

Consumer's Guide to Licensed Board and Care Homes

Ray Schwartz, LCSW



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Things to Know

Why we wrote the booklet

Many persons in need of special care and supervision due to age, infirmity or illness may not know what to expect from the board and care facility in which they are placed. This brief booklet will attempt to give the reader a better idea of what the board and care is, what it can provide, what it cannot provide, what it may cost, and other issues that usually are asked about licensed residential care (board and care) facilities.

What is a “board and care” home?

A board and care home is a state-licensed, non-nursing, residential care facility, which is allowed to accept certain persons (depending upon its license) for pay. In return, the home is to provide “care and supervision” to all residents. A licensed facility is not limited by number of beds; some have only 1 licensed bed while others can go over 100, 200, 300 or more beds.

Why must they be licensed?

Having a license attempts to ensure that the home has met certain minimal health and safety requirements placed upon it by the State of California. Some of these health and safety requirements include food handling and storage, proper menus, sanitary conditions of the house which must be in good condition at all times, medications handling and monitoring, supervision of daily activities, etc. The license may also require annual in-service staff training.



What is “care and supervision”?

Every licensed home must, by regulation, provide care and supervision to its residents. This can be assistance with medications, grooming, bathing, dressing, eating, transportation to programs or medical visits, recreational activities, and so on.

How much will I have to pay?

The cost of board and care varies greatly. Many adult facilities, those licensed for ages 18-59, accept the *current SSI board and care rate as payment in full*. Others may require higher rates; these are called private pay homes. There is no regulation covering rates. The administrator may request any amount he or she can get. Payment in full is expected at the beginning of the month. You are allowed some spending money from your SSI check for personal use.



What is the typical Board & Care like?

It will probably house two persons to a bedroom unless you are willing to pay extra for private or semi-private quarters, it will have a list of house rules, which will give you an idea of the expected code of behavior each resident is to keep while in the home. Every home has a different list of house rules. Ask for them. If you feel you cannot keep within these rules, search for another home. However, remember that these rules are made to ensure health and safety for everyone, not just you. So, the restriction on smoking in bedrooms or other areas of a home, as an example, becomes necessary despite your possible objections and is in all licensed homes. It is a state fire law. All meals are provided as part of your fee. If you must attend day programs, a brown bag lunch is provided. Free linens, towels, toothbrush and toothpaste, soap, washday material, hair shampoos, feminine napkins, stationery, stamps and envelopes, pens, and many other items are also provided free by regulation. Local telephone calls are provided at no cost. Recreational games, magazines and programs are to be available for daily use by residents. So you don't have to sit around all day and "have nothing to do". For a fact, you are encouraged to go to school get a part-time job, work around the facility, or remain active in any way you can. You may leave the facility; it is "open". You may take vacations, go to relatives for the weekend, and so on. But you must let the administrator know where you are going to, and go where you say you will be.

Because the home has many different people housed under one roof, each with different likes and tastes, it must try to please everyone in a general way.

Menus are selected which are most popular. Meal times are posted. There are listed times when residents must be quiet, not play electronic devices or musical instruments, not be up pacing around the home. There is a “lights out” time and a “wake up” call.

Many homes require that you be responsible to make your bed and tidy up your room and the bathroom after you shower or shave or bathe. This is only fair to the rest of the residents who live there.

How will my medications be given to me?

All licensed facilities are required to keep your medications centrally stored and under lock and key. When it is time for your medications, a staff person will give you the right dose. If you feel you need additional doses, and your doctor prescribed doses “as needed”, the staff is authorized to give you these “PRN.”

What if I miss a dose of medication?

You are expected to take all prescribed medication at the proper time. However, if a dose is missed, it can be taken so long as it is not too close to the next dose. Your doctor usually sets up a missed-dose program with board and care staff.



The staff's job is to make sure you get the medicines as prescribed. Your responsibility is to be there to receive it, and take it.

How do I know which home to choose from?

Decide first how large a facility you desire. Then, what part of the county. When you have gotten some leads (see below), ask to visit the facility, call the administrator and look at the place. Is it bright and cheery? Does it smell of food or stale smoke odors? Does it have recreational games, TV, radio, and reading materials in good repair? Are other residents friendly?

Are they near your age? Look at the menu - it must be posted. Is the food service to your taste? Look at your potential bedroom. Does it meet with your standards? Look at a copy of the house rules. Will you keep them? Is the neighborhood safe to walk around? Are you near public transportation? Are you near day programs? Schools you might attend? These are a few important things to consider. But remember, you will never find the perfect home to meet every desire you have.

Supposing I stay a short time and decide to leave: can I get a refund?

You must give at least 30 days written notice if you desire to leave. This is the law. However, exceptions are made if you both (you and the operator-licensee) agree.

Can the facility ask me to leave?

Yes. If you become a threat to others or yourself, if you steal from or rob others, if you are breaking house rules continually, if you are AWOL, if you are late or refuse to pay for services on time, you may be evicted.

Do I the resident have “rights” while living in a board and care home?

Yes. Resident Rights are the same as Patient Rights in a hospital. You have the right to privacy, you can have guests, you can make phone calls, you have freedom of movement, have the right to be treated with respect, and so on. If you are having problems at the facility that you feel are violations of your rights, call your case manager first. If you have none, ask the facility staff for the phone number of State Community Care Licensing. It should be posted in the facility.



Can I as a family member make a complaint regarding the care at a board and care facility?

Yes. The State Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division, has jurisdiction over all licensed board and care homes in California. The local office in San Diego County is in Mission Valley. If you or a family member, or an interested party and wish to make a formal complaint, call DSS-CCLD at (619)767-2300. You do not have to give your name if you do not wish to. Community Care Licensing is obliged by law to take your complaint and act on it within a number of days. Complaints are kept confidential. If proven to be true, a facility can be fined, and even lose its license to operate, depending on the nature of the complaint and the severity of the problem.



CHECKLIST FOR BOARD AND CARE HOME SELECTION

FACILITY NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

I. AGE PREFERENCE:

- a. 18 — 31 _____
- b. 36 — 50 _____
- c. 45 and over _____
- d. 18 — 59 _____
- e. 60 - 100 _____

(RCFE license)

II. SEX PREFERENCE:

- a. male only _____
- b. female only _____
- C. male/female _____
- d. accepts couples _____

III. PHYSICAL SETTING:

- a. neat and clean _____
- b. adequately furnished _____
- c. large bedrooms _____
- d. adequate closet space _____
- e. adequate storage space _____
- f. good recreation areas _____
- g. color TV available _____
- h. comfortable bed _____
- i. home in good repair _____
- j. well lit _____
- k. smoke/fire alarms _____
- l. disaster plans public _____

IV. SUPERVISION:

- a. live-in manager _____
- b. adequate staffing
 - at night _____
 - on weekends _____
 - during weekdays _____
- c. resident money supervised _____
- d. staff has regular in-service training available _____
- e. house transportation available _____
- f. house rules public _____
- g. staff/resident meetings regular _____

- V. SMOKING:**
- a. permitted indoors _____
 - b. no smoking indoors _____
 - c. non-smokers only _____

- VI. PROGRAMMING:**
- a. residents participate in:
 - menu planning _____
 - grocery shopping _____
 - meal preparation _____
 - household chores _____
 - b. grooming/personal hygiene taught by staff _____
 - c. residents must be in programs _____
 - d. residents must attend out-of-home programs daily _____

Impressions:

COMPARISON OF RESIDENTIAL CARE TO UNLICENSED FACILITIES

I. BOARD AND CARE (LICENSED)

1. Must be licensed by State Dept. of Social Services; must give basic services" to any related adult, and can charge a fee; no set rate regarding fees.
2. Required to give "care and supervision, other basic services, including medications monitoring storage, meals, recreational needs, personal hygiene helps.
3. All "patient rights" carried over to the licensed B&C. Ombudsman has admittance into B&C.
4. Medications and behavior are monitored daily; contact with treating doctor is maintained daily if needed.
5. Evictions covered under State Licensing regulations (usually 30-day notice required, but a 3-day eviction can be requested in certain cases).
6. Rates for SSI fixed by State Legislature; SSI/SSA also. GR rates fixed by County. No fixed rates for any other type of income. However, VA assists a pensioner to assure he is not overcharged.
7. Written Admissions Agreement under licensing regulations, must meet definite requirements, including refunding, eviction procedures, house rules.
8. Marty B&C residents have case managers, or have staff follow their progress-decline closely.
9. Residents urged to attend socialization or day treatment programs as part of stay in B&C.

INDEPENDENT FACILITY (NO LICENSE)

1. No licensing required to operate; may need business license from city.
2. Cannot give any personal services but may serve meals, provide bed and board. Some do not serve meals. Resident should be able to shop and cook on own without any assistance.
3. No patient rights; IF is under State landlord and tenant laws.
4. Barred from handling/storing medications; barred from assisting resident in any way, talking about problems, reminders re medications, doctor visits, etc.
5. Evictions under landlord-tenant law demand 30-day notice, and up to 90 days if court-ordered.
6. No rates; totally independent of any governing agency.
7. Admissions contract falls under State landlord-tenant law.
8. Since this resident is "high functioning", no case manager usually assigned:
9. IF resident has unlimited Freedom, no requirements on time.



For information and support call

NAMI San Diego Helpline
(800) 523-5933
(619) 543-1434

www.namisandiego.org
information@namisd.org