



Transitioning from Home to a Senior Living Community - 10 Must do Steps

Transitioning from home to a retirement community needn't be stressful – in fact, it can be quite enjoyable! The key is making the move a family endeavor with the Senior 100% involved in the decision-making process – after all this will be their home for hopefully years to come.

The process starts with a conversation on what your parent's wishes are and to determine if a retirement community is indeed what they are looking for.

If a retirement community is in your parent's future, here are 10 must do steps to follow:

1. **Determine cost and payment options.** Cost is an important factor when looking for senior living options. Depending on the situation at the time, you may have access to Medicare/Medicaid reimbursements or long-term care insurance benefits. If paying out of pocket determine what your family can afford on a monthly basis and look for retirement communities that fit your budget and needs.
2. **Connect with senior living communities.** Visit websites, request information, and talk to the admission's offices to gather as much data as you can on possible retirement communities. Create a list of places that fit your parent's needs and budget.
3. **Communication with your aging parents.** You can do much of the legwork for them, but it's important to have regular conversations with your parents so they feel included and understand that their preferences are being considered. Once you have a list of retirement communities to choose from that are a good fit, share the information with your parents.
4. **Take a tour of the retirement communities – in person or virtual.** You can view all the brochures, websites, and floor plans that you want, but there is no substitute for an in-person or virtual tour of the community. Meet with staff, view the amenities, sample the food if visiting in person, and see everything they have to offer. This is an emotional move – so your parents need to feel at home.

5. **Visit at least 2 communities.** If you have never visited a retirement community before, it's important to visit several before making your choice – otherwise, you have nothing to compare it to. If you aren't 100% sure about which option is best, go for a second visit or tour.
6. **Get a referral.** Asking friends, peers, healthcare providers, senior center employees, etc. for referrals is a great way to make sure you are exploring all of the available options. Most people won't refer a place they wouldn't consider themselves.
7. **Read reviews.** Always read reviews, but don't make your decision solely based on them.
8. **Start preparing for the move early.** Moving is stressful at the best of times but moving your parents to a retirement community that requires downsizing can be extra stressful. Help your parents go through their belongings and decide what they want to sell, give to family, donate, throw out, or take with them. Starting the process early will avoid a need to rush to get everything done.
9. **Coordinate the move.** Are you hiring a company or helping on your own? Set up a schedule and plan to ensure the move goes smoothly.
10. **Have a plan for managing medical and legal documents.** Locate medical documents, tax returns, wills, power of attorney documents, health care directives or any important information that your parents and you may need. Make sure they're in a safe place so they don't get lost or misplaced during the move. If you need copies, make sure you have what you need prior to the move especially if you are the power of attorney or executor of their wills.

Whether your parents are choosing the community themselves, or you're helping decide for a parent, the above steps should help ensure everyone in your family feels good about the transition to the retirement community that's selected. For more information about living at Noble Horizons, please contact Linda at 860-435-9851, ext. 160 or <mailto:lcastaldi@churchhomes.org>