

High Five: January

5 Things Every Person who Moves into a Facility Should Know

1. Rights provide protections.

Moving into a long-term care setting should build on every individual's basic human and civil rights. Rights should be talked about often; upon admission, during a stay through individual conversations and at care plan meetings, and through resident council meetings held on a routine basis. Rights are required to be posted in a visible location in a facility and include, but are not limited to, the rights to respect, dignity, privacy, information, participate in one's care and treatment, refuse/deny, choose, be free from restraints, abuse, and retaliation, communication, self-determination, voice grievances, a safe, homelike environment, and remain in a facility unless certain conditions are met.

2. What is included and any additional costs.

How care is paid for varies for every individual. Residents and their legal representatives should be provided with what is covered during their stay and what items or services they may be charged for, all in a language and manner they understand. Admission agreements, other admission paperwork, and resident handbooks can be a good source to find this information. It is the facility's responsibility to ensure residents and their representatives have been notified of possible charges. It is also a right to receive information about programs such as Medicare, Medicaid, and Veterans Administration benefits.

3. Who serves as a substitute decision maker(s) (SDM) and how they fit into decisions regarding care and finances.

There is no requirement that an individual have a substitute decision maker(s) (SDM), such as a power of attorney for healthcare and/or finances, to be admitted into a long-term care facility. The benefits of an SDM, however, can include a support system for the resident and someone to make decisions when the individual is no longer able to make decisions for him/herself. It is important to provide the facility staff with copies of any SDM documents and to keep face sheet information current for facility-required notifications and any care or emergency needs that need to be communicated.

4. That personal belongings are allowed and that an inventory is completed to account for such.

Every person has the right to a safe, clean, comfortable, and homelike environment. This includes allowing residents to use their personal belongings to the extent possible. From furnishings to clothing as space permits, a homelike

environment may be supported through furniture, pictures, bedding, knickknacks, and clothing, just to name a few. Upon admission and as items are brought in or removed, a resident and his/her representative should complete and update a personal effects inventory document to serve as proof belongings were accounted for if something would become missing during a person's stay. Upon discharge from any facility, this document is also signed off on to confirm the removal of personal belongings by the resident or representative. Pictures, in addition to this inventory, can help capture personal belongings brought into the facility.

5. That care should always be person-centered.

From the moment a person admits to a long-term care facility, care received should be individualized and person-centered, meaning everyone should have input into their plan of care, including what their needs and preferences are. Every person has the right to self-determination, to be involved in the care planning process, and to receive individualized care that incorporates cultural, religious, and lifestyle preferences, for example. Sometimes individuals or their representatives are reluctant to speak up about choices, concerns, or requests. Communicating with trusted staff, participating in the care planning process, utilizing the facility's grievance process, and reaching out to a long-term care ombudsman for support and advocacy, can all empower individuals to be more involved with and in control of their lives.