

Frequently Asked Questions

Assisted Living, Specialized Care & Memory Loss

Health Care Services

What is the difference between the Assisted Living and Special Care areas?

In terms of the experience, you ask for help when you are in Assisted Living. You are offered help if you are in Special Care.

The criteria that requires a move from Assisted Living to Specialized Care is based on the level of care needed. There is a list of Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) which is used as a checklist to evaluate how much assistance the resident will require. The number of activities the resident needs help with, as well as the amount of time required for those activities, determines whether the resident is in Assisted Living or Specialized Care. This decision is made by the nursing director, medical director, and the resident's physician.

Here are two examples of care that would indicate that a resident belongs in Special Care: (1) the resident can't get from their apartment to the dining area on their own; (2) the resident requires a two person lift (the need to have two people help them stand up from a sitting position). Note that these are examples, not hard-and-fast rules. It again comes down to the number of ADLs the resident needs help with, and the time required of the nursing staff in providing that assistance.

Nursing Staff

How many nursing staff are on duty?

In Assisted Living, there are health care professionals (CNAs and/or CRMAs) on the floor days and evenings. In addition a Charge Nurse (LPN or RN) is also present from 7 AM to 11 PM.

In Specialized Care, there are health care professionals (CNAs and/or CRMAs) on the floor days and evenings. In addition a Charge Nurse (LPN or RN) is also present from 7 AM to 11 PM.

In Memory Loss, there are healthcare professionals (CNAs and/or CRMAs) on the floor days and evenings. In addition a Charge Nurse (LPN or RN) is also present from 7AM to 11 PM.

Choice of Doctor, Pharmacy, and Therapist

Can I keep my current physician?

You can choose your own doctors, pharmacies, and therapists. If the pharmacy delivers to Dirigo Pines, that is the easiest. If not, you can schedule one of the vans to take you to pick up your prescription (provided it is within 10 miles of Dirigo); it is free on Tuesday and Thursday and a fee charged for other days. Or, you can arrange your own transportation to pick it up.

Although you can choose your own doctor, many physicians choose not to make home calls. You can use Dirigo's transportation to get to your doctors' appointments. In the event you are too weak or sick to go out, there are a few options available:

- 1) The nursing staff keeps extensive notes and records on how the resident is doing, so the resident's doctor may be able to assist over the phone.
- 2) Some Physicians' Assistant visit patients at Dirigo, so that would also be an option.
- 3) Dirigo Pines' Medical Director is Dr. Penny Lamhut. She is one of a few certified geriatricians in the state of Maine.

Service Plan

What is a Service Plan?

There is a written Service Plan that details everything about your care. It includes the types of activities you need help with, what your prescription dosages are, dietary restrictions, the frequency of physical therapy or occupational therapy that you need scheduled, etc.

The Service Plan is developed after you've been at Dirigo Pines for 30 days. This gives you and the staff time to evaluate the level of assistance you need from them. The plan is reviewed and updated every year thereafter or as needed in between. The review is done in a meeting with Dirigo staff, the resident, family members, and with any health care professionals that would be appropriate.

LifeLine

How do I get help when I'm in my room?

You are provided with a LifeLine button to be worn as a bracelet or pendent. Assisted living and specialized care residents can push the button for immediate help from a member of the nursing staff. Pressing the button pages the nurse working your floor.

Does LifeLine work outside of my room?

LifeLine works up to ¼ miles from your apartment, so taking a walk around the upper pond can be done knowing that if needed, help is just the push of the LifeLine button away.

Transportation

Does Dirigo Pines have a van for transportation?

Dirigo has a 5 person van and a larger 11 passenger bus that is equipped for wheelchair-accessible. Transportation is free of charge in the following scenarios:

- * Mondays - We go to a grocery store and local shopping centers. Residents can sign up to reserve a spot on the bus.
- * Dirigo staff provides transportation to medical and dental appointments. Memory loss and specialized care residents are escorted by staff to appointments. Many pharmacies deliver. You can take Dirigo's transportation on Tuesdays and Thursdays to your pharmacy as well.
- * Group activities planned by Dirigo, such as the Out-To-Lunch Bunch.

The above is available provided that the destination is within 10 miles of Dirigo (Bangor to Old Town).

Some popular group trips may require a fee if outside bus services are needed. Residents may request a personal trip for a fee when the van is available.

Financial Matters

Can couples live together on assisted living and specialized care?

Couples can be accommodated in the Deluxe and Regency size assisted living apartments. Couples can both receive assisted living care with a 20% discount of the total housing charge in one apartment.

Couples can live together on specialized care, but there is no discount when both need care.

Couples can also live together on memory loss, but there is no discount when both need care.

If one of the couple does not need care, the one needing care pays the daily rate (without a discount) and the resident not needing care is charged a monthly fee to cover meals, laundry, housekeeping, and activities.

What is the cost for assisted living and how am I billed?

Published rates are per resident per day; monthly calculations are available as well. There is no security deposit for residents living on assisted living or specialized care.

Billing is done monthly. You need to prepay the first 30 days on admission. During the first 30 days, when the 1st of the month comes, you are billed for the portion of the month you haven't paid for yet.

Example: You move in on 7/13 and pay for 7/13 – 8/11. On 8/1, you pay for 8/12 – 8/31.

Dirigo will ask for financial information for review prior to admission. Thirty days after admission, and every twelve months thereafter, the family meets with Dirigo staff to review the Care Plan and the financial status.

Does Dirigo Pines accept Mainecare and/or Medicare?

If at any time it appears that financial assistance may be needed within the following year, the resident needs to apply for financing from Mainecare. Dirigo Pines does not accept Mainecare, so living arrangements must be made elsewhere when financial resources are exhausted.

What is your annual rate increase and when does it change?

Dirigo Pines tries to keep within the consumer price index; residents should plan on a range of 2% – 5% rent increase on the October 1 of each year. With the help of staff and residents we try to contain cost while still offering the amenities residents expect.

If two residents live in Assisted Living and one moves to Special Care, do you have to pay rent for both units?

Yes.

Is there a discount for the second unit?

No.

Does Medicare pay for any portion of the housing fee (the daily rate for the unit)?

No.

Which of the following are included in the daily fee?

Phone Bill – No.

Cable TV – Yes.

Internet Access – No. (If you get internet access from the cable tv company, the cable company bills you just for the internet service portion of the bill.)

Storage – No. There is an independent storage facility nearby. You would pay them separately – they are not part of Dirigo.

Long-Term Care – No. You would pay an outside company for these services; the family would need to set up the appointments. Types of activities you would need to contract out for, are dressing wounds, and hospice care. Note: these types of costs, especially when ordered by your doctor, are generally covered by Medicare.

Skilled Care – No. Similar to Long-Term Care, you would pay an independent company for this type of service. These activities are Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy. Again, when ordered by your doctor, these services are generally paid for by Medicare.

How much notice do I need to give Dirigo Pines to move out?

If you plan to leave, you need to provide a 15 day written notice to Dirigo Pines.

Priority Waiting List

Is there a waiting list for apartments and how do I get on it?

There is a separate waiting list for each assisted living apartment size (standard, deluxe, and regency) and specialized care (private or semi-private).

With a \$1,000 fully refundable deposit, you can be added to more than one wait list.

Can you turn down an available unit when your name comes up, and keep your place on the list?

Yes.

Can you do that multiple times?

Yes.

Which waiting list is the longest?

The assisted living deluxe apartment waiting list is the longest.

Miscellaneous

Mom's osteoporosis has made her short. What if she can't sit at the dining table comfortably?

There are other residents with height issue too. With a physician order, occupational therapy, covered under Part B Medicare, can work individually to assist in providing comfortable seating.

Are the apartments furnished or do we bring our own furniture?

Apartments are generally not furnished although we do have dressers and night tables available on a first-come basis for specialized care residents only. If needed, you should discuss the need for a hospital bed with your physician; it may be covered by Medicare. Rooms are equipped with cable television at no charge, but we do not provide television sets.

What about pictures for the walls and curtains for the windows? Can Dirigo's Maintenance people hang them for us?

Yes. In fact, Dirigo prefers to do the hanging and at no charge.

Are there any Two Bedroom units in Assisted Living?

No.