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NATIONAL NURSING HOME WEEK: MAY 13 - 19

7 Things You Must Know Before Moving into a Nursing Home
2007 National Nursing Home Week Tips Ease the Burden of Transition

ALBANY, N.Y. – Each year, more than 300,000 New Yorkers require long-term care services provided by skilled nursing facilities. To assist consumers with preparing for the transition into a nursing home community, the New York State Health Facilities Association (NYSHFA) has released its 2007 National Nursing Home Week Tips titled, “7 Things You Must Know Before Moving into a Nursing Home.”

The seven tips provided in this year’s guide, build on NYSHFA’s previous National Nursing Home Week Tips designed to educate the public and aid consumers in making smart decisions about long-term care.

“The transition to a nursing home is a big step in a person’s life,” said NYSHFA President and CEO Richard J. Herrick. “During this year’s National Nursing Home Week, our goal is to provide New Yorkers with helpful tools that will help their loved ones properly prepare for life in a nursing home community.”

“Don’t be afraid to ask questions that matter to you or your loved one. The more information you gather, the better equipped you’ll be to help your loved one adjust to living in a nursing facility” said Richard S. Patterson, Jr., Senior Director of Business Development at NYSHFA.

Richard S. Patterson, Jr. is available this week to discuss simple, clear tips for those making the transition to nursing facility life. His “Making the Transition into a Skilled Nursing Facility,” tips list is attached and can also be found at www.nyshfa.org.

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ABOUT NYSHFA

NYSHFA is a statewide membership organization of nearly 250 licensed nursing facilities. The membership is diversified and represents individual and multi-facility operations of proprietary, voluntary and government sponsorship. Members provide care for some 40,000 New Yorkers. Members of NYSHFA are dedicated to the highest standards of care and to the quality of life of all residents.

7 Things You Must Know Before Moving into a Nursing Home

By, **Richard S. Patterson, Jr.**

Senior Director of Business Development

Every year more than 300,000 New Yorkers find themselves in need of the long-term care services provided by skilled nursing facilities. Making the transition from one's home to a nursing facility can create a lot of questions and lead to feelings of uncertainty.

Properly preparing for a loved one's move into a long-term care facility can help answer questions and minimize those feelings. Here is a tip list of 7 Things You Must Know Before Moving into a Nursing Home to smoothly make the transition.

1. Communicate

Families should talk with their loved ones early about difficult topics.

It's important to discuss uncomfortable topics or concerns openly prior to, as well as during, the admission process. Individuals entering a skilled nursing facility may have concerns about: Who the other residents are and what are they like? Who their roommate will be and will they get along? Will their personal belongings be safe? What happens if they don't like the food? How often can their family and friends visit them? Can they afford this? Can they trust the staff? How much privacy will they have?

2. Plan Ahead

Speak directly with the facility's staff members and get answers to any questions or concerns prior to admission day. Whenever possible, the individual being admitted should be involved in the process of selecting a facility that's right for them. Family and/or friends should visit prospective facilities and share as much information as possible with individuals unable to make pre-visits themselves.

3. Share Information

The facility needs to know as much as possible about the individual being admitted.

Incoming residents, along with their family, friends and physician, need to share information about diet, personal care needs, prior living conditions, mental status, religion, special interests, special equipment, medical issues, habits and practices. Knowing this information prior to admission gives the facility's staff an opportunity to make proper accommodations for you or your loved one.

4. Complete Paperwork

Get a head start on completing the admissions paperwork and reviewing financial details. Prior to admission day, complete all the necessary forms and financial information to the best of your ability. Providing a complete medical and social history of the individual being admitted is essential. Know the financial responsibilities of the individual and how Medicare and Medicaid work before admission day. Make note of any questions you have so you can ask at the appropriate time.

5. Bring a Piece of Home

Bringing personal items from home can help make the move into a skilled nursing facility easier. A small piece of furniture, pictures, materials for a hobby, a lamp, books, a radio and/or television are some items which help eliminate the feelings of loneliness and displacement. Think about clothing and footwear. All clothing should be comfortable, easy to manage and labeled with the individual's name for processing by onsite laundry services.

6. Make Your Own Decisions

People entering skilled nursing facilities should be comfortable making their own decisions. Input from one's family and friends is welcomed, but ultimately the individual has the final say on decisions concerning their care, treatment options or power of attorney issues. Should an individual be incapable of making those decisions, a legally designated responsible party should be appointed.

7. Spend Time

Spending time with the individual as he or she gets situated in the facility is a key element in the success of the transition phase. Help set up the room, get acquainted with the facility, meet the staff and other residents, and join them for their first meal. Check-in frequently in person, by phone or email to see how he or she is doing. Keep appointments to visit your loved one. Notify out-of-town relatives or friends about the move to a skilled nursing facility and encourage others to call, send cards, letters and emails when possible.

Like any new living arrangement, moving into a skilled nursing facility can take a period of adjustment. Helping the individual become part of the nursing facility community by making new friends and participating in activities is essential. Frequent visits by family and friends and their involvement in facility-based family events, plays an important role in easing the transition.

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