



KERN COUNTY ELDER NEWS

Monthly Information Article | Kern County DEAR/EDRT TEAM*

*(Dependent/Elder Abuse Review) Team/EDRT (Elder Death Review Team)

SEPTEMBER 2025

ASSISTED LIVING



Written By: Devora Martinez
Program Director, Long-Term
Care Ombudsman Program



Designed and Managed By:
Kern County District Attorney's
Office - Victim Services Unit

Overview of Assisted Living Facilities

Assisted Living facilities are non-medical facilities that provide room, meals, housekeeping, supervision, storage and distribution of medication, and personal care assistance with basic activities like hygiene, dressing, eating, bathing, and transferring. Assisted Living facilities serve persons 60 years of age and older. This level of care and supervision is for people who are unable to live independently but do not require 24-hour nursing care. Assisted Living facilities are considered non-medical facilities and are not required to have nurses, certified nursing assistants, or doctors on staff.

Who Covers the Cost of Assisted Living?

Most people pay privately for care. Long-term care insurance only covers a small percentage of the cost. Public funding is very limited through Supplemental Security Income (SSI), the SSI rate is so low that fewer facilities are willing to accept individuals on SSI. California has a special program called the Assisted Living Waiver, where Medi-Cal pays for eligible residents who require nursing home-level care to live in Assisted Living. This program is available in only 15 counties: Alameda, Contra Costa, Fresno, Kern, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Francisco, San Joaquin, San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Sonoma. For more information about the Assisted Living Waiver, please contact the Department of Health Care Services Long-Term Care Division at **(916) 552-9322**.

Searching for Assisted Living?

There are a variety of helpful resources to assist you in finding an assisted living facility. Whether you're searching for an assisted living option or exploring other long-term care facilities like nursing homes, the resources listed below are here to support your search.

Agency Partners

- Bakersfield Police Department
- California Dept. of Financial Protection & Innovation
- California Dept. of Insurance
- CSUB
- Dept. of Social Services Licensing
- GBLA
- Independent Living Center of KC
- Kaiser Permanente
- Kern Co. Aging & Adult
- Kern Co. BHRS
- Kern Co. Coroner
- Kern Co. District Attorney
- Kern Co. DA Victim Services
- Kern Co. Family Law Facilitator
- Kern Co. Public Health
- Kern Regional Center
- Kern Co. Sheriff's Office
- Kern Co. Veterans Service Dept.
- Social Security Admin.
- Strata Credit Union

1. Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program:

The Kern Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is part of Aging & Adult Services and provides placement information and free advocacy for residents of assisted living facilities and other long-term care facilities such as nursing homes. The program also assists residents in addressing concerns related to care and residents' rights. Ombudsman programs cannot refer you to specific facilities. However, the Kern Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program can provide a checklist tool and a list of all local long-term care facilities in your area. Feel free to contact the Kern Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program at 661-323-7884 or visit www.kerncounty.com/aas/ to obtain this information.

2. Community Care Licensing Facility Search Website:

You can access inspection and complaint investigation reports for Assisted Living facilities using the Community Care Licensing (CCL) "Facility Search" website, operated by the Department of Social Services, which oversees these facilities. The site allows you to view all facilities by city, county, or zip code, or find specific facility information. Inspection and complaint investigation reports are available online, or you can contact CCL at 1-844-538-8766 or visit their website at www.cdss.ca.gov.

3. Personal Visits

Once you find an Assisted Living facility that appears affordable and offers the necessary services, visit the location. Request a tour of the entire facility, not just the attractively decorated lobby or a designated unit. Try to get a sense of the quality of care and how the staff treats residents. Resident appearance, residents' rooms, food quality, and activities are all important when evaluating an Assisted Living facility. Do comparison shopping. You can request an Evaluation Checklist and Dementia Care Checklist from the Kern Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program to assist you in assessing potential facilities.

4. Medical Powers of Attorney:

Many seniors lose capacity due to illnesses like Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, or other dementias. This situation is challenging for seniors and their loved ones, especially if no advance plans are in place. Without a designated person to make healthcare decisions, friends and family may face difficulties. The best approach is to plan ahead while you're still feeling healthy and able to make your own decisions.

A medical power of attorney, also known as an Advance Health Care Directive, allows a person with capacity to specify their medical preferences and appoint someone to make healthcare decisions on their behalf. If a person loses mental capacity and did not plan ahead, these documents are no longer accessible. In such cases, a Petition for Conservatorship will be the next option. The Kern Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program office offers a free fillable Advanced Health Care Directive and instructions. Call **661-323-7884** to get a form.

