You Have Rights in a Nursing Home

When you go into a nursing home, you are moving into a new home. You have rights in your new home just as you did in your old home. But you need to understand how to protect your rights. This booklet will help you.

State and federal laws give you important rights in a Tennessee nursing home. A nursing home must give you a written copy of these rights when they admit you. The nursing home must give a copy to anyone who represents you. This helps a relative or other person protect your rights even if you can’t.

Save this booklet so you can easily find it. Anytime you disagree with something that happens in the nursing home, look at this booklet. Talk with the nursing home staff about what it says. If you still need help, call one of the phone numbers on pages 25 to 30.

Go over these rights carefully. Some rights are repeated so you will not miss them.

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Do you really need nursing home care?

Nursing homes are for medical care that can only be done in a nursing home or hospital. It is the most expensive type of long-term care. Long-term care is care given at home or in a nursing home. It is for people with chronic disabilities and/or lengthy illnesses. If you can get the help you need at home, you don’t need a nursing home.

Before you decide to go to a nursing home, be sure this is the kind of care you need. A doctor, nurse or social worker can take a look at what kind of help you need. They will look at your medical needs and at how much help you need taking medicine. They also look at how much help you need to walk, bathe and eat. They can tell you what is the best care plan for you.

Other types of care

Home and Community-Based Care can help you live safely in your own home. Services include things like Meals on Wheels, personal care visits, personal emergency response system, and adult day care. Sometimes you can stay in your own home if you get:

- A mix of these kinds of services and
- Some help from your family members or neighbors

Most health insurance will not pay for in-home care because it is not medical. But be sure to check because some long-term care policies do cover it.

CHOICES is a program that covers home and community based care. To find out how to apply, go to page 5 in this booklet. Want more information about CHOICES? See our booklet called “Applying for CHOICES to pay for your care in a nursing home or your home.” It is on our website at www.las.org. Click on “Legal Help Booklets,” then on “Health Care.” Then click on “Paying for nursing home care or care in your own home.” OR call 1-800-238-1443 and ask us to mail you a copy.

Home Health Aides come into your home to give you health care. For many people, this means they don’t need to go into a nursing home. Sometimes health insurance will pay these costs.

Medicare only pays for home health services if some skilled care is needed. Skilled care is things like physical or speech therapy. To find out more about what Medicare covers, call the Medicare Home Health Care claims processor. In this region it is Palmetto Government Benefit Administrators. Their phone number is 1-800-583-2236. This is a free call.

If you are on CHOICES, it covers “medically necessary” home health services. You can also get these services if
you are on CHOICES. For more information, contact your CHOICES insurance plan. What if your CHOICES plan will not give you services that your doctor says are medically necessary? Then you can appeal. You may want to contact your Legal Aid office for help. To find the office near you, see pages 29 to 30.

**Assisted Living** is many kinds of living arrangements with different levels of support. It is ideal for seniors and people with disabilities who need some help to live independently. They do meal services, housekeeping, laundry, activities and help with medications, bathing and dressing. Transportation services may be included. Some places may just be a room. Others are private apartments with kitchenettes.

In Tennessee these communities can be licensed as an **Assisted Care Living Facility** (ACLF). Usually nursing services and help will be provided in ACLFs but not always. Most of the time, you have to pay regular monthly rent. You also pay extra fees for any services you need. CHOICES and Medicare will **NOT** pay for room and board. In some cases, private long-term care insurance will help pay the cost. CHOICES/Choices can also pay for an Assisted Living Facility.

**Continuing Care Retirement Communities (CCRCs)** give different kinds of care based on what you need. This can be everything from independent living apartments to skilled nursing care in their nursing home. You move from one setting to another in the CCRC as your needs change. Most CCRC contracts say you have to use their nursing home if you need one. How can you find out if it is a good one? Ask for the inspection reports on the CCRC’s nursing home. These say if they do a good job obeying the laws about nursing homes. Before you can move into many CCRCs, you must make a large payment. They charge monthly fees and cost a lot.

Find out more about long-term care you can get in your community. Call your district Long Term Care Ombudsman. See pages 25 to 27.

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**Need a nursing home? How do you pay for it?**

First, make sure you only get the services you need. If not, you could end up paying some or all of the costs. Nursing homes get paid:

- By the resident or resident’s family **OR**
- By insurance companies - long-term care policies, for example **OR**
- By Medicare **OR**
- By CHOICES, Tennessee’s Medicaid program for nursing home care

**Private pay**

For private pay, the resident pays every month for the services he or she had.
Private pay is very expensive and most people cannot afford it. The average cost of a nursing home in Tennessee is $5,700 a month.

**Long Term Care Insurance**

Long Term Care insurance is also called LTC. It can help pay for long-term nursing home and home health care needs. It can also help pay for help with activities of daily living. People who already have serious medical problems usually can’t buy this kind of insurance. The older you are, the more the insurance costs. The insurance pays for your long-term care.

There are several things you should know before buying LTC insurance:

1. How much the monthly payments are compared to the cost of nursing home care AND
2. The daily cost of the nursing home compared to the daily amount the policy pays AND
3. If you could get CHOICES

Want to find out more about who can get CHOICES? See our booklet called “Applying for CHOICES to pay for your care in a nursing home or your home.” It is on our website at www.las.org. Click on “Legal Help Booklets,” then on “Health Care.” Then click on “Paying for nursing home care or care in your own home.” OR call 1-800-238-1443 and ask us to mail you a copy.

**Medicare**

Medicare will NOT pay for ordinary nursing home care. It pays for a very limited amount of care in a nursing home. Medicare only covers nursing home care in a skilled nursing facility. Skilled nursing includes things like changing bandages, changing catheters, and helping with feeding tubes. Medicare will only cover care if:

- Before the skilled nursing facility, you were in the hospital for 3 days or more AND
- Your doctor says that you need skilled care every day AND
- The care you need is because of a problem you had AND
- You had the problem when you were in the hospital for 3 days or more AND
- You are admitted to a Medicare-certified nursing facility within 30 days of your hospital stay.

Ordinary nursing home care is things like help with bathing or dressing. Is this the only help you need? Then Medicare won’t pay for it.

Medicare will only pay for 100 days of skilled nursing care. After 20 days, Medicare will only pay part of the cost.

**Medicare Supplement**

These policies pay Medicare deductibles and co-insurance. Some policies pay for Medicare approved skilled care for days 21 to 100 or longer.
CHOICES

CHOICES is a health insurance program. It pays for both ordinary nursing care and skilled care in a nursing home. The person must need care that can only be given in a nursing home. Your income and assets decide if you can get CHOICES in a nursing home. For more information about CHOICES, see our booklet “Applying for CHOICES to pay for your care in a nursing home or your home.”

Veterans Benefits

VA is the short name for the Veterans Administration. Most of the time, the VA pays for care in a private nursing home for:

1) Veterans in VA hospitals who need to go directly to a nursing home **AND**
2) People in Armed Forces hospitals who are veterans who must go directly to a nursing home **AND**
3) Other veterans who need a nursing home for a service-connected problem

Most of the time, the VA only pays for 6 months, but may pay longer. Also the VA must decide:

- That you got the disease or injury in the line of duty during active service **OR**
- That the disease or injury got worse in the line of duty during active service

Here’s how to apply for CHOICES

1. If you have TennCare, call your health plan (MCO). The number is on your TennCare card.
2. Don’t have TennCare? Call your local Area Agency on Aging and Disability at **1-866-836-6678**. It’s a free call. If you can’t get CHOICES, they can tell you about other programs that may help.

Do you have disabilities? Then they can come to your house to help you apply. You can also get help over the phone. Call Tennessee Health Connection at **1-855-259-0701**. Say you want help applying for a nursing home.

You should help with the application and make your own decisions. What if you are too sick to help? Then you can have a trusted family member or friend apply for you. They **don’t** need a power of attorney or other legal authority to do this.

To get CHOICES to help pay your nursing home bill, you must pass **2 tests:**

1. **Medical** - show your medical needs are bad enough to need nursing home care. Examples: trouble walking or using the toilet
2. **Financial** - show that your income and savings are below CHOICES limits:
   - Your income per month must be less than $2,199. It may be more if you have a qualified income trust (QIT) **AND**
• You must have less than $2,000 in resources. It may be more if you have a special needs trust.

Remember, if you are too sick, someone else can apply for you.

If you are turned down for CHOICES, they may be wrong. You can appeal. You may get free help with your appeal from your local Legal Aid program. See the Legal Help section on page 29 to 30.

For more information on CHOICES, see our booklet “Applying for CHOICES to pay for your care in a nursing home or your home.”

Your Rights In Applying to a Nursing Home

Most nursing homes get CHOICES money. If they do, they have to follow CHOICES rules for every patient. They must do this even for patients CHOICES is not paying for.

Your Rights to Medicare and CHOICES When Applying

Do NOT give up your rights to CHOICES, Medicare or other government help. It is illegal for a nursing home to ask you to do this. Are you on CHOICES? The nursing home has to take you as a CHOICES patient. It is illegal for the nursing home to make you pay as a private patient first.

Have you applied for CHOICES but don’t have it yet? The nursing home can’t ask you to pay the costs yourself before they admit you. What if you have been turned down by CHOICES but your CHOICES appeal isn’t over? The nursing home must still admit you when it is your turn. Have you already been admitted? The nursing home can’t put you out until your appeal is decided.

Waiting list rules

You have a right to be treated fairly when you try to get into a nursing home. All nursing homes must keep a waiting list of people who want to live there. You can call and ask to add your name to the waiting list. The nursing home must send you the necessary papers to complete. You can get on the waiting list of several nursing homes if you wish.

After you get on the waiting list

Most nursing homes get CHOICES payments. This means they must give the next open bed to the person who applied first. This is called the first come, first served rule. However, they can ignore this rule when:

• A CHOICES patient who had to leave the nursing home is ready to come back. This is for patients who left to get extra medical care, like in a hospital.

• Someone lower on the waiting list needs care more quickly.
• The bed is in a room that is only for men or only for women. They can give it to someone lower on the waiting list of that sex.

• The state health department decides certain groups of people get first chance at any openings.

Nursing home records must explain any time they break the first come, first served rule. These changes must be listed in nursing home records. It makes sure no one is kept out because of their race or color. It makes sure no one is kept out because they are on CHOICES.

You can see the reports on any nursing home

You have a right to see the inspection (survey) reports on any nursing home. You can see them for the last 3 years. This will tell you if they follow the rules for nursing homes. The nursing home must keep readable copies in one easy to get to file. They must let you see them right away during normal business hours.

You have a right to see:

• Fire safety inspections
• Building code inspections
• State health department surveys and reports
• Federal surveys and reports
• Orders from the state health commissioner or the board that licenses nursing homes
• The annual audit report on residents’ money handled by the nursing home

• Audit reports and findings by the Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury
• The account number and location of the bank account for patient money. This is a separate bank account for all money the nursing home holds for patients. The nursing home cannot use money that belongs to patients.

The state health department office nearest you also has survey reports for all nursing homes in your area. You have a right to see these reports. For the address of the office nearest you, see the section on page 27 called State Nursing Home Surveyors.

If you use the Internet, go to www.medicare.gov for nursing home information. If you go to the section called Nursing Home Compare, you can look up any nursing home. You can look them up by name or by the state and county they are in. Or you can look up a county and see all the nursing homes that are there. You can also see the survey reports for each nursing home.

Facts you must be given

All nursing homes must give you certain facts in writing before you enter the home or sign a contract. They must also give these facts to your next of kin and anyone who represents you.

They must tell you:

• How much they charge by the day or by the month AND
• All the services the nursing home gives and any charges for those services
  o Must show regular services and things they only do when needed AND
• Any extra charges for services AND
• The written policies which protect your rights to good medical care and respect
  o Must include keeping medical records private AND
• The addresses and phone numbers of your local ombudsman and Legal Aid office

If the nursing home changes their prices, they must give you a new list. What if you get CHOICES or Medicare coverage later? The nursing home must tell you about any charges not covered by those programs.

Admission Agreements

Have you have been told there is an opening for you at a nursing home? Then you or your representative must sign an admission agreement before you move in.

This agreement should clearly say what the nursing home has to do. It should say what you have to do as a resident. If you have a co-signer, it should say what the co-signer has to do.

Your admission agreement can’t:
• Make you give up your rights to have Medicare or CHOICES pay for your care OR

What if you and the nursing home disagree about something? An arbitrator is an outside person who decides who wins and who loses. The Admission Agreement cannot make you agree to let an arbitrator, not a court, decide who wins. You should know it’s against the new nursing home rules.

Special Rule: The nursing home may make your court-appointed conservator or guardian sign an admission agreement. It is a promise to use the money they handle for you to pay your nursing home bills. The guardian does not have to use his/her own money to pay your bill.

Your Rights While Living in a Nursing Home

Your right to a care plan

Did you just enter a nursing home? The nursing home has 2 days to write a care plan for you. The care plan says what kind of care you will get and how often. Who writes the plan? A nursing home assistant and a staff member that helps with nutrition must take part. You or your family should also take part.
### Your right to fair treatment

It is against the law for any nursing home to treat you differently (discriminate against) you:

1. Because of the nation you or your family came from **OR**
2. Because you have a particular medical condition, disease or disability **OR**
3. Because you have complained about the nursing home

Most nursing homes take CHOICES. If so, they can’t give you different care because of who pays your bill. They can’t treat you differently in any way because of who pays your bill.

Does the nursing home get federal government money like Medicare, CHOICES or Veterans’ benefits? Then it can’t treat you differently because of your age.

If you are treated differently (discriminated against), contact your local Legal Aid office (see pages 29 to 30.). You can call your local long-term care ombudsman (see pages 25 to 27).

In an easy-to-see place, Tennessee nursing homes have to put:

- The names, addresses and phone numbers of agencies
- The names, addresses and phone numbers of advocacy groups and
- The names, addresses and phone numbers of ombudsmen

### Your right to protect belongings

The nursing home must make a written list. It must show all the personal property you bring with you to the nursing home. If you tell them about changes in your belongings, they must change the list.

The nursing home must give you reasonable space to store your belongings. They must also give you a place to lock up small items for safekeeping. What if the locked space is not in your room? Then you must be able to get to it each day.

The nursing home must have a plan for what to do if patient property is lost or stolen. They must keep a record of what they did about any such reports.

Did you report lost or stolen property? Do you think the nursing home didn’t do enough when you reported it? You can ask the Tennessee Department of Health to look into the loss of your property.

### Your right to control your money

You have the right to manage your own money. Before anyone else can get or manage your money, you must give your OK in writing.

**Special Rule:** You can lose the right to control your money **IF:**

- A court gives these powers to someone else **OR**
- Doctors say you are not medically able to use these rights
What if you pay the nursing home for part of your care and later CHOICES covers it? Then the nursing home must pay you back.

**Records you have a right to see**

The nursing home must keep the financial records listed below. You have a right to see them.

- A written record of all income, expenses and money transfers involving the nursing home. This includes your care or money.
- An itemized statement showing everything that was done with your money. This is only if the nursing home is managing your money. The nursing home must send you a statement at least every 3 months.
- The account number and location of the bank account for patient money. This is a separate bank account for all money the nursing home holds for patients. The nursing home cannot use this money for any reason. The only exception is if the patient or the patient’s representative says so.

**If the owners sell the nursing home**

The old owners of the nursing home must give you written proof. It must show that they gave your money or belongings to the new owners. The new owners must also give you a report. It should show any of your money or belongings they get from the seller.

**Proper handling of your belongings after death**

What if a patient dies while in the nursing home? The nursing home must show what happened to the patient’s money the nursing home handled. They must give a list of the patient’s belongings. It must go to the person in charge of the estate. It must be done within 30 days after the death. They must give the money and property to the person the law says should have it.

**Federal Law Says:** Are you in a nursing home that takes Medicare or CHOICES payment? Then it does not matter who pays your bills. The nursing home must care for you. They must help you keep or improve your quality of life. The nursing home must also help you reach or keep your well-being. It should be the highest possible physical, mental, and psychosocial well-being. The nursing home must protect your dignity.

Your rights and legal protections are the same in the nursing home or your home. This includes the right to be free from any kind of physical or mental abuse.
Your right to good medical care and respect

Many laws and rules require nursing homes to give good care to all patients. These rules cover food, medical care, staff training and other things. Do you want a copy of these care rules? Ask the nursing home, the long-term care ombudsman or the Tennessee Department of Health. We explain some of the most important rules below.

The nursing home must support both your health and your quality of life. They must have written rules that protect these rights. They must give you a copy of these rules before you enter the nursing home. If the policies change, they must give you a new copy of the policies.

When you go into a nursing home, they must write down all your needs. This includes what care and services you need. The nursing home, your doctor, your family and you will make a care plan. It says what will be done to meet your needs. The nursing home must follow the care plan.

The nursing home must have enough trained staff to give you the care you need. What if you need special care that the nursing home staff cannot give? They must get a trained person from outside the home to give you the care. What if you need special therapy, or social services or counseling? The nursing home must give it to you.

Your right to care by a doctor

A doctor must supervise and approve your medical care. You have a right to choose your own doctor. If you don’t have a doctor, the nursing home must help you find one. They must make sure that a doctor sees you regularly.

Your right to know the facts about your condition

You have the right to be know everything about your medical condition. You have a right to know what treatment and care is planned for you. You have a right to be told this ahead of time.

You can refuse treatment

You have an absolute right to refuse treatment. No one, not even a doctor or nurse, can ignore this right in any way. Want to know how to protect your right to refuse treatment if you can’t talk? See our booklet on “Living Wills and Durable Powers of Attorney for Health Care.”

You can see your medical records

Your medical records are secret and private. You always have a right to see your medical records. You can also let your next of kin or someone who represents you see them. You can make a copy of your records. You can let your relative or representative make a copy. The nursing home must always obey this rule.
Drugs
You should only get the medicines you really need for your health. The nursing home may not give you medicine to punish you. Can they give you medicines just to make it easier for them to take care of you? No, not unless the medicine is needed for your medical condition.

You have a right to give yourself the drugs your doctor says you need.

Special Rule: Has your doctor decided it is unsafe for you to give yourself the medicine? OR have others who write your care plan decided it is unsafe? Then you don’t have this right.

Experimental treatment
Unless you agree to it, the nursing home cannot give you treatment that is experimental. Experimental means there is no proof that it will work. They must tell you all the good and bad things it could do to you. Your medical record must show that you agreed to the treatment in writing.

Dental, hearing and vision care
The nursing home must help you get the care you need for your teeth, your hearing and your eyesight. The nursing home does not have to pay for this care. Medicare and CHOICES only pay for this care in certain unusual cases. You may have to pay for your dentist with your own money. You may have to buy hearing aids or glasses with your own money.

Are you on CHOICES? Then see if CHOICES will pay more of your share of the nursing home bill. Then you can use your own money to pay for the dentist, eyeglasses or a hearing aid. To do this, ask CHOICES about “Item D Deductions” for these expenses. See “Paying for medical expenses that CHOICES does not cover” on page 23.

Cleanliness
The nursing home must be clean and healthy. They must give you clean sheets, towels and clothing as needed. Also, the nursing home must give regular skin, hair, feet, nails, teeth and gum care. You have a right to be kept clean, dry and free of odors.

Food
You have a right to good food, served hot. Meals must be served at regular times of day. If your doctor orders special food for you, the nursing home must give it to you.

If you do not like the meal that is offered, you can ask for another choice. But they don’t have to give you as many choices as a restaurant would. There must be food for snacks and as ordered by your doctor.
If you need help eating, they must help feed you. They cannot feed you through a tube unless it is the only way you can get enough food. Are you already fed through a tube? Then they must help you get well enough to eat without a tube, if possible.

Water
You have a right to water and other fluids you need. If you need help, they must help you drink.

Using the Toilet
What if you cannot control your bladder or bowels? The nursing home must give you special training to help you control them, if possible. Can they use a catheter tube? Only if that is the only way to control your bladder and keep you dry.

Your Personal and Privacy Rights

Your right to use the phone
You have the right to talk privately to anyone by phone. The nursing home must a phone you can use. Do you use a wheelchair or have hearing problems? Then there must be a phone that meets your needs.

Your right to mail
You have the right to send and get mail. The nursing home cannot hold, open, or mess with your mail.

Your right to meet and talk with other residents
You have the right to meet and talk privately with other residents of the nursing home. You may set up a patient council. It can make complaints or push for changes in the nursing home. The nursing home may not do anything to stop or interrupt these meetings. If you ask, the nursing home must give you a place to meet. If you ask, the nursing home must help you set up such meetings.

Your right to meet and talk with groups
You have the right to meet with social, religious, community and business groups. You have the right to take part in their activities. The nursing home can limit this only if:

- Such activities would harm the health and safety of a resident or staff member OR
- Such activities could harm the property of a resident, staff member or the nursing home.

Private visits with anyone
You have the right to visit in private with anyone during reasonable hours. The nursing home can keep you from having such visits only if:

- It would harm the health and safety of a resident or staff member OR
- It could harm the property of a resident, staff member, or the nursing home.
Does the nursing home get Medicare or CHOICES money? Then it can never delay or stop you from visiting privately with:

- Your doctor OR
- A government inspector OR
- An ombudsman OR
- A lawyer OR
- Your family

The nursing home cannot keep someone from visiting you to tell you your legal rights.

What if the nursing home will not let you have a visitor? You or the person who was not allowed to visit can complain to:

Tennessee Department of Health
Phone: (877) 287-0010
Phone is answered from 8 AM to 4:30 PM Monday through Friday

Privacy for married couples

Married couples have a right to privacy during visits. What if both husband and wife live in the same nursing home? Then they have a right to share the same room.

Personal privacy

You have a right to the private use and enjoyment of your room. What if you share a room? You have the same rights in your part of the room. You have the right to keep the door closed. Can a doctor or nurse order the door to stay open? Yes, if it is for medical reasons.

Can the nursing home staff come in your room when the door is closed? Yes, they can come in to give medical or personal care. They can come in to protect your safety. They can come in to protect the safety of others in the room.

You have a right to privacy during treatment, personal care, bathing and using the toilet.

Personal clothes and grooming

The nursing home must respect your right to privacy and dignity. You have the right to wear your own clothes. The nursing home cannot charge you extra to wash your personal clothes.

You always have a right to wear suitable clothes. What if you need help getting dressed, grooming or staying clean? The nursing home must give you any help you need.

Your choice of roommates

Are you in a room with other beds? You may say who you want as a roommate. The nursing home must give you this roommate if:

- The other person wants to room with you AND
- There is enough space AND
- The other person is of the same sex or is related to you by blood or marriage

Special Rule: Can a doctor can order the nursing home to keep you from rooming with someone? Yes, if it is for medical reasons.
Does the nursing home take Medicare or CHOICES money? Then it must give advance warning before moving you or your roommate to another room. The advance warning must go to you and your family. What if your health improves and you need less care? That cannot be why the nursing home moves you to another part of the building.

Private records

Your personal records are secret and private. Usually, the nursing home cannot let anyone outside the nursing home see your records. You or the person who represents you can agree in writing to let others see them. Certain officials also have a legal right to see patient records.

Your right to move around freely

As a resident of a nursing home, you have a right to move about freely. You can go outdoors in good weather. You can leave the nursing home with an adult who is responsible and OK’d to take you. This is true unless doing so would be clearly dangerous for you. The nursing home must help you keep or improve your ability to move your body.

Use of drugs or devices to keep you from moving about

Can a nursing home use drugs or devices to keep you from moving about? No, not unless it is to treat your health problem. A doctor must give written orders first. These orders must be checked every 3 months. The nursing home must keep a record of such orders. The nursing home must let the Department of Health and your ombudsman see these orders.

The nursing home can never lock devices that hold you down. Can they use drugs or other restraints? No, not just to make it easier for the nursing home to care for you. They can never use drugs or other restraints to punish you.

Has a nursing home wrongly used drugs or restraints on you or someone else? Then talk to your ombudsman. You may also contact:

Office of Patient Care Advocacy
710 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, TN 37243
615-741-5879 or 800-722-7901

If you cannot move around

If you cannot move around, the nursing home must care for you so you won’t get bed sores ("decubitus ulcers"). What if you do have bed sores? Then they must give you special care to help the bed sores heal.

You have a right to stay active. If you want, they must help you:

- Eat in the dining room and
- Take part in other activities

You can make your own decisions about your care

You can even decide to leave the nursing home for good. You do NOT have to have someone else sign your discharge papers. Did someone else sign the papers to get
you into the nursing home? You can still sign yourself out.

**Special Rule:** Has a **court** said that you are mentally incompetent? Then you lose the right to make decisions about your care. **Mentally incompetent** means you are no longer able to make good decisions for yourself. Or it can mean you cannot understand what will happen after you decide something. What if the court says you are incompetent? Then the court will choose someone to make decisions for you.

**NOTE:** If your heart or breathing stop, the rules about what will be done are different. What if you **haven’t** told anyone what you want? **AND** no court has said you are incompetent? Then 2 doctors can decide if you are able to make this decision for yourself. What if they say you can’t make this decision? Then your doctor and someone who speaks for you will decide.

**Special Rule:** Sometimes you can lose your right to move about for a limited time. This can happen if a doctor signs an order saying:

- You are a threat to yourself **OR**
- You are a threat to the rights of other residents **OR**
- You are a threat to the safety of other residents

**It’s your choice**
You have a right to choose how you will live while you are in the nursing home, so long as you don’t bother other residents or disrupt the nursing home. You have a right to be different. You can choose:

- Your activities
- Your schedule
- Your health care

You can choose these based on your interests, needs and plan of care.

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**Your Rights to Stay in the Nursing Home**

Most of the time, the nursing home cannot make you leave. Can they move you out because you won’t pay for your care? No, not if Medicare, CHOICES or another insurance program has already paid for the care.

What if you owe a bill to someone else, like a drug store? Can they move you out for not paying it? **No.**

They can’t move you out because you reported bad things about the nursing home.

**When they can make you leave**
They can make you leave **IF:**

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• You need medical care you cannot get there OR
• It is the only way to protect you or other patients OR
• Your nursing home bill has not been paid OR
• You no longer need nursing home care

NOTE: Are you on Medicare? Are you supposed to pay for part of your care? The nursing home can’t ask you to pay your share up front. What if you can’t pay your share after you get the care? They still can’t make you leave.

Are you on CHOICES? Then you may have to give part of your income to the nursing home. This is called “patient liability.” CHOICES pays the rest. You don’t have to pay your share before you move into the nursing home.

What about after you have gotten in? What if you have CHOICES and you or your family refuses to pay your part? Then the nursing home can make you leave.

Are you on CHOICES? Did you file an appeal about CHOICES that is not over yet? An appeal is a way to get a problem fixed. CHOICES can’t make you leave while the appeal is going on. Are you waiting for a CHOICES appeal to be decided? Then you can stay in the nursing home until it is decided.

Be sure you ask how much you have to pay. Ask when you have to start paying it. Don’t spend the money you owe the nursing home on anything else. It’s a good idea to keep all your money in the bank for a few months. Do this until you know for sure how much the nursing home will charge you. You can spend $30 a month. The nursing home has to let you keep at least this much of your income.

If the nursing home wants to make you leave

You have more rights in a nursing home that takes Medicare or CHOICES. Does the nursing home take Medicare or CHOICES? Then usually they must tell you at least 30 days before they move you out.

The notice must tell you:
• Why they want to move you out
• You can appeal if you don’t agree with the reason for moving you out
• If you appeal, you can tell your side of the story at a hearing and
• How to get help with the appeal from the local long term care ombudsman. An ombudsman is a person who helps patients and families with nursing home problems. The ombudsman does not work for the nursing home.

Legal Aid may be able to help you with your appeal. See pages 29 to 30 in this booklet.

Can the nursing home ever tell you to move in less than 30 days? Yes, IF:
• Staying in the nursing home makes you a danger to your own health or safety OR
• You are a danger to the health or safety of others OR
• You have gotten so much better that you don’t need nursing home care OR
• You have been in the nursing home less than 30 days

If the nursing home says you are a danger

Does the nursing home want you to leave because you are a danger? This can mean a danger to yourself or to others. Then they must take 3 steps:

1. They must get a written order from your doctor. It must say they are moving you out. It must say it is to protect the health and safety of you or others. It must also say:
   • The doctor himself examined you during the 7 days before you will move
   • He knows the plans for your care after you leave
   • He has thought about how upsetting a move could be for you
   • He knows how far you will be from your family after your move and
   • The move will not hurt your health or put you in danger
2. They must tell the Tennessee Department of Health at least 5 days before you move out. They also must tell the long term care ombudsman 5 days before you move out.
3. They must tell you in writing that they plan to move you out. They must also tell your family member or someone who represents you in writing.

Your right to come back after hospital care or therapeutic leave

Therapeutic leave is overnight visits or to attend a special event. Nursing homes have rules about how long you can be gone and keep your bed. Are you going to the hospital or taking therapeutic leave? Then the nursing home must give you a written notice. They must also give it to a family member or someone who represents you. The notice must tell you how long you can be gone and keep your bed.

Special CHOICES rights

Are you in a nursing home and have applied for CHOICES? If yes, the nursing home can’t kick you out if you haven’t paid them.

Are you on CHOICES? The rules must say if you can get CHOICES to hold your nursing home bed for you. It must also tell you how to get CHOICES to hold the bed. What if you stay away longer than CHOICES will pay to hold your bed? Then you have the right to go into the nursing home’s next open semi-private room. To have this right, you must still need nursing home care.

Do you pay for nursing home care with your own money? Then the nursing home doesn’t have to hold your bed for you.
If the nursing home closes

What if the nursing home closes because of a disaster like a fire or flood? What if a government agency closes the nursing home? Then other rules may apply to your transfer or discharge. To find out more, contact a local Legal Aid office (see pages 29 to 30).

Legal protection if you complain

The law says a nursing home can’t get back at you or treat you unfairly IF:

- You complained in good faith to state inspectors, long term care ombudsmen or Legal Aid OR
- You helped any of these groups in any way OR
- You did something you have a right to do under state or federal law

You can make a complaint without giving your name. What if you do give your name? The long term care ombudsman and state inspectors must not tell who complained. The only time they can tell is if a court orders them to.

Unless you agree, a Legal Aid lawyer can never tell your name. Unless you agree, they can never tell what you say about your nursing home problem.

If you are being sent home or moved to another place for care

The nursing home must tell Tennessee’s long-term care ombudsman program. The ombudsman may be able to help. To find their number, see pages 25 to 27 in this booklet.

Your Rights under MediCARE

Medicare is the main health insurance program for people 65 or older or with disabilities. It is mostly for people who paid into Social Security while they worked. Most people over age 65 have Medicare. Most people on kidney dialysis can get Medicare. So can most people who got Social Security disability benefits for 2 years or more. To find out if you can get Medicare, call Social Security at 1-800-772-1213.

In a nursing home, Medicare pays for “skilled” care only. What is skilled care? It can be changing a bandage, changing a catheter, or helping with a feeding tube. A trained person must do skilled care for it to be safe and work correctly. OR a trained person must supervise it. Most nursing home patients do not receive skilled care.

Nursing home care can be “skilled” because the care is hard to do. It also can be “skilled” because you have a lot of health problems. OR because they are so serious only a trained person can take care of you.

To get Medicare to pay for your care in a nursing home:

- You have to be in the hospital for at least 3 days AND
• You have go to a nursing home within 30 days of leaving the hospital **AND**
• Your doctor must order skilled nursing or rehabilitation services every day

What if you leave the nursing home but go back within 30 days? MediCARE can cover your care **without** a new 3-day hospital stay.

Medicare covers only 100 days of nursing home care each time you are sick. Medicare pays the full cost of 20 days of skilled care. However, you must pay part of the cost for days 21 to 100. Do you have a Medicare Supplement policy? If Medicare pays, your Supplement **may** help pay for days 21 to 100 or longer.

Remember, Medicare does not pay for all nursing home care, only “skilled” care.

**You don’t have to take the nursing home’s word that Medicare won’t pay**

Often, the nursing home will say that Medicare will not pay for your care. It is hard to tell what is called skilled care and what is not. You want Medicare, not the nursing home, to decide if your care is covered. Don’t let the nursing home tell you what Medicare will pay. You have a legal right to get a decision from Medicare.

Does the nursing home believe that Medicare will not pay for certain services?

Then they must give you written notice that has the following facts:

• The rules about what Medicare covers
• Why Medicare won’t pay for your care
• That the nursing home (not Medicare) has decided this
• That you can make them send the bill to Medicare to see if it will pay
• That Medicare has to refuse to pay before the nursing home can bill you and
• The name and address of the local Medicare office

Can you find out if Medicare will pay before you get the care? No, you have to get the care first. But, if you need the care, it’s better to go ahead and get it. Often, you can make Medicare pay.

**You have the right to have a bill sent to Medicare**

Medicare will decide about paying for your care only after they get a bill. Only the nursing home can bill Medicare.

Nursing homes don’t like to bill Medicare when they think Medicare won’t pay. Did you get the care anyway? Then you have the legal right to a “demand billing” each month. This means that the nursing home sends the bill to Medicare because you demanded it. They must tell you when they send the bill to Medicare.

The nursing home **can’t** refuse to do a demand billing. They should give you the forms you need to ask for it.
What if the nursing home refuses to do a demand billing to Medicare? Call the nursing home ombudsman and your Legal Aid office. See pages 25 to 30 for the phone numbers. You can also report them to the Inspector General’s Fraud and Abuse Hot Line. You can call them at 1-800-447-8477 for free.

You have the right to appeal if Medicare says it won’t pay

What if Medicare says at first that it will not pay? You may still be able to get them to pay. You can file an appeal with Medicare within 60 days. The nursing home can’t bill you until Medicare decides about your appeal.

You can only file a Medicare appeal if the nursing home has billed Medicare. The “demand billing” is important. It forces the nursing home to let Medicare decide. Then it gives you the right to appeal.

IMPORTANT: The nursing home can’t bill you while MediCARE is deciding if it will pay.

You may not have to pay

Sometimes, the nursing home may make a different mistake. They may say that Medicare will pay, when it won’t. You wind up with a bill you didn’t expect.

In these cases, you may not have to pay the bill. You may be able to get a waiver of liability.

A waiver of liability means that Medicare will pay when it usually would not. Medicare will do this only if you and the nursing home were not “at fault.” Not at fault means you thought Medicare would pay for the care. You didn’t have any way of knowing Medicare would not pay for the care. You just acted in good faith.

Usually, you don’t need to worry about the nursing home not being at fault. Did the nursing home follow the correct steps? Then Medicare says the nursing home was not at fault in telling you the wrong information. What if the nursing home did not take the correct steps? Then the nursing home will have to pay, not you.

The waiver of liability should protect you. You don’t pay for the nursing home’s mistake in telling you that Medicare would pay. What if you are in the nursing home more than 20 days? Then you still may have to pay your part of the daily costs. To apply for a waiver of liability, call the nursing home. OR follow the steps on the back of the Medicare letter saying Medicare wouldn’t pay.

If you can’t pay your part of the bill for days 21-100 of Medicare covered skilled care

If Medicare covers your skilled care, it pays the full cost of the first 20 days. For days 21 to 100, you owe part of the bill and Medicare owes part. The nursing home cannot ask you to pay your part before you get the care. Also they can’t put you out of the nursing home if you are not able to pay it. You may want to apply for
CHOICES to pay part of this bill. Want information on how to apply for CHOICES? Ask for our booklet “Applying for CHOICES to pay for your care in a nursing home or your home.”

**Your Rights Under CHOICES**

In Tennessee, the CHOICES program can pay for nursing home care. OR it can pay for home and community-based services. If you can’t pay it yourself, CHOICES helps pay for nursing home care. You must also meet the rules to get CHOICES.

Medicare covers only skilled nursing home care. But CHOICES covers both ordinary nursing care and skilled care in a nursing home.

Even if you are not on Medicare, you can still get CHOICES

Are you on CHOICES? Then you pay part of the nursing home bill each month. CHOICES pays the rest. CHOICES will tell you how much to pay. They call the part you pay the patient liability. You should only pay what CHOICES says is your share. The nursing home should never ask you to pay more than that. If you are on CHOICES, most of your income will go to pay the nursing home.

Are you in a nursing home and on CHOICES? Is your husband or wife still at home and have low income? Then all of your income won’t go to the nursing home. Your husband or wife can keep part of your income. The part your husband or wife keeps is called a spousal allowance. Want to learn more about spousal allowance? See our booklet “Applying for CHOICES to pay for your care in a nursing home or your home.”

You always get to keep a $50 personal needs allowance to spend as you wish for non-medical needs such as clothing and reading material. Important: It is against the law for the nursing home to take this money. They can’t use it to pay for medicine or anything else CHOICES should pay for.

What if you are in the nursing home less than 90 days and get SSI? CHOICES will let you use your SSI to keep your home until you return. You will need to contact Social Security. Ask what you need to do to make sure your regular SSI check keeps coming.

You can also ask CHOICES to let you keep:

- The cost of your medical insurance premium AND
- Money for other medical costs not covered by CHOICES. These are things like dentures, eye glasses, and hearing aids (see page 23).

What CHOICES covers

CHOICES pays for most of the care you will need in a nursing home. You only pay
what CHOICES says is your share of the bill. Here are some of the things CHOICES will pay for:

- Some over-the-counter drugs like aspirin, laxatives, or medicine for indigestion
- Diapers
- Kleenex, soap and deodorant
- Shaves, shampoos, haircuts, nail care and simple hair sets
- Permanents or other special hair styling – but they can charge you more for these
- Pajamas and gowns
- Laundry service for your clothes
- Bandages, pads and other medical supplies and
- Wheelchairs, walkers and other medical equipment

The full list of what CHOICES will pay for is very long. Does the nursing home want you to pay for something? Do you think you and CHOICES may have already paid for it? Ask for the list. You can get a list of covered services from CHOICES. Or you can get it from the nursing home social worker.

You shouldn’t pay for medicine

Medicare and CHOICES pay for ALL of your regular medical care outside the nursing home. This includes hospital bills. Your TennCare insurance plan (MCO) will pay for your prescription drugs.

You and your family should NOT pay for your prescription medicine while you have CHOICES.

If you are being billed for prescription medicine, call TennCare Solutions. The number is 1-800-878-3192. It is best to call them during the day. Nights and weekends you can leave a message. They can try to fix the problem or help you file an appeal. You may also want to call your Legal Aid office for help with an appeal. See the Legal Help section on pages 29 to 30.

Paying for medical expenses CHOICES doesn’t cover

Do you have medical expenses that CHOICES and Medicare don’t cover? They call these expenses “Item D deductions.” Tell your caseworker at TennCare about these costs. They may lower how much you pay the nursing home for 1 month. This can leave you enough money for these expenses.

For example, CHOICES may leave you enough money to pay for dentures. Or to pay for a hearing aid, eyeglasses or a private duty nurse. The nursing home social worker may help you set this up with CHOICES.

Your right to apply for CHOICES

You have the right to apply for CHOICES. You can apply whenever you need help to
pay for your care. The nursing home cannot ask you to wait before applying for CHOICES or other benefits. It is against the law.

**Once you apply, you are protected**

Have you applied for CHOICES? Then the nursing home must admit you when your turn comes on the waiting list.

What if you were turned down for CHOICES? The nursing home must still take you in when it is your turn if:

- You appealed CHOICES’s decision, and
- The appeal isn’t over yet.

**Other CHOICES rights**

Does the nursing home take CHOICES? Do you have CHOICES? Then the nursing home can’t legally ask for anything else before admitting you.

- The nursing home must take you as a CHOICES patient. They can’t make you pay as a private patient first.
- You don’t need a co-signer.

The nursing home can’t make another person promise to pay any part of your bill.

**Special Rule:** Do you have a court-appointed conservator or guardian? The nursing home may make them sign an admission agreement. It says they will pay any bills with your money. The guardian does not have to use his or her money to pay your bills.

**Refunds**

When the nursing home learns that you have CHOICES, it must bill CHOICES. It can bill for any earlier care you paid for that CHOICES can cover. It must do this the next time it bills CHOICES.

The nursing home could get a back payment from CHOICES. When it comes, the nursing home must refund your money within 10 days. They can subtract any part of the bill that the law says you should pay.

**You can ask the nursing home to keep your money for you**

You can ask the nursing home to keep your money for you. They must put it in a special bank account. You will lose CHOICES if your savings go over a certain amount. What if the money in your nursing home account gets close to the CHOICES limit? Then the nursing home must warn you. Then you can spend some of your money so you won’t lose CHOICES.

**Laundry**

The nursing home can’t charge you for washing your clothes, sheets, pajamas, gowns or other linens. Laundry is part of the care paid for by you and CHOICES.
Help
Protecting
Your Rights

What if you cannot act for yourself? Then a relative or friend can speak for you to protect your rights.

Your Family Can Help

Your family can act for you, if you need help. The nursing home must tell them about your rights. If you say so, the nursing home must tell your family about:

- Your bills and
- Any money the nursing home is keeping for you

If you say so, they must let your family see and copy your medical records.

A nursing home must tell your family at once if:

- You are hurt or your health changes OR
- They plan to change your care in a way that matters OR
- They plan to move you or your roommate to another room OR
- They plan to transfer you or move you out

You can have your family take part in planning your care. Your family can visit with you privately, whenever you want. Your family has a right to meet privately in the nursing home with other residents’ families.

What if you DON’T want a relative to visit you or know about your business? Just tell the nursing home. They must protect your privacy.

Others That Can Help

The people and offices listed in this section help people for free.

Ombudsmen do not work for the nursing homes or for state government. They will not tell who complained about a nursing home. You can contact your local Long Term Care Ombudsman for help with:

- Questions or problems about a nursing home or the care it gives OR
- Problems getting into a nursing home

First Tennessee (Region 1)
Debby Morrell
Mae Grimes
Legal Aid of East TN
311 West Walnut St.
Johnson City, TN 37064-6786
or PO Drawer 360
Johnson City, TN 37605-0360
Phone: 423-794-2488
Fax: 423-928-9488
Email: dmorrell@laet.org
Counties served: Carter, Greene, Hancock, Hawkins, Johnson, Sullivan, Unicoi, Washington

East Tennessee (Region 2)
Lynette Edwards
East TN Human Resource Agency
9111 Cross Park Drive, Suite D-100
Knoxville, TN 37923-4517
Tel: 865-691-2551 ext. 4223
Fax: 865-531-7216
Email: ledwards@ethra.org
Counties served: Anderson, Blount, Campbell, Claiborne, Cocke, Grainger, Hamblen, Jefferson, Knox, Loudon, Monroe, Morgan, Roane, Scott, Sevier, Union

Southeast Tennessee (Region 3)
Rebecca Jones
Partnership for Families, Children, and Adults
5600 Brainerd Road, Suite B24
Chattanooga, TN 37411-5347
Tel: 423-755-2877
Fax: 423-755-2755
Email: rjones@partnershipfca.com
Counties served: Bledsoe, Bradley, Grundy, Hamilton, McMinn, Marion, Meigs, Polk, Rhea, Sequatchie

Upper Cumberland (Region 4)
Kim Fowler
Aging Services for the Upper Cumberland
1225 South Willow Avenue
Cookeville, TN 38506-4194
Tel: 931-432-4210
Fax: 931-432-6010
Email: ombud@twlakes.net
Counties served: Cannon, Clay, Cumberland, DeKalb, Fentress, Jackson, Macon, Overton, Pickett, Putnam, Smith, Van Buren, Warren, White

Greater Nashville (Region 5)
Brittany Morton / Richard Robinson
Mid-Cumberland Human Resource Agency
1101 Kermit Drive, Suite 300
Nashville, TN 37217-5109
Office: 615-850-3918
Fax: 615-834-8906
Email: bmorton@mchra.com
Email: rrobinson@mchra.com
Counties served: Cheatham, Davidson, Dickson, Houston, Humphreys, Montgomery, Robertson, Rutherford, Stewart, Sumner, Trousdale, Williamson, Wilson

South Central (Region 6)
Andrea Morrow
South Central Tennessee AAAD
101 Sam Watkins Blvd.
Mt. Pleasant, TN 38474-4024
Phone: 931-379-2940
Fax: 931-379-2685
Email: amorrow@sctdd.org
Counties served: Bedford, Coffee, Franklin, Giles, Hickman, Lawrence, Lewis, Lincoln, Marshall, Maury, Moore, Perry, Wayne

Northwest (Region 7)
Marchell Gardner
Northwest TN Human Resource Agency
124 Weldon Drive
Martin, TN 38237-1308
or PO Box 963
Martin, TN 38237-0963
Tel: 731-587-4213 ext. 239
Fax: 731-587-6823
Email: marchell.gardner@nwthra.org
Counties served: Benton, Carroll, Crockett, Dyer, Gibson, Henry, Lake, Obion, Weakley

Southwest (Region 8)
Norma Bell
Southwest TN Area Agency on Aging and Disability
102 East College St.
Jackson, TN 38301-6202
Tel: 731-668-6411
Fax: 731-668-6421
Email: nbell@swtdd.org
Counties served: Chester, Decatur, Hardeman, Hardin, Haywood, Henderson, McNairy, Madison
Aging Commission of the Mid-South (Region 9)
Zev Samuels
Metropolitan Inter-Faith Assoc.
910 Vance Avenue
Memphis, TN 38126-2911
or PO Box 3130
Memphis, TN 38173-0130
Tel: 901-529-4565
Fax: 901-523-1266
Email: zsamuels@mifa.org
Counties served: Fayette, Lauderdale, Shelby, Tipton

State Long-Term Care Ombudsman
Laura Meeker
Tennessee Commission on Aging and Disability
502 Deaderick Street
Andrew Jackson Building, 9th Floor
Nashville, TN 37243-0860
Tel: 615-253-4392
Fax: 615-741-3309
Toll Free: 877-236-0013
TDD: 615-532-3893
Email: laura.meeker@tn.gov
From the website: http://www.tn.gov/aging/topic/district-long-term-care-ombudsman

State nursing home surveyors
You can complain to state government about a nursing home. Contact the Bureau of Manpower and Facilities, Tennessee Department of Health. The Bureau inspects and regulates nursing homes. They will not tell who complained. To complain, call:

Health Care Facilities 1-877-287-0010
No results? You can complain to:

Commissioner of Health
Department of Health
710 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, TN 37243
Phone: (615) 741-3111

Federal nursing home inspectors
If the state does not improve the quality of care, don’t give up! Contact the federal agency that oversees nursing homes. It is called the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. You can reach the office that covers Tennessee at:

Office of the Regional Administrator
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
Atlanta Federal Center
61 Forsyth Street SW, Suite 4T20
Atlanta, GA 30303-8909
Phone: (214) 767-6423

Discrimination
Do you think that a nursing home has treated you unfairly because of your
• Race
• Particular illness or
• Need for special medical care
Then contact:
Director, Civil Rights Compliance
Department of Human Services
400 Deaderick Street
Nashville, TN 37243-1403
Phone: (615) 313-4700

Note: An answering machine tells you the name of the Director. Leave your name, phone number and why you are calling. You should get a return call in a few days.
You may also complain to the federal office in charge of civil rights:
Fraud

You may contact state and federal agencies if you think that a nursing home is cheating Medicare or CHOICES. Fraud includes things like:

- Charging for services they did not give
- Mishandling patients’ money
- Seeking payment for services already paid for by Medicare or CHOICES or
- Cheating patients or the government in other ways

You may also contact any of the following state and federal offices:

**Division of Audit**
Office of the Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury State Capitol
Nashville, TN 37243-9034
Phone: (800) 232-5454

**Medicaid Fraud Control Unit**
Tennessee Bureau of Investigation
901 R.S. Gass Blvd.
Nashville, TN 37216
Phone: (615) 744-4000

**U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Fraud Hotline**
PO Box 23489
Washington, DC 20026
Phone: 1-800-447-8477

Help for people with developmental disabilities or mental illness

People with a developmental disability or mental illness who need help with nursing home care may also contact:

**Tennessee Protection & Advocacy**
2416 21st Avenue South, Suite 100
Nashville, TN 37212
Phone: (615) 298-1080 or 1-800-342-1660

**OR**
**Tennessee Disability Coalition**
955 Woodland Street
Nashville, TN 37206
Phone: (615) 383-9442

You must report abuse or mistreatment

Under Tennessee law, you must report any abuse or mistreatment of a nursing home resident or other frail adult. Tell the Adult Protective Services Unit of the Tennessee Department of Human Services (DHS) in your county.

Need the phone number for the DHS office? Call the Family Assistance Help Line at 1-888-863-6178. It’s a free call. They can give you the number for the office nearest you.

Legal help

You can sue a nursing home if it violates your rights. If you are hurt, you may sue for money. Contact a private attorney if you want to sue a nursing home for hurting you. For other help protecting your rights, you can contact your local Legal Aid office. They provide free legal help if you meet their rules.
An asterisk (*) means they are part of the Legal Assistance for the Elderly program. This means they help persons age 60 and older no matter how much money they make.

Legal Aid Offices

The Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberlands

*Nashville Office (Main Office)
300 Deaderick Street
Nashville, TN 37201
(615) 244-6610

*Clarksville Office
109 South Third Street
Clarksville, TN 37040
(931) 552-6656

*Columbia Office
1121 Trotwood Avenue, Suite 4
Columbia, TN 38401
(931) 381-5533

Cookeville Office
95 S Jefferson Avenue, Suite 102
Cookeville, TN 38501
(931) 528-7436

*Gallatin Office
650 N. Water Avenue
Gallatin, TN 37066
(615) 451-1880

*Murfreesboro Office
526 North Walnut Street
Murfreesboro, TN 37130
(615) 451-1880

Oak Ridge Office
575 Oak Ridge Turnpike, Suite 201
Oak Ridge, TN 37830
(865) 483-8454

*Tullahoma Office
261 Industrial Blvd.
Tullahoma, TN 37388
(931) 455-7000

West Tennessee Legal Services

Jackson Office (Main Office)
210 West Main Street
Jackson, TN 38302
(731) 423-0616
Counties served: Madison, Decatur, Gibson, Hardeman, Haywood, Henderson

Dyersburg Office
208 East Church Street
Dyersburg, Tennessee 38024
731-285-8181
Counties served: Crockett, Dyer, Lake, and Obion

Huntingdon Office
113 West Paris Street
Huntingdon, Tennessee 38344
731-986-8975
Counties served: Benton, Carroll, Henry, and Weakley

Selmer Office
141 West Third Street
Selmer, Tennessee 38375
731-645-7961
800-499-1602
Counties served: Chester, McNairy, and Hardin

Memphis Area Legal Services

Memphis Office
22 N. Front Street, 11th Floor
Memphis, TN 38103
(901) 523-8822 or Toll Free (866) 361-9001
NOTE: This information was prepared by the Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee. Every effort has been made to make sure that this booklet is accurate and up-to-date. However, it does not have all of the laws about rights and responsibilities of nursing home residents in Tennessee. Also, laws change from time to time. This booklet cannot take the place of advice from a lawyer.