

PENNSYLVANIA

Alzheimer's Special Care Unit Disclosure

Pennsylvania statutorily requires personal care homes and assisted living facilities to provide a uniform disclosure, including staff training requirements, when a personal care home or an assisted living residences holds itself out as providing services or housing for consumers with cognitive impairments. In addition, by regulation, assisted living residences that hold themselves out as providing services or housing for residents with Alzheimer's disease or dementia patients must make certain uniform disclosures, including the training it gives staff regarding how to take care of patients with Alzheimer's or dementia.

(Prior to 2007, personal care homes and assisted living residences were essentially the same thing in Pennsylvania. New legislation, which took effect in 2001, created two different levels of licensure for each. Some, but not all, personal care homes may meet the regulatory requirements for licensure as assisted living residences. Residents of personal care homes do not need a nursing facility level of care.)

Assisted Living Residences

Pennsylvania regulation governs the training requirements for direct care staff for assisted living residences. Direct care staff in assisted living residents must complete an initial training including care of residents with dementia, and must pass a Department-approved competency test. Initial training is comprised of 18 hours in specified areas, and in addition, direct care staff must have 16 hours of training annually in specified areas including the care of residents with dementia and cognitive impairments. By separate regulation, administrative staff, direct care staff persons, ancillary staff persons, substitute personnel and volunteers are required to receive at least four (4) hours of dementia-specific training within 30 days of hire and at least two (2) hours of dementia-specific training annually thereafter in addition to the training requirements of this chapter

There is also a separate regulation governing the training of direct care staff in specialized assisted living residences that deal specifically with Alzheimer's and dementia patients. Specialists working in Alzheimer's or dementia units must have eight (8) hours of initial training within the first 30 days and then eight (8) additional annual hours of dementia/Alzheimer's specific training annually. Training must include: an overview of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias; managing challenging behaviors; effective communications; assistance with ADLs; and creating a safe environment.

Personal Care Homes

Pennsylvania regulation governs the training requirements for direct care staff for personal care homes. Direct care staff in personal care homes must complete an initial training including care of residents with dementia, and must pass a Department-approved competency test. In addition, direct care staff must have at least 12 hours of annual training thereafter, including training in the care of residents with dementia. In addition, direct care staff in secured dementia care units must have six (6) hours annually of training specifically concerning caring for dementia patients in addition to the required initial training. Verification of this training must be provided to the Department.

Administrators

Pennsylvania regulates the training and competency of administrators of assisted living residences and personal care homes. The regulations set for the training requirements in both settings to include a 100-hour standardized Department-approved training course and a Department-approved competency-based training test with a passing score. Training must include care for residents with dementia or other cognitive impairment. It is not clear from the regulations if the training courses or training tests are identical.

Medicaid Waiver

Pennsylvania is pursuing a Medicaid waiver for assisted living.