

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.

We use multiple factors in determining a need to move from Assisted Living to Specialized Care – acuity of illness, need for around the clock observation, extent of assistance, level of ambulation/adaption, etc. These factors will be discussed routinely in Service Plan meetings (see below) and are seldom a surprise to anyone. 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, healthcare staff (CNAs and/or CRMAs) are on the floor days and evenings. In addition professional licensed nurses (RN and LPN) are also onsite 17.5 hours per day and on call for the remaining 6.5 hours.

In Specialized Care, there are healthcare staff (CNAs and/or CRMAs) on the floor days and evenings. In addition professional licensed nurses (RN and LPN) are also onsite 17.5 hours per day and on call for the remaining 6.5 hours.

In Memory Loss, there are healthcare staff (CNAs and/or CRMAs) on the floor days and evenings. In addition, professional licensed nurses (RN and LPN) are also onsite 17.5 hours per day and on call for the remaining 6.5 hours.

Choice of Doctor, Pharmacy, and Therapist

Can I keep my current physician?

You can choose your own doctors, pharmacies, and therapists.

Although you can choose your own **doctor**, many physicians choose not to make house calls. Other than podiatry, Dr. Penny Lamhut is currently the only physician who visits DPI, she is one of a few certified geriatricians in the state of Maine. If your physician is elsewhere, you can use Dirigo's transportation to get to your appointments. In the event you are too weak or sick to go out, 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.

While residents may choose their own **pharmacy**, it may require them (or their POA) to manage medication ordering. Miller Drug is our facility pharmacy and a corporate affiliate via Affiliated Healthcare Services, therefore the only one we will guarantee our ability to manage with medication ordering.

It is very helpful if your pharmacy delivers to Dirigo Pines, 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.

All **therapy** companies are welcomed to work at DPI with private pay residents, however few will actually see residents in our facility; check with staff for this availability. Transportation to and from therapy appointments is provided in keeping with standard transportation guidelines.

Service Plan

What is a Service Plan?

A Service Plan is a detailed clinical plan that outlines your care needs. All disciplines involved in care contribute to this plan. An initial plan will be put in place the day you arrive. Within 30 days, a very specific plan will be accomplished for your long term goals and needs. At that time, a meeting will be held with the clinical team, the resident and family. This meeting will then convene every six months for those on AL, and yearly for those on SC or ML. Any member of the team may request an interim meeting at any time (resident and family are part of “the team”). Team meetings are designed to keep all members in the loop in terms of resident need, change in condition, decline or need for increased support.

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?

Depending on where you are and possible obstructions like firewalls, Lifeline can work up to a few yards to ¼ miles from your apartment.

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. We encourage residents to keep us engaged in the financial picture if the need arises to seek alternate living arrangements. Thirty days after admission, and every twelve months thereafter, the family meets with Dirigo staff to review the Care Plan.

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.