



PRIVATE UNLICENSED LONG-TERM CARE HOMES

Nova Scotia Health Authority (NSHA) coordinates long-term care for people through a number of contracted nursing homes and residential care facilities. These facilities are required by law to have a government-issued license and must meet all government laws, policies and standards. These facilities are inspected and monitored to make sure standards are being met. A list of these facilities can be found at <http://novascotia.ca/dhw/ccs/documents/Nursing-Homes-and-Residential-Care-Directories.pdf>

There are also many private unlicensed long-term care homes (such as assisted living facilities, retirement homes, boarding homes, and seniors' homes) which are not part of the public health care system. These homes **are not** inspected or licensed by the Department of Health and Wellness.

Before you consider living in a private unlicensed care home, you should know that:

- NSHA does not endorse or recommend any of these private facilities or homes.
- Private homes **are not** funded, audited, inspected or licensed by the Department of Health & Wellness.
- It is illegal to offer nursing home or residential care facility level care without a license issued by the NS government.
- You are responsible for paying the home for all costs.

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Before you choose a private unlicensed care home, you should:

- Decide what kind of care and tasks you need help with, when and how often. Do you need 24 hour care every day, help at certain times every day, or help with meals and housekeeping a few times a week?
- Figure out how much money you have to pay for room, meals and care each month. Ask for the cost of any additional care you may need.
- Check Caregivers Nova Scotia www.caregiversns.org or call them at 1-877-488-7390, visit ns.211.ca or call 211, check the Yellow Pages, newspaper ads, the Department of Seniors' [Positive Aging Directory](#), and ask family and friends which facilities they recommend. Visit a number of homes before you decide.
- Check with the Better Business Bureau to see if there have been any reported complaints.
- Check with municipal fire service and zoning division to make sure the home is permitted to operate. For example, single family dwellings such as houses in residential neighbourhoods are not built to the building codes needed for health care facilities caring for frail individuals.
- Ask:
 - about the qualifications (education, training and experience) of the workers providing care. You may want to see proof of these qualifications. Ask if they have a registered nurse (RN) on staff.
 - how much they charge per day or per month and what it includes, whether you have to pay a deposit upfront and how much notice you have to give if you decide to move.
 - for references from current and past residents and talk to these individuals.
 - to see the contract they may want you to sign and read it carefully. Ask for a trial period before you commit to a longer-term one. Make sure the contract includes a list of the tasks included.
 - if they have business insurance, if they complete police record checks and vulnerable sector checks (an enhanced criminal record check to protect vulnerable persons) on their staff, and whether their staff are bonded.
 - for a tour of the home, including your room to see if it meets your needs.
 - for a copy of the menu, calendar of activities, and policies (such as fees, smoking, visitors, etc.).
 - to see their fire safety plan and ask about fire safety features (alarm system, fire separation doors, fire extinguishers, sprinklers, etc.).

Moving into a private unlicensed long-term care home is an important decision; make it carefully.