

About Continuing Care Retirement Communities

What Is a Continuing Care Retirement Community?

People often use terms like “assisted living” and “long-term care” interchangeably when referring to places to retire long-term. But different facilities provide varying accommodations and levels of care for the older adults.

Continuing care retirement communities, also called CCRCs, offer a full spectrum of living options and levels of care. With stand-alone and household units, residents have a choice in their living space. And as their needs change, seniors can easily transition from one type of living space or level of care to another.

What Makes a CCRC Unique?

In addition to offering different living spaces and levels of care, CCRCs take the approach of providing a rich, vibrant community for residents. That sense of community is what sets them apart from nursing homes and other retirement facilities, says Lonnie Baker, Chief Executive Officer, Meadowlark, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to enhancing senior lifestyles.

“Stand-alone nursing facilities are limited in terms of the activities and amenities they can provide,” he says. “At a CCRC, residents have numerous options on how they spend their time.”

For example:

- Residents can take advantage of socialization opportunities, transportation services that allow them to remain active in the local area, or participate in wellness programs.
- Some residents enjoy having a maintenance-free home, so that they can travel, or spend winters or summers in a different area.
- Some couples find that one spouse needs extra support over time. CCRCs can provide health care resources for the ailing spouse, as well as programs to provide respite and support for the caretaking spouse.

The spectrum runs the gamut from people wanting independence to needing more support. At a CCRC, residents have options so they can choose how to spend their days and create a lifestyle that fits their wants and needs.

Transitions at CCRCs

Medical staff are on-site to help monitor and diagnose certain medical conditions, which may point to a resident needing temporary help, or even more permanent support.

Additionally, staff members have the opportunity to interact with and observe residents throughout the natural course of their daily and weekly routines. If staff notice changes, they can immediately address them with residents.

“We’re all unique and we’re all looking for a different experience in retirement. A continuing care retirement community has something for every resident.”

Lonnie Baker, Chief Executive Officer,
Meadowlark

Staff Engagement at CCRCs

Because of the hands-on interactions that happen throughout the day, staff and residents often enjoy a deep level of engagement at CCRCs. Beyond the administrative component that ensures residents feel comfortable and cared for, staff and residents enjoy social relationships that develop naturally in the community.

Whether dining out or participating in game nights together, all members of the community have the opportunity to develop deep bonds.

The engagement extends to family members and friends, as well. Visitation and communication with staff are encouraged and open.

Learn More

Be sure to research the different types of facilities available in your area to find one that will be a good match for your needs—now and into the future.