Choosing a Memory Care Provider Checklist (Part I- Comparing communities)

Before you choose a memory care community, it is helpful to have a tool to compare your options. We have created the chart below, along with questions and a financial checklist to be used when tours are scheduled.

Benefit/Features	Provider 1: Emerald Crest	Provider 2:	Provider 3:
Environment:			
One level – barrier free	X		
Calming décor	X		
Circular layout for easy navigation	X		
Outside patio/area (fenced)	X		
Wheelchair accessible	X		
Secured entrance and exits	X		
Visual cues and lighting for orientation	X		
Private rooms w/private baths	X		
Beauty/barber shop	X		
Percentage of community dedicated to memory care services	100%		
Staffing:			
Caregivers are certified nursing assistants	X		
Provides dementia-specific training	X		
On-the-floor training for new caregivers	X		
Provides ongoing training annually	X		
Resident care plans and assessment completed by RN & occupational therapist	X		
RN on site 40+ hours a week and on call 24/7	X		
Staffing ratio			
Awake overnight staff	X		
Occupational therapist on site for cognitive management	X		
Mentorship program for employees	X		
Staff turnover			
Programming/Activities:			
Specialized activities designed and managed by occupational therapist (OTR/L)	X		
Activities provided 7 days a week	X		
Evening activities 7 days a week	X		
Activities designed and individualized for all cognitive levels	X		
Exercise/range of motion program	X		
Ability for residents to perform household tasks with appropriate supervision	X		
Spiritual services available	X		
Number of hours TV is on in common area daily	1 hour		
Care Delivery:			
Assist with ADL's (dressing, grooming, toileting, bathing, mobility, transfers, etc)	X		
Medication management/administration	X		
Management of incontinence	X		
End stage/hospice support	X		
Physician/NP available on site	X		
Management of behaviors	Mild/Moderate		
Cognitive assessments provided by occupational therapist for care plan implementation (initial, 30- day, annual, and change in condition)	X		

Other helpful questions to consider when choosing a memory care community:

Environment

- *Is the community on a quiet or busy street? Urban or residential?* Quiet residential neighborhoods are preferable.
- *What is the noise level? Is the building insulated to reduce noise?* A low noise level is best for people with Alzheimers or dementia, because their senses are easily overloaded.
- *Is the care community for people with cognitive conditions physically separate from the rest of the care community?* Lucid patients and those with cognitive issues have different needs. Too much interaction between them can disturb both sets of residents.
- *Is the community small and home-like or large and institutional?* Smaller, home-like environments are preferable. Residents with cognitive conditions become easily confused in institutional settings where everything looks the same.
- *Is housing all on one level?* This is preferable for residents with cognitive conditions who are at greater risk of falling or becoming disoriented.
- *Are there circular areas designated for wanderers, or are the hallways long with dead ends?* Residents with conditions like Alzheimer's or dementia often seem compelled to wander. Dead ends can make them agitated and frustrated.
- *Is light used as a cue to help residents know the time of day?* Bright lights should be used during daylight and low lights at night.

Staff and Services

- *What is the staff-to-resident ratio*?
- *What is the difference in training for staff in a special care setting*? *Is an Alzheimer's/dementia specialist on staff or available on a consulting basis?*
- *How do services in the special care unit differ from services in the rest of the care community*? *What special services are provided for residents with Alzheimer's/dementia*?
- *How do you insure that residents get proper nutrition*? *Are finger foods available*?
- *If a resident shows _____ behavior, how would the staff react*? (*Examples: tearful, combative, accusatory, asking repetitive questions - whatever behavior your loved one tends to experience*.)
- *What is the policy on restraints, both chemical and physical*?
- *What activities are arranged for residents with memory impairment*?
- *Are residents encouraged to remain continent*? *Are they reminded to use the bathroom*? *Is a schedule in place*?
- *Does staff guide residents to the bathroom if needed*?

**Reference:* http://www.aging-parents-and-elder-care.com/Pages/Checklists/Alzheimers_Chklst.html

The Importance of a Tailored Activity Program

Through careful assessments, Emerald Crest by Augustana Care's occupational therapy program offers direct-care staff and families greater understanding of residents' cognitive capacities and needs. This process enables residents to be successful at their highest levels with day-to-day activities. Below are a few important programming considerations to consider when choosing a memory care community

- ***Does the community have a licensed clinician occupational therapist available to assist in the development of individualized designed activities?*** Occupational therapists are specially trained to customize activities to residents' needs and skills. Most importantly, occupational therapists know how to collaborate with and teach caregivers how to lead activities that maximize opportunities for residents' success.
- ***Does the layout of the community promote active participation in daily activities?*** Memory care communities with open common spaces and minimum barriers promote ease of participation in activities, which helps residents maintain their abilities longer. Environments with multiple community rooms, hallways, levels and other distractions increase isolation and confusion, resulting in a decline in functioning.
- ***Are activities integrated for residents at all stages? How and who determines the appropriate activities for each stage?*** All residents at any stage of dementia can benefit from activities. However, it is important to have activities that match a person's capabilities in order to decrease stress and agitation for those with cognitive challenges. For example, people in the early to middle stages of Alzheimer's/dementia are introduced to goal-directed and multi-step activities to achieve a just-right challenge. In later stages, individuals are introduced to activities based on repetitive motion (such as folding towels) that integrate activities based on the senses (such as soft music, objects pleasant to the touch).
- **Are residents guided in a structured day or are they expected to follow their own schedule/calendar? Are activities lead by staff from start to finish?** Individuals who have cognitive impairments lose their ability to initiate, sequence and complete activities from start to finish without the guidance of care partner. Isolation and other common behaviors (including wandering, rummaging, hoarding, resistiveness) can result when an individual with dementia is expected to initiate and carry out their own daily activities.
- **How does the community incorporate television into a resident's day?** Although watching television is a popular activity in many of our lives, it can cause challenges in the lives of those with cognitive conditions. Daily television content (such as soap operas, news and violent images) can cause increased anxiety and agitation because those with dementia cannot differentiate between what's real and what's illusion. Limiting television to designated times and viewing content that is familiar and simple to follow (such as old time music shows, relaxing videos and familiar sports) promotes less agitation.

Choosing a Memory Care Provider Checklist (Part 2 – Financing)

We know the process of choosing a memory care community for your loved one can be stressful and confusing, especially when every community prices their services differently. We have therefore devised a helpful piece to assist you in comparing prices and services between communities.

	Provider 1: Emerald Crest	**Provider 2:**	**Provider 3:**
Basic Rent/Fee Includes	$3900 - $4550		
Room tental & use of common areas	Included		
Three meals daily, plus snacks	Included		
Daily programming (7 days a week) monitored by occupational therapists	Included		
Caregiver staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year specifically trained in dementia	Included		
Assessments and care plan implementation and monitoring involving interdisciplinary team of nurses and licensed occupations therapists	Included		
Basic medication set up and administration with central storage of medications provided by house pharmacy	Included		
Nurse supervision of resident's care plan	Included		
RN on call 24 hours a day	Included		
Monthly vitals	Included		
Household /care items: deodorant, toothpaste, toothbrush, shampoo, toilet paper, facial tissue, etc.	Included		
Use of house phone	Included		
Light housekeeping	Included		
Laundry services	Included		
General maintenance	Included		
Utilities (excluding phone and cable)	Included		
2013 Care Packages/Levels of Care*			
Ala Carte Services			
Verbal & physical Assist & supervision with ADL's (Grooming, Bathing, Dressing, Toileting, Meals, Bed Mobility, Meals, Mobility, and Transfers)	Incl. in Care Pack.		
Behavior management (mild to moderate)	Incl. in Care Pack.		
Incontinence care	Incl. in Care Pack.		
Additional med management & basic treatments by CNA	Incl. in Care Pack.		
Assist of one and/or two on basic cares	Incl. in Care Pack.		
Okay checks over night	Incl. in Care Pack.		
Use of adaptive equipment	Incl. in Care Pack.		
Incontinent products	$165/mo		
Medication set up with medications provided by family	$180/mo		
Customized Nursing Services & Treatments (list as needed)			
RN and/or OTR Intervention			
TOTAL			

Care packages defined: Emerald Crest by Augustana Care packages and services are individualized and tailored to meet each resident's health, safety, and functional needs. Resident care and service needs are based on an interdisciplinary evaluation/assessment by a registered nurse (RN) and occupational therapist (OTR). Care package costs are based on the amount of service a resident needs, based again on the evaluation/assessment. A service-cost form is created before admission and provided to residents and/or families to better understand the services being purchased. Resident coordinators (caregivers) provide varied level of assistance 24 hours per day, 365 days a year, using care plans to address residents' individual needs with regards to social interactions/activities and daily living skills. Services include bathing, dressing, grooming, eating, and toileting.

Average Cost of Services

The process of selecting housing with services can be stressful. It can be a challenge to compare communities' combined cost for services and room and board. For this reason, we compiled and listed the average monthly cost of services in the Twin Cities, as follows:

Home care companion	$25/hour, three- -hour minimum
Home care-medical	$30/hour, four-hour minimum
Adult day services	$60 - $80 per day, Mon – Fri, some provide Saturday
Independent living	$750 - $2,000/mo depending on size and amenities of apartment
Assisted living (AL)	$3000 - $5,000 depending on level of assistance
Memory care AL	$5000 - $8,000 depending on level of assistance
Care suites/enhanced AL	$7000 - $9,000 depending on level of assistance
Nursing home/care center	$5000 - $10,000 depending on level of assistance

Other helpful questions to ask

Is there an admission/community deposit or fee? How much? Is it refundable?

How often are rate increases introduced? What is the care community's history of rate increases?

Will I be aware of all care costs and services for my loved one before admission?

Will there be items on my bill that I will not be aware of until I see them?

What is your policy on medical assistance (EW, GRH)?

After discharge, when does the rental agreement end?