

**Considering a Continuing Care Retirement Community? Here are Four Key Aspects of the Decision Process.**

Continuing care retirement communities are a popular retirement living choice among older adults who live fully, or mostly, independently today but desire to live in a setting whereby long-term care services are available if needed in the future. Choosing the right community is an important often complex decision process. Here are four key aspects of the decision process:

**Contract Details:**

There are a number of different types of residency contracts available. The vast majority of CCRCs require an entry fee and monthly fees. These fees are impacted by factors such as the size of the home or apartment, location, available services and other amenities. Yet the fees are also based, in part, on what you will pay for assisted living and healthcare services when needed.

Some residency contracts state that your monthly fees will remain relatively level over the course of your lifetime, except for inflationary increases, regardless of whether you are living independently or require care services. Other residency contracts may require a smaller entry fee and possibly even lower monthly fees, but if you ever require care services your monthly fees will increase to reflect the market cost of care at that time. Still yet, there are other contracts that are essentially a blend of these two.

In addition to the types of residency contracts available, many providers also offer refundable entry fee contracts. These contracts essentially pay back some portion of the entry fee if the resident moves out or at death. The tradeoff: entry fees are almost always higher for a refundable entry fee contract and may be contingent on the resale of your residence.

**Financial Stability of CCRC**

The financial stability of a CCRC will determine if it is in position to fulfill its long-term commitment to provide housing and health care to residents for life. Do your research to learn about the community's occupancy ratio, history of operations, financial ratios and the experience and expertise of its management. Consult with a financial or tax professional for additional guidance.

**Lifestyle**

Location, culture, programs, and other services and amenities should align with your personal preferences. After all, this is where you are going to live and you want to be happy there. Consider whether the lifestyle offered will help you thrive in mind, body, and spirit.

It may be wise for you to stay a night or two in a guest suite to get a sense of what it might be like to live there. Observe whether residents seem involved in the community and respected by staff? Are activities mainly resident-driven or staff-driven? This can indicate the vitality of the resident base, or lack thereof. Is there up-to-date technology, including wi-fi in common areas and in the residences? Also, are meals only available at scheduled times or are their flexible meal time and menus?

## Health care

Although most people are attracted to CCRCs by the independent living features, the ultimate reason for considering this type of retirement community and paying an entry fee is the peace of mind that comes with having priority access to healthcare. Here are some key questions to ask:

- Does the community appear to take pride in the care that makes available to residents?
- What sets the community's care facility apart from other providers?
- If there is a record of complaints against the CCRC, can you review it? If skilled nursing care is offered in a Medicare-certified facility (versus private pay only), consult the CMS star rating on Medicare.gov.
- Has the healthcare facility received any special awards or special recognition for quality of care?
- Ask about staff turnover in the health care facility. A high turnover rate may indicate an unhappy staff, which could translate into poor care delivery.

The above article was written by Brad Breeding of [myLifeSite](#) and is legally licensed for use.