



Promoting Competitive Markets

CONSUMER GUIDELINE FOR SELECTING A NURSING HOME

Nursing homes provide services to a vulnerable segment of society. Therefore, consumers who intend to contract the services of nursing homes should seek information to ensure that loved ones are well cared for. Having all the relevant information prior to utilizing a nursing home will (i) Assist persons in making more informed choices; (ii) Reduce the stress associated with moving into a nursing home, and; (iii) Help persons to potentially live independently for longer. Based on the findings of the FTC's study of the nursing homes sector in Jamaica, the FTC highlights seven (7) guidelines for consumers to consider when contracting the services of nursing homes in Jamaica.

1. Verify the registration status of nursing homes with the Ministry of Health and Wellness (MoHW)

Before selecting a nursing home, consumers should verify that the home is registered to operate as a nursing home. In Jamaica, nursing homes are required to be registered under the Nursing Homes Registration Act, 1934. The MoHW maintains a list of registered nursing homes, which it publishes on its website. The public may also contact the Standards and Regulation Division (SRD) of the MoHW to check if a facility is registered.

2. Research nursing homes

Consumers must conduct a thorough research about nursing homes before selecting. For instance, consumers should make queries about the services and activities provided, pricing, spacing, qualifications of the staff, and refund policy. Unfortunately, some nursing homes may refuse to provide information by telephone.

3. Compare nursing homes

Having researched nursing homes, consumers should compare the facilities and select based on the factor(s) most important to them. Consumers should make a checklist to obtain all pertinent information from the relevant sources and nursing homes.

4. Visit the Nursing Home

Consumers should visit the location to ascertain if the physical layout and amenities are suitable, as well as to ensure that the registration certification is openly displayed as required by law. Additionally, consumers should confirm that a medical doctor or a registered nurse oversees the nursing home. On your visit to the Nursing Home, ascertain the last date of the home's inspection by the MoHW and/or Public Health Authority. These bodies are responsible for ensuring that the Nursing Home is in good livable condition.

5. Request a written contract

Consumers should request that the operators of nursing homes provide a written contract or agreement outlining the terms and conditions of its service, including refund policy and whether the notice given, if any, to terminate the contract is reasonable.

6. Cost of Service

Consumers should be aware that the cost of services provided by a nursing home may depend on the level of care the potential resident requires. Nursing homes are privately run facilities, and therefore their cost is **not** subsidized by the government. Be sure to check with the nursing home about any additional charges that a resident may incur while staying at the home.

7. Feedback and Complaints

Consumers should ascertain whether a complaint procedure is in place at the nursing home. Consumers may also submit their complaints regarding the quality of service obtained from a nursing home to the Investigation and Enforcement Branch within the SRD of the MoHW.