



## *How To Find Long-Term Care For Your Parent*

When adult children start to notice changes in their senior parents, they start to look for answers. Maybe Dad is having trouble eating and bathing himself. Perhaps Mom has received a new diagnosis or her chronic illness has worsened.

After seeking solutions and discussing their concerns with a physician, many adult children start to wonder: “Is long-term care an option — and is it right for my parent?”

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Medicare offers this **definition of long-term care**: “Long-term care is a range of services and support for your personal care needs. Most long-term care isn’t medical care, but rather help with basic personal tasks of everyday life, sometimes called activities of daily living.”

Some examples of activities of daily living (ADLs) include:

- Walking
- Eating
- Dressing/grooming
- Toileting
- Bathing
- Transferring/standing up



Your parent might not need help in all of those areas. But if they need help with multiple ADLs, long-term care would most likely be appropriate.

In addition to assistance with ADLs, long-term care communities offer things such as medication management, ensuring proper nutrition and physician visits to make sure the resident’s medical needs are being met.



## Who Needs Long-Term Care?

Long-term care is for seniors who are no longer able to safely live at home on their own and require some form of 24-hour nursing care. It could be that they have a chronic illness or injury, or are simply facing age-related challenges.

Typically, if your parent is struggling with multiple activities of daily living and/or has other health concerns, they would likely benefit from long-term care. However, the decision does not rest on your shoulders alone. Talk to your parent and your parent's doctor, as well as other family members, to determine if long-term care is the right fit.



Before entering a long-term care community that offers skilled nursing, a doctor needs to confirm that their patient needs to enter the community for care. Think of it as writing a prescription for long-term care.

**Get answers about long-term care: Contact us online!**



## Long-Term Care vs. Assisted Living

If you've never had to look for long-term care for a parent before, it can be a little confusing to distinguish between the different care levels available. One of the most common points of confusion is the difference between long-term care and assisted living.

Think of the two as progressive steps of care. They provide similar services; both provide assistance with tasks, as well as offer services and social and entertainment opportunities, but the care provided comes at differing degrees.

**Assisted living** is for seniors who may need a little assistance with one or two ADLs and enjoy the convenience of assisted living, but do not require 24/7 care. For the most part, they're able to live in-dependently and just need a little help with daily tasks from time to time.

In comparison, long-term care is for seniors who need extensive assistance on a daily basis with both personal and physician-directed nursing care. Their need for care is much higher than assisted living residents — they need help every day with things like bathing, eating and managing their medicines.

If you think your parent is right on the bubble between the two levels of care, a community that offers both care levels can help you determine which is the most suitable fit for your parent. They'll review the clinical information from their physician and discuss it with you and your parent.



# Long-Term Care Types and Services

Once you and the physician have established that your parent needs long-term care, there are different avenues you can explore. There are different types of long-term care available to your parent, including home care, community services, continuing care retirement communities and long-term care nursing communities (historically known as nursing homes).

When it comes to deciding which is best for your parent, many people have questions about whether it's better to keep their parent at home or move them to a long-term care community.

There's no right answer — it's whatever is best for your parent's specific needs. Below you'll find a brief outline of both to help you determine which will be the best fit for your loved one.



## Home Care

The term “home care” covers a range of services provided at home. This could mean caring for your parent yourself, care from other family members or volunteers, or hiring health care professionals. The benefit of home care is that your family member can stay in their own home.

However, the drawback is that if you provide the care yourself, it can be overwhelming. Depending on your parent's needs, you may need to bathe, dress and feed them daily (especially if swallowing is becoming a concern). You'll also have to manage their medicines and, depending on their mobility, handle transferring them in and out of bed.



If you hire long-term care professionals to provide in-home care, you'll likely have to pay out of pocket or rely on long-term care insurance policies if your parent has one.

## Long-Term Care Communities

Some communities offer assisted living or long-term care services — or both. At these communities, residents receive daily personal and medical care, services, and access to activities and amenities.



Because of the higher level of care and services, the cost can be higher than home care. However, the costs are more comparable than most people realize.

For example, Genworth estimates that in 2020, the monthly cost in Ohio for a home health aide is around \$4,763 and for homemaker services is around \$4,763. In comparison, a semi-private room at a community that offers long-term nursing care is around \$4,063 per month, which includes the same services a home health aide and homemaker would.



Additionally, it's important to keep in mind that living at home would also come with other costs, such as utilities, transportation and mortgage payments — as well as necessary medical supplies. Ultimately, you should base your decision off of your parent's needs and whether or not those will be best met at home or a comprehensive long-term care community. As discussed above, you should ask your parent's primary care physician for their advice to help you make your decision.

## How to Pay For Long-Term Care

If you and your parent decide that a long-term care community is the best fit for them, there are three main ways to pay for it: Medicaid, private pay or long-term care insurance.

Generally, most commercial insurance types will not cover long-term care services. If your parent does not have long-term care insurance, they'll likely need to pay out-of-pocket. If they can't cover the costs themselves, they're likely financially eligible for Medicaid (Medicare doesn't cover long-term care if that's the only care your parent needs).



## Questions About Paying for Long-Term Care? Optalis Can Help

Determining your options for covering the cost of long-term care can be confusing— especially if you're trying to navigate Medicaid benefits. That's why we're here to help. You can contact any of our centers if you're wondering what Medicaid will cover for your parent. We can also help answer any insurance questions your family might have.



Additionally, should your parent need to enroll in Medicaid after moving to a Optalis care community, we have someone on staff dedicated to helping them through the process.

Contact us online for more information.



# How to Choose a Long-Term Care Community

It's best to tackle this in stages. Medicare offers a roadmap to choosing a long-term care community, but here's a simplified version to help you get started:

**Step 1:** Compile a list of long-term care communities. You can search in a certain area you're interested in or ask for recommendations from friends and family. Just be careful that your search radius isn't too small — you might miss out on quality long-term care communities if you don't cast a wide net.

It's also a good idea to ask for suggestions from a doctor or ask at the local senior center. If your parent is in the hospital, a social worker will be able to provide you with a list.

**Step 2:** Compare the quality of the long-term care communities you're considering. You can get a feel for the community by contacting staff members to ask preliminary questions about care and services, as well as visiting the care community's website to compare and contrast services.

One thing to note is that during this whole process, pay attention not only to your five senses but also to what your "sixth sense" is telling you. Trust your gut feelings.



**Step 3:** Visit the long-term care communities you're interested in with your parent. Call to schedule an appointment, and someone can give you a tour of the community and answer any questions you might have.

*One tip: Don't be afraid to ask questions. Ask about anything you're curious about or don't understand. And at the end of the visit, ask for the contact information of the person you can call with any questions that occur to you after you leave. You'll likely think of a few more things you want to ask.*

**Step 4:** Choose the long-term care community that best meets your parent's needs. After going through the steps above, the right choice might be apparent. But if you're stuck between two, don't be afraid to request another visit so you can get a better feel for the community. Trust your instincts.

## **Optalis Healthcare: Long-Term Care Communities in Columbus, Ohio**

If your senior parent is in need of long-term care in the central Ohio area, Optalis has several communities to accommodate their needs. You can learn more about each community by visiting their pages:

- Canal Winchester
- Mill Run
- Monterey
- New Albany
- Pickaway
- West Park
- Whetstone



Optalis care communities can admit seniors from home, their physician's office or the hospital. We also welcome those coming from other assisted living communities, since some assisted living communities have a level of care cutoff and are unable to meet the needs of residents who develop long-term care needs.

When a resident wishes to move in, we first review clinical information from their primary care physician to make sure that we can meet their needs and that they're a good fit.



Ultimately, it's the senior's decision if they want to make the move, but it's a collaborative effort between the senior, their family members, their doctor and the Optalis team.

We have both private and semi-private rooms at our long-term care communities. Residents are free to bring their own personal belongings, but Optalis does provide furniture. They'll receive three nutritious meals a day (either in the dining room or their room - it's up to their personal preference) and can participate in engaging and enriching activities seven days a week.

They will also be able to take advantage of on-site physician visits and will receive help with ADLs.

We meet each person's needs through:

- Permanent staffing assignments that support genuine relationships
- Engaging dining experiences to promote social interaction and a variety of tasty food options
- Resident-directed bathing choices that support decisions on when and how often to bathe
- Natural rising, allowing residents to awaken when they choose or feel ready
- Restful nights providing an uninterrupted sleep pattern (unless medically necessary) for our residents

## Memory Care in Columbus, Ohio

Two Optalis care communities, Monterey and West Park, also offer memory care programs for those with Alzheimer's or dementia. No two cases of Alzheimer's or dementia are alike. They affect people in different ways, which is why we provide a personalized plan of care for each resident.

Memory care at each community includes:

- Consistent staff
- A secure outside courtyard
- A large activity space and a variety of engaging activities
- A Music and Memory program, certified by the Ohio Department of Aging
- A monthly Alzheimer's support group

## The Optalis Difference: Central Ohio Long-Term Care

What sets Optalis care communities apart from other long-term care communities? Our people.

Optalis Healthcare is locally operated and staffed by associates who live in the same communities we serve. That means you'll see corporate staff walking the hallways and working side-by-side with our care and community associates.

Residents, families and staff are all on a first-name basis. Our staff truly sets us apart from other chain communities. Each care community is like a neighborhood, with its own culture and personality.



The other thing that sets us apart is our continuum of care. Many of our assisted living residents choose to use our long-term care services when their needs advance. This adds an extra level of comfort, as they're already used to the people and the community. Additionally, thanks to our comprehensive levels of care, your parent can also receive on-site rehab services if they ever suffer a health set-back.

## Questions about Long-Term Care? Contact Us

If you have any questions about long-term care for your parent or loved one, please don't hesitate to contact us. We're happy to answer your questions about services, insurance, costs, levels of care and more.

*That's the Optalis Difference.*

Contact us online or give us a call at (614) 345-9500