

## Skilled Nursing Comparison Checklist

Following are checklists you may wish to take with you as you tour each center. These are suggestions for specific items that will make yourself or your loved one more comfortable and well cared for in a nursing environment. The columns on the right allow space to rate each center you visit—health center A, B or C. Checkmark “yes” answers in the columns provided.

### *Physical Appearance*

	A	B	C				
Are grounds clean and well cared for?	___	___	___	Does the center offer training and continuing education for all staff?	___	___	___
Is the lobby clean, pleasant, attractive?	___	___	___	Is there on-going specialized training for licensed staff and nursing assistants?	___	___	___
Are there areas for residents to enjoy the outdoors when the weather is good?	___	___	___	Are background checks standard for all potential employees?	___	___	___
Are living spaces comfortable with common spaces where residents can visit, watch television, read, or relax?	___	___	___	Does the center often need to use outside agencies for nursing staff?	___	___	___
Is the center clean, airy, and free of unpleasant odors?	___	___	___	Does the center have a high staff turnover rate?	___	___	___
Is the center a smoke-free or smoke-restricted environment?	___	___	___	Has the center been providing care for a long time? Is it locally owned? Do they own other facilities?	___	___	___

### *Quality Assurance*

	A	B	C
Are copies of recent government surveys posted in the lobby?	___	___	___
Does the center’s quality assurance program include regular visits by health care providers?	___	___	___
Is the Residents’ Bill of Rights posted in the lobby?	___	___	___
Is the copy of the latest customer service survey posted in the lobby?	___	___	___

### *Specialty Care Services*

	A	B	C
Are there specialized therapies available—rehabilitation, short-term care, Alzheimer’s care, hospice, or chemical dependency programs?	___	___	___
Are therapists employed by the center?	___	___	___

### *Staff Training and Education*

	A	B	C
Is there a high ratio of staff members to patients?	___	___	___
Do patients have the same caregiver on a daily basis?	___	___	___

### *Medical and Health Care*

	A	B	C
Is the center’s medical director a specialist in geriatrics?	___	___	___
Is there communication between the center and the resident’s personal physician?	___	___	___
Are residents and their families encouraged to be involved in care plans?	___	___	___

### *Staff and Patient Relationships*

	A	B	C
Do staff members seem friendly and caring and enjoy their work?	___	___	___
Do they address residents by name?	___	___	___
Do they show respect and knock before entering residents’ rooms?	___	___	___
Are the residents up and out of bed, properly dressed and groomed?	___	___	___
Do nurse call signals seem to be answered promptly?	___	___	___

*—Continued on the following page*

<i>Resident Rooms</i>	A	B	C	Is there a pastoral care staff?	___	___	___
Is there a reading lamp and comfortable chair for each resident?	___	___	___	Does the activities director have special training for this position?	___	___	___
Is there a nurse call within easy reach?	___	___	___	Is there a volunteer program?	___	___	___
Does each resident have a closet and personal storage space?	___	___	___	Is there a welcoming program in place to help residents adjust to living at the center?	___	___	___
Can a resident bring personal items or furniture?	___	___	___	Are there pets around the center for residents to enjoy?	___	___	___
Do the bathrooms have grab bars and an emergency call system?	___	___	___				
Does the center allow residents to choose their roommates?	___	___	___	<i>Meals and Dietary Services</i>	A	B	C
				Do residents have menu choices at each meal?	___	___	___
<i>Security and Safety</i>	A	B	C	Are the menus posted?	___	___	___
Are the entrances controlled and are visitors asked to check in at the reception area?	___	___	___	Are the dining room tables easily accessible by wheelchairs?	___	___	___
Are there handrails in hallways?	___	___	___	Are the residents who need assistance with meals provided help?	___	___	___
Are the hallways wide enough to avoid accidents and allow two wheelchairs to pass?	___	___	___	Is there a trained dietician on staff?	___	___	___
Are smoke detectors, extinguishers, and sprinklers in place?	___	___	___	Are there snacks and beverages available between meals?	___	___	___
				Are there water pitchers and glasses on residents' tables?	___	___	___
<i>Activities and Environment</i>	A	B	C	<i>Financial and Admissions</i>	A	B	C
Are activities calendars posted?	___	___	___	Does the center accept Medicare?	___	___	___
Do activities cover a range of interests and abilities?	___	___	___	Does the center accept Medicaid?	___	___	___
Does the center have an active resident and family council?	___	___	___	Is the rate sheet available for visitors to review?	___	___	___
Are there opportunities for spiritual activities?	___	___	___	Is the rate sheet clear and is it easy to understand all that is included?	___	___	___

After a thorough tour and completing this checklist, you should have the information necessary to make a good decision. After your loved one has moved, be sure to stay active in family council meetings, care planning, activities, and meals to assure that the best in care is continually given. A good health center welcomes the frequent presence of family and friends and can offer support services and information to help you help them.