

# ASSISTED LIVING CENTERS: RESIDENT'S BILL OF RIGHTS



**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES  
ADULT SERVICES AND AGING: OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM**

# RESIDENT'S RIGHTS IN ASSISTED LIVING CENTERS TABLE OF CONTENTS

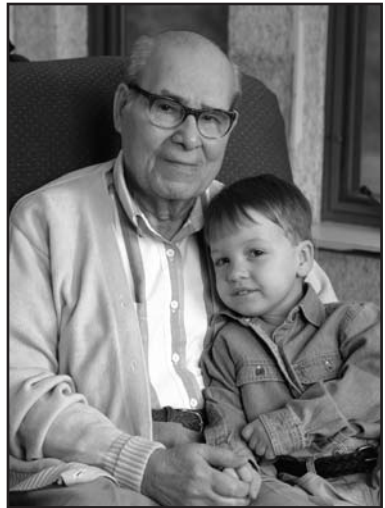
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**T**his booklet will help you better understand what your rights are and how they pertain to your stay in an **assisted living center**. The resident's rights outlined in this booklet have been paraphrased in much easier-to-understand language from the South Dakota Department of Health's Administrative Rules Chapter 44:04:17.

Assisted living centers must ensure **all** residents receive a copy of their rights and that these rights are fully implemented. Administrative rules require assisted living centers to inform residents of the rights included in this book both orally and in writing.



Assisted living centers must also provide **all** residents with a copy of its rules governing a resident's conduct and responsibilities while residing in the center. These rules and responsibilities are typically interpretations of administrative rules/resident's rights and cannot be in violation of those rules.

When you enter an assisted living center, you must be treated as an individual with dignity, respect, and consideration.

## Section 1

**Assisted living centers must comply with this chapter.** An assisted living center must establish policies consistent with this chapter to protect and promote the rights of each resident.

## Section 2

**An assisted living center must inform you of your rights.** An assisted living center must inform you both orally and in writing of your rights. The facility must also explain the rules regarding your conduct and responsibilities while living there. This information must be given to you before or when you are admitted and during your stay. Proof that the information was given to you and any changes must be acknowledged in writing. The information must contain the following:



1. You have all of the rights given to you as a resident of the assisted living center and as a citizen of the United States.
2. You have the right to be free of interference, coercion, discrimination and reprisal from the assisted living center when exercising your rights.

3. You have the right to have a person appointed to act on your behalf. Should you be declared incompetent or incapacitated, your rights will be exercised by a person appointed under state law to act on your behalf. If you are not incompetent or incapacitated, your rights may be exercised by the legal surrogate recognized under state law. The assisted living center must have the appointed person's address and phone number.

4. You have the right to your records. You may purchase photocopies of your records, and the cost cannot exceed community standards for photocopying. The assisted living center must provide the photocopies within two working days after your request.

5. You have the right to be fully informed of your health status and medical care.

6. You have the right to refuse treatment or participation in experimental research. The assisted living center must still provide you with necessary medical services and treatment. If you refuse treatment, you must be informed of the results plus any available alternatives.

7. You have the right to formulate a durable power of attorney for health care as provided in SDCL chapter 59-7 and a living will declaration as provided in SDCL chapter 34-12D.

8. You have the right to receive visitors. Visiting hours and policies must permit and encourage visits from your friends and relatives.

### **Section 3**

**An assisted living center must provide information about available services.** An assisted living center must provide you with the following information in writing:

1. A list of services available at the assisted living center and charges for the services.
2. A description of how a resident can protect personal funds, including your right to apply for Medicaid.
3. A list of client advocate names, addresses and telephone numbers. Client advocates are agencies responsible for the protection and advocacy of patients and residents. For residents of assisted living centers, the Ombudsman Program is the client advocate. (Chapter 44:04:01:01)
4. A description of how to file a complaint with the Department of Health concerning abuse, neglect and the misuse of your property.
5. A description of how you can contact your physician, including the physician's name and specialty.

- 6. A description of how you can apply for and use Medicare and Medicaid benefits, plus the addresses and phone numbers of the nearest Social Services and Social Security offices.
  
- 7. A description of the bed-hold policy which indicates the length of time your bed will be held, policies regarding the held bed and your readmission rights.
  
- 8. A description explaining the responsibilities of the resident and family members regarding self-administered medications.

A signed and dated admission agreement between you or your legal representative and the assisted living center must include this entire section. The agreement must be completed before or at the time of admission and before you have made a commitment for payment. The agreement may not include unclear or misleading information and may not be in conflict with this chapter. The agreement must be printed so you can read it. If the agreement exceeds three pages, it must contain a table of contents or an index of sections. You must be provided with any changes.

**Section 4**

**An assisted living center must notify you when your condition changes.** A facility must inform you, consult with your physician and, if known, notify your legal representative or interested family member when any of the following occurs:

1. You were injured in an accident and may potentially require a physician.
2. Your physical, mental or psychosocial status changes significantly.
3. Your treatment needs altered significantly.
4. The facility decides to transfer or discharge you.

## **Section 5**

### **An assisted living center must notify you about changes in your room assignment or rights.**

A facility must promptly notify you and, if known, your legal representative or interested family member when there has been a change in your room or roommate assignment or your rights.

## **Section 6**

### **You have the right to manage your personal financial affairs.** An assisted living center may not

require residents to deposit their personal funds with the facility. If you choose to deposit funds with the facility and give written authorization, the facility must hold the funds in accordance with SDCL 34-12-15.1 to 34-12-15.10, inclusive.



## **Section 7**

**You can help plan your care.** You may choose a personal attending physician. You also have the right to be informed in advance about care and treatment and of any changes that may affect your well-being, and unless you are incompetent or otherwise found to be incapacitated under state law, you may participate in planning care and treatment, or changes in care or treatment.

### **Cross-References:**

\* *Right to choose own physician unimpaired by public health programs – Misdemeanor – SDCL 34-1-20.*

\* *Rights of authorized person as incapacitated person – SDCL 34-12C-6.*

\* *Liability of health care provider – Liability of authorized decision maker – SDCL 34-12C-7.*

## **Section 8**

**You have the right to privacy and confidentiality in an assisted living center.** This includes your accommodations, medical treatment, written and telephone communications, personal care, visits and meetings with family and resident groups. Assisted living centers are not required to provide a private room for each resident. A facility must permit you to:

1. Send and receive unopened mail and purchase stationery, postage and writing implements.

2. Use a telephone without being overheard.
3. Visit your spouse, if you are married. If you and your spouse live in the same assisted living center, you have a right to share the same room, if both of you agree to it.
4. Close your door and require others to knock before entering, except in an emergency.
5. Have only authorized staff present during treatment or activities of personal hygiene.
6. Retire and rise when you wish, as long as you do not disturb other residents.
7. Meet with people in a private place within the assisted living center.
8. Participate in social, religious and community activities that do not interfere with the rights of other residents.
9. Approve or refuse the release of your personal and medical records to anyone outside the assisted living center, except when you are transferred to another facility or when the release of your records are required by law. With your permission, a facility must allow the state ombudsman or a representative of the ombudsman access to your medical records.

## Section 9

**You are entitled to quality of life.** A facility must provide care and an environment that contributes to your quality of life including:

1. A safe, clean, comfortable and home-like environment.
2. Maintenance or enhancement of your ability to preserve individuality, exercise self-determination and control every day physical needs.
3. Freedom from physical or chemical restraints used for purposes of discipline or convenience.
4. Freedom from theft of personal property; verbal, sexual, physical or mental abuse; and involuntary seclusion, neglect or exploitation imposed by anyone.
5. Use of your personal possessions, including furnishings and clothing, as space permits, unless to do so would infringe upon the rights, health and safety of other residents.



## **Section 10**

**You may voice grievances without discrimination or reprisal.** Your grievance may be in writing or oral and may relate to treatment, behavior of other residents or infringement of your rights. An assisted living center must adopt a grievance process and make the process known to you and your immediate family. The grievance process must include the facility's efforts to resolve the grievance, documentation of the grievance, names of the people involved, nature of the matter and the date.

## **Section 11**

**You may examine the Department of Health's most recent survey results of your assisted living center and any plan of correction in effect.** A facility must make this information available to residents plus the survey conducted by the United States Department of Health and Human Services and any plans of correction in effect, if applicable. You may request this information from client advocates and be allowed to contact these agencies.

## **Section 12**

**You have the right to refuse to perform services.** You may refuse to perform services, unless you agreed to otherwise in your plan of care. You may perform services for the facility when the following conditions are met:

1. The plan of care includes documentation of the need or desire for work.
2. The nature of the services performed is specified, including whether the services are voluntary or paid.
3. Compensation for paid services is at or above prevailing rates.
4. You agree to the work arrangement.

### **Section 13**

**Self-administration of drugs.** A resident may self-administer drugs if the registered nurse (*if applicable*), physician and pharmacist have determined the practice to be safe.

### **Section 14**

**Admission, transfer, and discharge policies.** An assisted living center must establish and maintain policies and practices for admission, discharge and transfer of residents which prohibit discrimination based upon payment source and which are made known to residents at or before the time of admission. The policies and practices must include:

1. You may remain in the assisted living center and not be transferred or discharged unless: your needs and welfare cannot be met by the facility, you no longer need the services, you endanger the safety or health of others, you have failed to pay for allowable billed services as agreed to, or the facility ceases to operate.

2. The assisted living center must notify you and a family member or client advocate in writing at least 30 days before the transfer or discharge, unless a change in your health requires immediate transfer or discharge or you have not resided in the facility for 30 days. The notice must specify the reason for and effective date of the transfer or discharge and your new location.

3. Conditions under which you may request or refuse transfer within the facility.

4. A description of how you may appeal a decision by the facility to transfer or discharge you.

In South Dakota, a resident or legal representative may appeal a facility's decision to transfer the resident by contacting:

**Office of Administrative Hearings  
700 Governors Drive  
Pierre, SD 57501-2291  
(605) 773-6851  
[www.dss.sd.gov/adminhearings](http://www.dss.sd.gov/adminhearings)**

A resident or legal representative may also receive assistance from the Ombudsman Program by contacting:

**Adult Services and Aging/Ombudsman Program  
700 Governors Drive  
Pierre, SD 57501-2291  
(605) 773-3656 or toll-free 1-866-854-5465  
[www.dss.sd.gov/elderlyservices/services/ombudsman](http://www.dss.sd.gov/elderlyservices/services/ombudsman)**

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The South Dakota Department of Health's Administrative Rules Chapter 44:04:17 contains the requirements for resident's rights in the state's assisted living centers. These rights originate from the Federal Medicare/Medicaid Requirements (42 CFR) resident's rights in long-term care facilities.

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