



Just the Facts:

Assisted Living

What is assisted living?

Assisted living combines a home-like setting with personal support services. Assisted living residences vary considerably, but most provide meals, housekeeping, laundry, transportation, and social activities. They also offer personal care, such as assistance with eating, bathing, grooming and personal hygiene. Some nursing care is also provided, including medication administration and dressing changes.

How many older adults reside in assisted living facilities?

Assisted living is the fastest growing type of senior housing. Between 16,000 and 18,000 older adults in Ohio's 400 assisted living communities. The average age of the residents is 83. The typical resident usually needs assistance with three activities of daily living.

Do assisted living facilities receive specific licensing?

More than 33 states have an assisted living licensing category, but Ohio does not. The Ohio Department of Health does, however, license nursing facilities and residential care facilities. Many assisted living facilities hold residential care facility licenses.

How much does assisted living cost?

Costs vary depending on the size of living area an older adult chooses, area of the state, and the amount of care needed. Costs generally range from \$2,000 to \$4,000 per month.

How does assisted living fit into the long-term care continuum?

Assisted living facilities provide older adults with an option to nursing facility care and to home and community-based services. Assisted living facilities offer residential care that is less expensive and less restrictive than nursing facility care.

Does Medicaid or other public funding pay for services in assisted living facilities?

All assisted living in Ohio is paid for privately. Forty-one other states have Medicaid waiver programs that pay for services in assisted living facilities and some even have state funds for the housing costs associated with assisted living. Older adults who rely on Medicaid in Ohio must either receive PASSPORT home care or enter a nursing facility.

How could Ohio use Medicaid to fund services in assisted living facilities?

Ohio could apply for a Medicaid waiver. As a waiver program, services in assisted living facilities would be available to older adults who meet nursing facility eligibility criteria for Medicaid. States can also use assisted living as part of the Medicaid state plan. Ohio could then provide a range of services to all eligible older adults, regardless of whether the older adult meets nursing facility eligibility. State plan services are an entitlement and federal funding would match state expenditures without a cap.

Without a Medicaid waiver program to pay for assisted living, what happens when older adults paying privately no longer can afford to pay for assisted living care?

When older adults paying privately to reside at an assisted living facility can no longer afford to pay for care, many are forced to enter nursing facilities, because nursing home care receives Medicaid funding. A few older adults may be able to find other sources of funding, such as friends or family or private grants at the nonprofit facilities.