THE AREA AGENCY ON AGING

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), created in 1971 by local governments of the Atlanta region, serves Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry and Rockdale counties and the City of Atlanta. ARC is the regional planning and intergovernmental coordination agency for the region and also serves as the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) and the Aging & Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) for the Atlanta region with the responsibility for planning and administering services and programs of the Older Americans Act, the Social Services Block Grant and the Community Care Services Program.

In addition, ARC offers basic consultation services to the business community in the areas of eldercare, caregiver needs and options for individuals with disabilities. However, ARC does not develop business plans, complete applications on behalf of a private company or agency, issue any type of license to provide services or recommend or endorse any provider over another to consumers.

AgeWise Connection is a program of the AAA and ADRC at the Atlanta Regional Commission. Its’ objectives are to help older adults and individuals with disabilities and their caregivers find services, act as a resource for agencies and organizations serving these individuals and families and advocate for policies and programs that lead to the creation of age-friendly and barrier free communities. For more information about aging programs and services for caregivers and individuals with disabilities in the Atlanta region, call the Atlanta Regional Commission’s AgeWise Connection at 404.463.3333 or visit our web site at www.agewiseconnection.com.

WHAT IS A PERSONAL CARE HOME?

A Personal Care Home is a single home, building or group of buildings where personal care services are provided to two or more adults not related to the owner or administrator by blood or marriage. These homes are licensed by the Department of Community Health, Healthcare Facility Regulation (HFR). The homes must provide a room, three meals and snacks daily, and assistance with “Activities of Daily Living” in the amount needed by each individual resident including, but not limited to, bathing, shaving, brushing teeth, combing hair, toileting, dressing, eating, laundry, housekeeping, managing money, writing letters, shopping, using public transportation, making telephone calls, grooming, obtaining appointments, engaging in leisure and recreational activities, or other similar activities and supervision of medications.

A personal care home cannot provide nursing or other medical services or admit and retain residents who need continuous medical or nursing care or is not an “Ambulatory Resident” who has the ability to move from place to place by walking, either unaided or aided by prosthesis, brace, cane, crutches, walker or hand rails, or by propelling a wheelchair; who cannot respond to an emergency condition, whether caused by fire or otherwise, and escape with minimal human assistance such as guiding a resident to an exit, using the normal means of egress. Personal care homes are never authorized to use restraints on residents.

They may be operated by for-profit companies or nonprofit organizations. The homes are operated on a fee for service basis. For more information on personal care homes, go to: http://dch.georgia.gov/personal-care-homes

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY LIVING ARRANGEMENT?

A Community Living Arrangement (CLA) is any residence, whether operated for profit or not for profit, that provides or arranges for the provision of daily personal services, supports, care, or treatment exclusively for two or more adults who are not related to the owner or administrator by blood or marriage and whose residential services are financially supported, in whole or in part, by funds designated through the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD). “Personal Services” include, but are not limited to, individual assistance with or supervision of medications, walking and transfer, and essential activities of daily living such as eating, bathing, grooming, dressing, and toileting. “Supports, care, or treatment” means specific services that are provided to the resident that include but are not limited to...
mental health services, habilitation, rehabilitation, social services, medical, dental, and other health care services, education, financial management, legal services, vocational services, transportation, recreational and leisure activities, and other services required to meet a resident’s needs.

These homes are licensed by the Department of Community Health, Healthcare Facility Regulation (HFR). For more information on Community Living Arrangements visit: http://dch.georgia.gov/community-living-arrangements-cla

WHAT IS AN ASSISTED LIVING COMMUNITY?

Assisted Living Communities require a separate level of licensure, have a capacity of 25 or more residents and provide assisted living care to adults who require varying degrees of assistance with the activities of daily living but who do not require continuous medical or nursing care. “Assisted living care” means the specialized care and services provided by an assisted living community which includes the provision of personal services, the administration of medications by a certified medication aide and the provision of assisted self-preservation which is the capacity of a resident to be evacuated from an assisted living community to a designated point of safety within an established period of time as determined by the Office of Fire Safety Commissioner. The physical structure must have handrails, doorways and corridors which accommodate mobility devices, such as walkers, wheelchairs and crutches or canes in addition to other structural requirements in the state regulations that are necessary for resident comfort and safety. These homes are licensed by the Department of Community Health, Healthcare Facility Regulation (HFR). Complete regulations may be found on the web at:http://dch.georgia.gov/sites/dch.georgia.gov/files/ALC-InitialLicensure-Packet_021216.pdf

HOW MANY PERSONAL CARE HOMES, COMMUNITY LIVING ARRANGEMENTS AND ASSISTED LIVING COMMUNITIES ARE IN THE ATLANTA REGION?

Within the 10-county Atlanta region (Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry, and Rockdale counties), there are over 700 personal care homes, community living arrangements and assisted living communities active with HFR that serve older adults and those with physical, cognitive or developmental challenges.

If you are considering starting a personal care home, community living arrangement or assisted living community and are unfamiliar with the way they operate, you may wish to visit one of the homes. Most homes will welcome sharing their expertise. Some may charge a modest consultation fee. Always call ahead to schedule a convenient time to visit.

WHAT IS THE NEED FOR PERSONAL CARE HOMES, COMMUNITY LIVING ARRANGEMENTS AND ASSISTED LIVING FACILITIES IN THE ATLANTA REGION?

There is no standard method for determining the need for Personal Care Homes, Community Living Arrangements or Assisted Living Communities. Persons that generally are considered appropriate for these housing options include persons who:

- have physical, cognitive and/or psychosocial challenges
- can no longer live alone;
- require minimum supervision;
- need to be reminded to take medications or have someone administer the medications;
- need reminding of medical appointments
- need assistance with personal care

In general, these housing options are not appropriate for persons with significant or advanced dementia.

Predicting demand for these services is an extremely difficult task. These housing options must provide a safe, quality service that the residents can afford (or are covered through limited state funded programs) at the same time charging fees that will turn a profit for the home. This is a delicate balance to achieve. It is the responsibility of each licensed home or community to find the residents. Some reasons that these housing options may not be used are:

- lack of financial resources of the prospective resident
- lack of state funding for services
• the high start-up costs for the provider
• the individuals want to stay in their own home or families may feel that the best place for the family member to receive care is in the comfort and familiarity of the home
• the personal care homes may not be barrier free
• the homes or communities may not be centrally located and difficult to get to shopping, doctors and family
• the homes or communities may be unable to meet special needs of the resident such as restricted diets, allowing the residents to bring pets or personal furniture

DOES GEORGIA LICENSE PERSONAL CARE HOMES, COMMUNITY LIVING ARRANGEMENTS AND ASSISTED LIVING COMMUNITIES?

The state of Georgia requires that all homes serving two or more adults not related to the owner or administrator by blood or marriage be licensed by the Department of Community Health, Healthcare Facilities Regulation (HFR). Please note that applications can ONLY be obtained on the website. Applications will not be mailed. The Information Line with instructions on obtaining an application for Personal Care Homes, Community Living Arrangements or Assisted Living Communities is available at 404-657-4077. Applications can be found on the Healthcare Facilities Regulation (formerly known as ORS) website at: http://dch.georgia.gov/licensure-forms-applications

The licensing process is lengthy. There are a variety of additional laws and regulations for Personal Care Homes, Community Living Arrangements and Assisted Living Communities, depending on their size and location. Local zoning, fire safety, heating, and electrical standards must be met. If the proposed home is not served by public water and public sewer, the water supply and septic tank systems will need to be evaluated and approved by the public health department. If the facility serves more than 24 residents, the facility must obtain a “Certificate of Need” from the Department of Community Health, Healthcare Facility Regulation. Initial applications and instructions may be downloaded at no charge from the website at: http://dch.georgia.gov/forms-and-applications

All downloaded applications are in Adobe Acrobat format and must be printed out and completed by hand. A complete application package includes all the listed materials. Neglecting to submit all the required application forms will result in the application being returned as incomplete.

If there are still unanswered questions on the application process, call 404-657-5850 for further assistance.

Operators of unlicensed personal care homes are subject to fines and in some cases, operation of an unlicensed home may be considered a felony.

IS FUNDING AVAILABLE FOR PERSONAL CARE HOMES, COMMUNITY LIVING ARRANGEMENTS OR ASSISTED LIVING COMMUNITIES IN THE ATLANTA REGION?

National and local private foundations from time to time offer funding for services for aging persons or persons with disabilities including residential options. Foundation priorities may change based on many factors including the current state of the economy. Directories of foundations may be found in public libraries. The Central Branch of the Atlanta-Fulton County Public Library, located at 1 Margaret Mitchell Square, Atlanta (404.730.1900) has a comprehensive foundation reference section. Additional resources may be obtained in the Foundation Center Library located at 133 Peachtree Street, NE, Atlanta (404 880.0094) which is open Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 10am to 5pm. Public Libraries and the Foundation Center are reference sources and do not provide direct funding.

Additionally, the Community Care Services Program (CCSP) and the SOURCE Program in Georgia have funding that is earmarked for Alternative Living Services (ALS).

To obtain additional information about becoming a provider under these waiver programs in Georgia, visit: http://aging.dhs.georgia.gov/sites/aging.dhs.georgia.gov/files/related_files/document/Potential%20CCSP%20Provider%20Information%207-2015.pdf

The Area Agency on Aging at The Atlanta Regional Commission is not a funding source for underwriting the costs of opening any of these residential options.
WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF PERSONAL CARE HOMES, COMMUNITY LIVING ARRANGEMENTS AND ASSISTED LIVING COMMUNITIES?

These factors are likely to influence the number of personal care homes:

- a growth in the number of persons who wish to live in the community in the least restrictive setting, but who need some type of long-term care service
- the increasing frailty of persons who need placement
- the emergence of long-term care insurance which may cover personal care home or assisted living community costs
- the level of funding for the Medicaid Waiver Programs (CCSP and SOURCE)

Private long-term care insurance policies are becoming increasingly common in the marketplace. There are approximately 20 companies that have been approved by the Georgia Insurance Commissioner to sell long-term care insurance in the state. Many of the policies cover personal care homes (assisted living) as an eligible service for policyholders.

Personal care homes are not likely to see a significant percentage of their income from long-term care insurance for several years because insurance companies do not sell policies to persons in imminent need of long-term care.

AGEWISE CONNECTION: YOUR SOURCE FOR INFORMATION ABOUT SERVICES FOR OLDER ADULTS, CAREGIVERS AND INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Call AgeWise Connection at 404.463.3333 whenever you need help finding services for older adults, caregivers and individuals with disabilities in metro Atlanta, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, or visit our web site at www.agewisefconnection.com. AgeWise Connection is a program of the Atlanta Regional Commission, Area Agency on Aging for the 10-county Atlanta region.

Sources used in preparing this document: Healthcare Facilities Regulation Division, Long Term Care Section

Please note that any and all information provided about service providers is intended for referral purposes only. AgeWise Connection of the Atlanta Regional commission does not license service providers nor guarantee the quality of service they will provide. Therefore, staff is in no position to endorse or recommend any provider over another. The decision to use any service provider is the responsibility of the individuals in need of service or their family.

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