



A Helping Hand

Navigating your way in your new home

(Personal Care Home Edition)

Home Administrator

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Local Ombudsman

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

PEER Contact

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

All communication with your local
Ombudsman and **PEER** is
FREE and **CONFIDENTIAL**.

Welcome to the Helping Hand guide that will assist you in navigating your way through your personal care home.

This guide was prepared to help you become more informed about your new home.

If you have questions, you can speak to your home's administrator, their designated staff person, and/or your local Ombudsman.



LONG TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM

The Pennsylvania Department of Aging contracts with 52 Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) to provide Ombudsman services throughout the commonwealth. Ombudsman services are confidential and available at no charge.

OMBUDSMAN

An Ombudsman is a trained individual who helps protect the rights of Pennsylvanians who receive long-term care services.

Ombudsmen provide information, answer questions, investigate complaints and offer assistance in resolving problems about quality of care or treatment.

PEER PROGRAM

PEER (Pennsylvania's Empowered Expert Residents) is a program initiated in Pennsylvania where residents of long term care facilities are trained to advocate for residents rights, quality of life and care issues within the facility.

These specially trained residents are called **PEERs** and undergo ten (10) hours of specialized training in resident rights, self-resolution, and the Long-Term Care Ombudsman program.

Ask your home's administrator or your local Ombudsman if there is a **PEER** Program in your facility.

PERSONAL CARE HOME (PCH)

All Personal Care Homes must be licensed to operate in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

The Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare (DPW) is the state agency that licenses and investigates complaints in personal care homes. DPW visits the facility at least once each year to conduct an inspection. You may review the results of your home's most recent inspection at any time. Ask a facility staff member where the results are posted.

Speak with your PCH administrator or designated staff person if you believe your rights are not respected. If your concern is not resolved, speak with your local ombudsman or a **PEER**.

DPW's field office that monitors this facility may be contacted at:

As a Resident, you have the Right to:

- Be informed of your rights in writing, and receive a copy of your rights
- Be informed, in writing, of the home's policies, services and charges
- Leave and return to the home at reasonable times
- Use your own clothing and possessions
- Receive visitors
- Telephone access and privacy
- Receive and send unopened mail
- Be free of retaliation from complaints
- Be free from mental, physical, and sexual abuse, exploitation, neglect, and involuntary seclusion
- Be treated with dignity and respect
- Be free from chemical (drug) and physical restraints
- Request and receive assistance in relocating
- Freely participate in any religious, social, or community activity of your choosing

For a more complete explanation of your rights, contact your local Ombudsman.

RESIDENT COUNCIL

The resident council is YOUR organization. It is a place where you can get information, voice your concerns, seek assistance with problems, and make suggestions for improvements. Take advantage of the opportunity to become involved in the decision-making process at the facility. Check your activity schedule for time and place. Not all Personal Care Homes have resident council.

If your facility participates in the **PEER** program, one or more resident representatives have received special training and information regarding your rights, self-resolution, and the Ombudsman. Ask your social worker or Ombudsman about the **PEER** program and its availability at this facility.



VISITORS, PRIVACY, AND YOUR ROOM

It is your right to receive visitors for a minimum of twelve hours a day, seven days a week.

Your facility will have a policy stating visitation hours. This policy will also explain how to make arrangements for visitors that need to come during off-hours.

You also have the right to refuse visitors.

My Home's Visiting Hours are: _____

EVERYONE should knock on your door and await your permission before entering your room. If you prefer, you can meet with your visitors in private. Facility staff should inform you where you can meet privately with your visitors.

You have the right to use the telephone in private and make local calls without charge except where a pay phone is used.

You have access to your own room at all times and the right to use recreations or living areas. A working television and radio must be provided in a sitting area. Large home are encouraged to provide more than one television.

If you have a roommate, this may be a new experience for you and it may be a challenge. Sometimes, despite everyone's best effort roommates are incompatible. If so, you may request a room change. Ask your administrator for the room change policy.

PERSONAL PROPERTY

Your home should take reasonable measures to ensure your clothing is not lost or misplaced. Your home may offer a labeling service to identify your possessions. If not, you may use a permanent marker or labels to place your name on all of your clothing.

An inventory of your personal property was completed when you first arrived and should be stored in your facility file. You should ask for a copy of your inventory and keep it in a safe place. When you receive, dispose, or store items, you should request that your personal inventory be updated. If your possessions are lost in the home, ask your home administrator to complete and provide you a copy of a missing property report. If an item is not returned within a reasonable time, ask your administrator to replace the item.

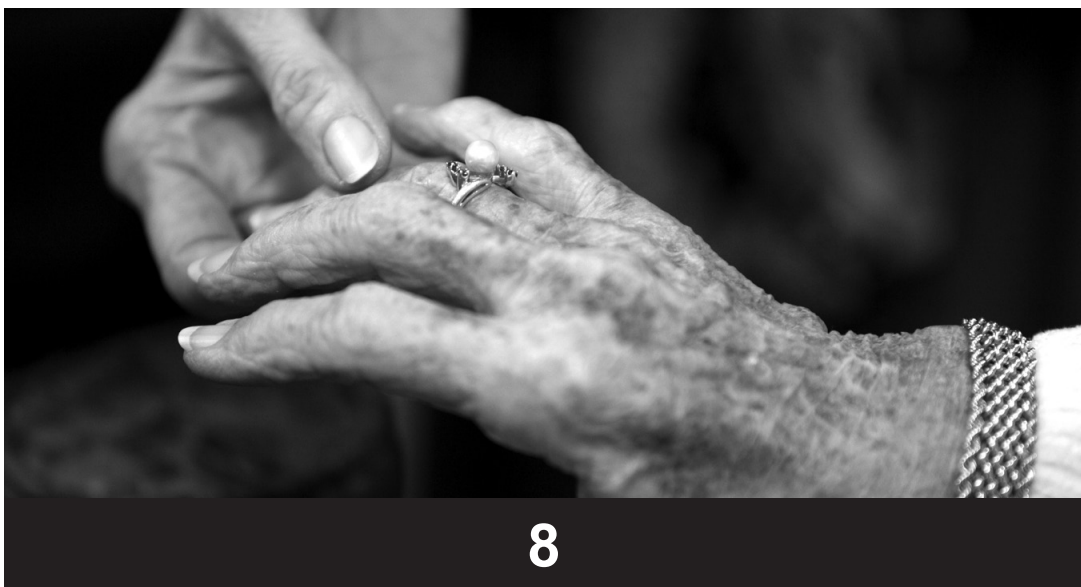
A current, accurate personal inventory will help you lay claim to a missing item.

You should not keep expensive jewelry or cash in your room unless you can put it in a locked area. Large items should be stored in a dry, protected area. You and your administrator should have a list of any items entrusted to them for safekeeping.

Jewelry should be listed on your personal inventory sheet. It is not advisable to keep expensive jewelry or cash in your room unless a locked area is provided for storage. The facility must ensure the security of your personal possessions.

If your personal items need to be repaired or replaced, contact your administrator or the designated staff person for assistance.

I have a current inventory list: ___Yes ___ No



For help with personal items, I can talk to:

Laundry _____

Maintenance _____

Other _____

RESIDENT EVALUATION QUALITY OF CARE

When you seek admission to a personal care home, the home will perform an initial medical evaluation and a mobility assessment screening. This will help to determine if your needs can be met by this home.

The administrator must review both results with you. If the home cannot meet your needs, appropriate referrals will be made.

If you feel your home is unable to meet your needs, you should speak directly to your administrator or a designated staff person to discuss the quality of your care. You have the right to ask for a new screening and medical evaluation.

In my home, I talk with _____
when I need help with care.

DISCHARGE



Discharge can happen for many reasons. If you decide to leave your home, first check the discharge policy and your contract.

It is important that you follow the proper procedure to notify the facility that you are leaving.

You may have certain financial obligations specified in the contract.

If the home is discharging you, your administrator will give a 30-day advance written notice to you, your designated person, and/or your referral agent, which states the reasons for the discharge or transfer, the date, and your destination. Your designated person might be a family member, power of attorney, or other person of your choice.

The referral agent is the social worker, aging office care manager or another professional who helps you. At your request, the home shall provide assistance in your relocation to another residence. A copy of the discharge notice must be in your record.

The personal care home must return all medications, personal belongings and clothing when you are discharged. You may be entitled to a refund. Ask your Ombudsman.

If you experience problems during a discharge, call your local Ombudsman.

PHYSICIAN SERVICES



While in a personal care home, you should continue to receive care from your primary care physician. You are required to have a physical examination by your physician either 60 days before entering your new home or within 30 days of admission.

Thereafter, you will receive a yearly medical evaluation that will be included in your personal file. If you become ill before your annual evaluation, you will receive care from your primary care physician. Your Medicare, medicaid, other medical insurance and/or private payment will pay for these services.

In my home, I talk with _____
when I am not feeling well.

MEALS

Your home must offer at least three balanced meals a day and is expected to follow any dietary restrictions prescribed by your physician.

The menus for the week must be prepared and posted, and each meal must include an alternate choice of food and drink.



Changes to the menu are to be made at least one week before the meal is served.

The meals are to be served in a dining area unless you require service in your room.

There should be no extra fee for the meal service in your room when you are physically unable to eat in the dining area.

If you must miss a meal, your administrator should ensure that you have food available to meet daily nutritional requirements.

Where to find the weekly meal menu in my home: _____

In my home, I talk with _____ when I need help with food.

ACTIVITIES

A weekly activity schedule will be provided to you and posted in a prominent place within the home. You should expect a wide variety of



activities to be available every week that will appeal to the social, physical, intellectual and recreational needs of you and your fellow residents. Participation in any of the posted activities is voluntary.

If there is an activity you enjoy but is not offered speak with the administrator to see if the home can fulfill your request. Each home encourages independent activities and your administrator should provide access to your desired activities within the home and your community.

In my home, I talk with _____
when I have questions or suggestions about activities.

TRANSPORTATION

There may be times when you will want to leave the facility for a doctor's appointment, medical tests, or activities with friends or family.

If you have an appointment, the facility must inform you, in advance of the appointment, the method of transportation and any cost that you may incur. You may travel with family or friends if you desire and are physically able. If this is not an option, your home may provide transportation. The facility should never schedule transportation for you without your knowledge or consent.

Transportation services contact: _____

Facility transportation: _____

Community transportation: _____





FINANCES

Determining how to finance long term care should be done before, or at the time of admission. However, if additional concerns arise after you have been admitted, the

business office in your PCH will be available to answer your questions.

Business Office Manager is: _____

You may qualify for Supplemental Social Security Income (SSI) to assist with your payments. For qualification and application information, speak with your PCH administrator or the business office manager to determine if the PCH accepts SSI. If you receive SSI, you are entitled to a personal needs allowance of \$85 per month.

Some PCHs may ask for additional money from a third party payer, a group or individual who has agreed to help pay for your stay.

Most often, the third party contract is between the facility and one of your relatives, a church or civic organization; therefore, you are not responsible for it. Some PCH's do not accept

SSI recipients. If you qualify and receive a rent rebate, the facility may not require you to use more than 50% of the rebate toward payment for your care in the facility. The percentage should be indicated in the contract.

If the business office assists in managing your money, you are permitted to view your account information during normal business hours, and additionally will receive an itemized account on a quarterly basis of financial transactions made on your behalf. If you are not satisfied with your home's response to your financial concerns, your local Ombudsman may be able to assist you.



If you have questions on your Medicare coverage, you may contact an **APPRISE** counselor. The **APPRISE** program is a free health insurance counseling program to help adults with Medicare.

APPRISE Toll-Free 1-800-783-7067

WE ARE HERE FOR YOU

You should always be treated with respect and dignity. If you feel threatened, frightened, or believe you have been mistreated, **REPORT IT IMMEDIATELY.**

Contact your home's administrator or your local Ombudsman at:



HELPLINES

Department of Aging	717-783-1550
PA Link to Aging & Disability Resources	1-866-286-3636
APPRISE Insurance Counseling	1-800-783-7067
PACE/PACENET	1-800-225-7223
Elder Abuse	1-800-490-8505
Property Tax/Rent Rebate	1-888-222-9190
Department of Health Complaint	1-800-254-5164
Medicare	1-800-633-4227
Senior Law Helpline	1-877-727-7529

FOR MORE INFORMATION