



ALF and SCALF Residents: Appropriate vs. Inappropriate?

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Assisted Living, Specialty Care Assisted Living, Memory Care Facility, Resident Care Homes – whatever title they go by, each state has its own set of rules and regulations for these care facilities. The criteria for admission and retention for any of these centers will vary depending on the state in which you live. The State of Alabama is no exception; it has its own set of rules and regulations; especially when it comes to admission and retention of a resident into one of its Assisted Living Facilities (ALF) and Specialty Care Assisted Livings (SCALF). Alabama has the highest deficiency rate, as cited by The Alabama Department of Public Health for Assisted Livings and Specialty Care Assisted Living, during the inspection of a licensed facility for this very reason.

One key factor in ensuring a facility's compliance with this regulatory requirement is an in-depth admission screening and admission process. This process identifies the care needs of each new resident, and allows the care team to establish a plan of care to address the resident's needs. A "change in status," or change in condition either physically, mentally or both, can quickly determine the care needs of a resident and the facility's ability to provide care that meets those needs. This change in resident status can alter the position of a resident who, up until this point, was appropriate for ALF or SCALF, thus causing them to become "inappropriate," or no longer suitable for this level of care.

Is "appropriate/inappropriate" confusing for the resident and their family? Absolutely. In fact, this situation of appropriate versus inappropriate can be confusing for both caregivers and their administration.

Looking at this situation from a regulatory perspective:

The Rules of Alabama State Board of Health Alabama Department of Public Health Chapter 420-5-4 Assisted Living Facilities and The Rules of Alabama State Board of Health Alabama Department of Public Health Chapter 420-5-20 Specialty Care Assisted Living Facilities provide centers with the criteria for admission and retention. The following Admission and Retention criteria is not an all-inclusive list for the determination of an inappropriate resident for ALF and SCALF but merely some of the criteria as stated in the Rules 420-5-4 and 420-5-20:

The Rules of Alabama State Board of Health Alabama Department of Public Health Chapter 420-5-4 Assisted living Facilities

ALF 420-5-4 Admission and Retention of Residents

- » "An ALF shall not admit or retain a resident who is severely cognitively impaired. 420-5-4-.06(4) (c) - A resident who is not aware of his or her medications is deemed severely cognitively impaired. Severely cognitively impaired is defined as a resident being incapable of recognizing his or her name, or if he or she does not understand the unit dose medication system in use by the facility, or if the

resident likely cannot protect himself or herself from medication errors by the facility staff.”

- » “An ALF shall not admit nor once admitted shall it retain a resident who requires medical or skilled nursing care for an acute condition or exacerbation of a chronic condition which is expected to exceed 90 days unless: 1.) The individual is capable of performing some or all tasks related to his or her own care OR 2.) The individual is capable of performing some or all task related to his or her own care due to limitations of mobility or dexterity BUT the individual has sufficient cognitive ability to direct his or her own care AND the individual is able to direct others and does direct others to provide the physical assistance needed to complete such tasks, AND the facility staff is capable of providing such assistance and does provide such assistance.”
- » “An assisted living shall not admit a resident who is receiving or in need of hospice care at the time of admission. If a resident of an assisted living facility is diagnosed with a terminal illness other than dementia and requires hospice care, the resident may be admitted to a properly licensed and certified hospice program. The facility may permit the resident to remain in the facility by arranging for such care to be delivered by properly licensed individuals. A resident receiving hospice care may remain in the facility beyond 90 days. The facility would in all cases remain responsible for the appropriate delivery of such care and must take necessary steps to ensure that appropriate care needed by a resident is delivered to the resident. If the facility is unable or becomes unable to meet an admitted resident’s needs, or if an admitted resident requires care beyond what the facility may lawfully provide pursuant to this section, then the facility shall promptly make arrangements to discharge or transfer the resident to a safe and appropriate placement in accordance with the discharge procedures and prearranged plan required by these rules for assisted living facilities.”
- » “Individuals with acute infectious pulmonary disease, such as influenza or active tuberculosis, or with other diseases capable of transmission to other residents through normal resident to resident contact shall be temporarily denied admission until certified by a physician to be free of a contagious condition.”
- » “Individuals with infected draining wounds shall be temporarily denied admission until the wound is sufficiently healed to have stopped draining.”
- » “No assisted living facility shall be operated in whole or in part in a manner that prevents free and unhindered egress from the facility by any of its residents.”
- » “An assisted living facility shall not admit a resident, nor shall it retain any resident, if such resident, because of dementia, cannot safely reside in the facility unless his or her egress from the facility is restricted.”



SCALF 420-5-20 Admission and Retention of Residents with Special Needs

- » “Screening. Residents shall be screened and approved for admission into the specialty care assisted living facility prior to admission to the specialty care assisted living facility. The screening shall include a clinical history, a mental status examination to include aphasia screening, a geriatric depression screen, a physical functioning screen and a behavior screen.”
- » “Cognitive Assessments Requirements. The Physical Self Maintenance Scale (PSMS) and Behavior Screening Form are required for each resident admitted to the specialty care assisted living. The resident’s PSMS score shall be no greater than 23 and the resident shall be functioning without unmanageable behavior problems. Residents shall not score five in feeding, dressing, grooming, bathing, or a four or five in physical ambulation on the PSMS. Each resident shall be carefully evaluated by an RN and by the Unit Coordinator. The Physical Self Maintenance Scale and the Behavioral Screening Forms shall be required annually on each resident. The PSMS and Behavior Screening form shall be completed where there is a significant change in the resident.”
- » “Nothing in these rules shall prohibit a specialty care assisted living facility from admitting or retaining a resident who is eligible for admission to an assisted living facility licensed under

Chapter 420-5-4. Provided, that the facility shall have procedures in place to ensure that such a resident has readily available egress from the facility.”

This is a tremendous amount of information, but it is important to remember that each facility acts on these regulations in their best effort to provide the proper care and services for residents. All of this, and staffing has not even been mentioned – who is going to care for these residents?

Each ALF and SCALF should staff according to the needs of each resident residing at their facility. Inadequate staffing is a huge concern for the administration of these facilities because the consequences of failure to provide acceptable staffing could potentially trigger a domino effect. Inappropriate residents and staff unfamiliar with the care needs of these residents that no longer meet the criteria for their facility could all add up to a facility being caught in a worrisome situation.

Should you have any questions regarding the appropriateness of a potential resident for admission or retention, remember there are numerous resources such as The Alabama State Board of Health Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) and the Assisted Living Facilities/Specialty Care Assisted Living Facilities Division. The ADPH is a resource that is available by phone the next time you have an “appropriate versus inappropriate” question. And it should be noted that all questions are appropriate.

About the Authors



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