and Medicare's nursing home visit questions. Use one copy per community and visit at least twice: once at a meal, once in the evening or on a weekend.

COMMUNITY NAME	ADDRESS
CONTACT PERSON / TITLE	PHONE
EMAIL	TOUR DATE & TIME
CARE LEVELS OFFERED	QUOTED MONTHLY COST

Before you visit (Ohio guidance)

Source: Ohio Dept. of Aging

- [ ] Look up the community's license and inspection results in the Ohio Long-Term Care Consumer Guide.
- [ ] During the visit, ask questions of staff, residents and visitors.
- [ ] Use your senses: what do you see, smell, hear and feel?
- [ ] Check for fire safety, emergency preparedness and required postings.

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» The free Long-Term Care Ombudsman (Pro Seniors in SW Ohio) can help you read inspection reports and narrow your list.

Your care (Medicare's visit questions)

Source: Medicare CMS 02174

- [ ] How is my loved one involved in developing their care plan?
- [ ] How many staff are assigned per resident during the day, overnight and on weekends?
- [ ] What happens in a medical emergency?
- [ ] How do we report concerns about care? Will we be told how they're resolved?
- [ ] How do you help arrange transportation for doctor visits?

Dementia care (Medicare's visit questions)

Source: Medicare CMS 02174

- [ ] Is there a designated dementia care unit? Is it locked, with safe access to an outdoor area?
- [ ] How are staff trained to care for people with dementia?
- [ ] What non-medication approaches do you offer, and how do you avoid antipsychotics whenever possible?
- [ ] How do you keep residents from wandering into unsafe areas?

Preferences & visitors (Medicare's visit questions)

Source: Medicare CMS 02174

- [ ] Can my loved one bring their own furniture and decorations? Choose a roommate?
- [ ] How do you respect preferences for when to get up, go to sleep, eat and bathe?
- [ ] Is there a private space to visit with guests? Internet, phone and TV access?
- [ ] Can I get a list of what the monthly rate includes and what's charged separately?

Safety & Environment

- [ ] Does the building smell clean in hallways, bathrooms and resident rooms?
- [ ] Are there handrails, grab bars and non-slip floors in bathrooms and halls?
- [ ] How do residents call for help from their room and bathroom? Can you test it?
- [ ] How are entrances and exits secured, especially for memory care?
- [ ] What happens during a power outage? Is there a generator, and what does it run?

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» Ask for the most recent state inspection report and any citations. Look it up yourself in the Ohio Long-Term Care Consumer Guide.

» Ask: 'How many falls did you have last quarter, and what changed afterward?'

» Press a call button during the tour and time how long staff take to respond.

Staff & Care

- [ ] What is the staff-to-resident ratio on day, evening and overnight shifts?
- [ ] Is a nurse on site 24 hours, or on call? Who gives medications?
- [ ] What training do aides get, including dementia training?
- [ ] How is the care plan created, and how often is it reviewed with family?
- [ ] What happens if my loved one falls or gets sick at 2 a.m.?

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» Ask: 'What was your staff turnover last year?' and 'How long has your director been here?'

» Ask how often they use agency (temporary) staff.

» Watch staff with residents: do they knock, use names, make eye contact?

Daily Life & Activities

- [ ] Can I see this month's activity calendar? Are activities happening as listed?
- [ ] Can residents choose meal times, and are special diets handled?
- [ ] What can residents bring: furniture, pets, a car?
- [ ] Are there visiting hour limits? Can family join meals?
- [ ] Is transportation offered to doctors, church, shopping? Is there a charge?

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» Eat a meal there. Ask residents what they think of the food.

» Count how many residents are engaged versus sitting alone in front of a TV.

» Ask what happens for residents who don't want group activities.

Costs & Contracts

- [ ] Is pricing all-inclusive, tiered by care level, or à la carte?
- [ ] What is the community/entrance fee, and is any of it refundable?
- [ ] How much did rates rise each of the last three years?
- [ ] What triggers a move to a higher care level, and who decides?
- [ ] Do you accept Medicaid's Assisted Living Waiver, long-term care insurance or VA benefits?
- [ ] How much notice is required to move out, and how are refunds handled?

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» Ask for a full written price list, including medication management and incontinence fees.

» Get the contract in advance and have an elder law attorney review it before signing.

» Ask: 'If my loved one runs out of money, can they stay?'

Red flags

! Pressure to sign or pay a deposit the same day
! Can't or won't share inspection results
! Residents unkempt or call lights ignored
! Vague answers about staffing or rate increases

Official sources

Ohio Long-Term Care Consumer Guide (Ohio Dept. of Aging)
https://ltc.ohio.gov
Medicare: Your Guide to Choosing a Nursing Home (CMS 02174)
https://www.medicare.gov/publications/02174-your-guide-to-choosing-a-nursing-home.pdf
Ohio Long-Term Care Ombudsman
https://aging.ohio.gov/ombudsman

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