



Bay Ridge

3850 Scenic Ridge - Traverse City, MI 49684

Phone: 231-995-9385 - Fax: 231-932-7986

TTY Relay: 800/649-3777

How to choose a Retirement Continuum of Care Community

In the process called Retirement, most people feel they would like to be free to enjoy their life to the fullest. They sometimes leave the family home, move to Florida or another warm weather state, and enjoy years of leisure living. The desire to simplify life, a medical crisis, or loss of spouse often causes them to reconsider the practicality of living by themselves and the search for a retirement community with services begins. The main question that arises is: "Can I still live Independently or do I need Assisted living?"

A Continuum of Care Community is the combination of Independent Senior Living and Assisted Living. Sometimes these services are available in the same building, but most often they are provided in separate buildings. A Continuum of Care Community allows its residents to advance from one level of care to another without having to move across town, only to the next building. This is particularly helpful when one half of a couple needs assisted living, but the other is still independent. They can stay close, in the same community, but with their individual apartment needs fulfilled.

When searching for that perfect next home, it is wise to make a comparison worksheet that you take with you to visit the communities that might fill your needs. The following are questions you

will want to consider when looking for an **Independent Senior Living Apartment**. Which things are important to you?

1. Are the buildings and grounds well maintained with flowers, trees, and walking paths? Does it have a soothing pond or other water feature? Will you be proud to have your friends come through the front door?
2. When you step inside, how do you feel? Is the lobby spacious, comfortable, clean, well lit and beautifully decorated? Is there a cheerful fireplace to greet you?
3. Was the staff person who met with you helpful, pleasant, and knowledgeable? Did they ask about your needs, and what you are looking for in an apartment? Were you given a thorough tour of the model, exercise room, hair salon, library, miniature theater, dining room and other common areas?
4. Does the apartment have a full kitchen, wall to wall carpet, individual heat/air control, window treatments, balcony or patio? Is it a size and layout that you can comfortably make into your new home?
5. Is the apartment equipped with a medical emergency call system, with staff that responds 24 hours a day, 7 days a week?
6. What is included with the rent? Do you pay for your own gas, electric, cable

- TV, telephone? Do you have to go outdoors for your mail, or dispose of your garbage, or are they both conveniently located inside?
7. Are there social activities available for everyone to participate in? Do they include at home events like exercise class, coffee hour, book club, Bible study, quilting, arts and crafts, bridge and other card games? Is there a community bus to take residents on day trips, to the local theater, restaurants, banks, shopping, and community events?
 8. Is there freedom to choose from optional services to make your life easier? Can you use housekeeping, laundry, hair salon, and handyman services on a "pay as you use" basis?
 9. Are there meals available, individually or on a package plan? Were you able to have a meal with your tour? If so was the food tasty, nourishing, and pleasantly served in a beautiful community dining room?
 10. Can the community arrange for interim services like bathing, grooming, and medication management for those transitioning, but not quite ready for Assisted Living? Are you free to obtain these services by the outside provider of your choice?

In looking at the **Assisted Living** side of a Continuum of Care Community, you will want to take many of the same items into consideration. Here are a few more questions you may want to add to your list.

1. Is the facility licensed by the state? What services does that license allow them to provide?
2. Are the staff members neat and clean, friendly, happy, outgoing, interactive, and responsive to residents needs?

3. What is the staff-to-resident ratio on each shift? Is there awake staff at all times? Is a criminal background check run on each potential employee?
4. Is there safety equipment such as handrails, fire extinguishers and emergency lighting installed throughout the facility?
5. Were the residents active and enjoying themselves in daily life enrichment activities like baking cookies, arts and crafts, and card games?
6. Are there nurses on staff that do medication management?
7. Were you able to sit and talk to residents to see how they like their Assisted Living apartment?
8. Were you given the financial information you need to make an informed decision about living expenses?
9. Do both the studio and one bedroom apartments offer a private bath?
10. Does this Assisted Living home have a secured Memory Care wing with staff specializing in Alzheimer's and Dementia care?

In creating and maintaining your own personalized check list you will learn which services are most important to you and will be able to choose the **Continuum of Care Community** that best suits your needs. A Community where you know you will be happy, content, cared about, respected, and well cared for.