

Assisted Living in Wisconsin: Important Information to Know

(Modified from an article by Cia Westphal, I & A - St Croix County ADRC)

In Wisconsin, there is a range of assisted living settings which serve a variety of consumer needs. These facilities must be licensed or certified by the State of Wisconsin. Often a person may add supportive or home health care to the support they receive from family and friends, while still living in their own home or apartment. However, sometimes the amount of support and care needed surpasses the availability of that care and the next step must be considered. An assisted living facility is often used as a “stepping stone” between receiving care at home and permanently entering a nursing home.

Assisted living facilities are designed to help people remain as independent as possible, while providing needed care. A person may need to consider moving to assisted living when they have difficulty with self-care; diminishing health, physical or cognitive abilities; a lack of sufficient community supports; or family is not available to provide enough care or supervision to keep them safe. Assisted living facilities are required to provide or arrange for these basics, and depending on individual need other services like: health monitoring, assistance with medications, access to leisure activities, and personal care such as help with dressing, eating, bathing, grooming, toileting and mobility.

In addition to supportive home care, “day programming” or **adult day care** can sometimes delay the need for a move to assisted living as they provide both care and respite for the caregiver. The ADRC has information about the programs available in the area if this is something you want to consider.

There is a lot of terminology to know when it comes to assisted living facilities. Below is a snapshot, but please know that you can call the ADRC at 262-833-8777 for more information or to discuss your individual situation.

A **Residential Care Apartment Complex (RCAC)** is a place where 5 or more unrelated adults live. Each person has a separate, independent apartment with a door that locks, a kitchen, and a private, full bathroom. Residents in an RCAC must not need more than 28 hours of care per week (supportive, personal and nursing care combined). Additionally, a person must be legally competent when moving into this type of facility.

An **Adult Family Home (AFH)** is a place where 3 or 4 unrelated adults, who are not related to the license owner, live and receive care, treatment or services in addition to room & board, and may include up to 7 hours per week of nursing care per resident. Some AFHs are owned by people who also live on site, while others are owned by a person or company who provides staff for each shift throughout the day.

A **Community Based Residential Facility (CBRF)** is a place where 5 or more unrelated adults live and receive care, treatment or services in addition to room & board. People who live in these settings cannot need more than 3 hours a week of skilled nursing care. (Supportive and personal care is readily available based on need.) CBRFs come in a variety of sizes, based on the number of residents: small (5-8), medium (9-20) and large (21 or more).

Some people who live in assisted living centers pay the facility owner directly for their care, while other people receive public funding to help them cover the full cost of that care. Many

people start as private pay residents and transition to public funding when their assets are fully depleted. Medicare does not cover the costs associated with assisted living. If you feel that you need an assisted living facility, but lack resources or assets to cover the costs, contact the ADRC about the publicly funded programs that may be able to assist with this.

Racine County has a wide variety of assisted living facilities in almost all communities. We have listed many of these in our Living Options Directory which can be mailed to you, is available on our website in the “Racine County Resources” area, or we would be happy to make an appointment to discuss your needs. We would also be happy to discuss assisted living and other options over the phone as well.