



# Entering Long Term Care



For those who can no longer live in their home or community alone, or with relatives/friends with Home Care supports, long-term care may be the answer. Long-term care provides meals and accommodation, supervision, personal care, and nursing services for those who need it.

The Department of Health and Wellness licenses and approves two types of long-term care facilities; residential care facilities and nursing homes. Residential care facilities are designed for people who need minimal supervision, but may require help with personal care and reminders about routine tasks and activities, such as taking medication. Nursing homes are designed for people who require personal care, nursing services and medication administration.

## How do I know if I need to go to a long-term care home?

Everyone's situation is different. Some people enter long-term care because:

- Their care needs may exceed what Home Care can provide.
- The family member(s) who usually provide their care, can no longer do so.
- Their health care status may change, requiring a higher level of care, such as ongoing nursing services.

## How do I apply for long-term care?

If you or a family member needs long-term care, call Continuing Care, toll free, at 1-800-225-7225.

If you are in the hospital, you can also call the toll-free line or have the hospital staff make the referral on your behalf.

## How do I know the level of care I need?

After you contact Continuing Care, a Care Coordinator will meet with you to assess your care needs. Other professionals may also need to meet with you and your family to better understand your personal situation.

## I may need a nursing home in a couple of years . . . should I apply now?

No, only those who are ready to move into a home now should apply.

## Can I choose where I want to live?

Yes, you can choose the home you prefer and is able to meet your care needs. Your Care Coordinator will discuss your options with you and your family. You may choose as many long-term care homes as you wish. Your name will be placed on a wait list according to the date you were approved for long-term care.

## What should I keep in mind when selecting these homes?

It is important you put your name only on wait lists of homes where you are sure you want to live. You or a family member should consider visiting some homes when making selections. When choosing a nursing home or residential care facility, keep the following points in mind:

- Is the home in a community where you would like to live?
- Is the location of the home convenient for friends and family to visit?
- Does the home offer activities and services you enjoy?

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#### **How long are the wait lists?**

The length of home wait lists varies and depends on a number of factors. Wait times can range from several weeks to several months, or longer. Wait times depend on the number of people who are waiting to get into a specific home, as well as how quickly suitable vacancies become available.

If you live at home and your situation worsens while you are on the wait list, you should contact your Care Coordinator. The Care Coordinator may be able to arrange for other services, such as additional Home Care or respite care. If you feel you need hospital care, please call your family doctor.

#### **What happens if I turn down a space that is offered to me?**

If you are living at home or in the community and you are offered a placement in a long-term care facility, you may defer placement for up to three months. Nearing the end of the three-month deferral period, your Care Coordinator will contact you to determine whether you want to reactivate or withdraw your application for long-term care. Your care needs will be reviewed at that time as well as your list of preferred facilities. You cannot defer your placement for more than three months.

If you are living in your home, have reached the end of the three-month deferral period, and you decline long-term care placement, you will be removed from all wait lists. However, you may reapply at a later date by contacting Continuing Care, toll-free, at 1-800-225-7225.

#### **Will I lose my place on the wait list if I defer placement?**

No, your place on the wait list is not affected if you defer for the three-month period.

#### **How long will I have to wait for a long-term care placement if I want to live in the same home as my family member?**

When you meet with your Care Coordinator, he/she will determine whether you require long-term care and if your care needs can be met in the same facility as your family member. Efforts are made to place certain family members in the same facility as soon as possible.

#### **What do I need to know if I am in the hospital waiting for long-term care placement?**

Every effort will be made to place you in the home of your choice. However, when a suitable bed is not available in your chosen home, you will be asked to move to the first available bed within 100 kilometers of the community of your choice. When a suitable bed becomes available in one of your selected home(s), you will have the option to transfer there. If you decline a placement, the hospital may discharge you or charge you a daily fee to stay in the hospital.

#### **What if I'm not eligible for long-term care?**

There is a Service Decision Review Process that you can discuss with your Care Coordinator.

#### **Do I pay for my own long-term care?**

Long-term care costs are shared by you, the resident, and the provincial government. You pay your accommodation costs and personal expenses and the Department of Health and Wellness pays your health care costs.

The Department of Health and Wellness sets standard accommodation charges annually. Those who can pay the standard accommodation charge are not required to complete a financial assessment. Those who cannot pay the standard accommodation charge can apply to have their rate reduced through an income based financial assessment. Please refer to the Paying for Long Term Care fact sheet for more detail.

To learn more about Long Term Care, please call the Continuing Care toll-free line at **1-800-225-7225**, or visit the Department of Health and Wellness website at **[www.gov.ns.ca/health/ccs](http://www.gov.ns.ca/health/ccs)**