

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?

I am often asked about hospitals, skilled nursing facilities (SNF), rehab centers, assisted living, group homes, caregiving, hospice care; what are they? What is the difference between assisted living and skilled nursing? How do I choose?

First of all, much of it has to do with licensing by the state of California. More and more facilities are licensed to provide various levels of care. Where you go also has much to do with your specific insurance coverage.

Hospital: Where you go for a life-threatening emergency or for a surgery and need to be there overnight. Once you are stable enough that you do not need that level of care (IV meds, breathing treatments, etc.), you are discharged home or to a

Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF)—“SNiF” unit or Rehab Center. These terms are interchangeable. If you are going to need physical therapy (PT) or occupational therapy (OT), and you are not stable enough to get around at home and/or there is no one to care for you at home, you will need a SNF or rehab facility so you can get strong enough to go home. Example: The Aviara or Encinitas Center. Some acute hospitals have their own SNF unit attached to them.

Caregiving: Sometimes you are ready to be discharged, but there is no one at home to care for you or the person you live with is too frail, so you need a caregiver to help you with activities of daily living (ADL); example, dressing, bathing, meal preparation, going to the market, etc. That caregiver may be a friend, a family member or a person from an agency. You can hire someone for 1 hour or 24 hours. We may be able to help you find a good person.

Assisted Living (AL): Sometimes we make a decision to go into a large facility or a group home (4-6 residents in a home in a residential neighborhood) where we always have someone to prepare meals and be available if we need help. After being in an acute hospital or a SNF, it is possible to return to your AL; sometimes with a Caregiver added or more care from the AL staff.

Hospice Care: Hospice Care is additional care and supervision by a hospice agency near the end of life (might die in 6 months—depends on the diagnosis). There are many hospices in North County; for profit and non-profit. Hospice Care is available through Medicare as comfort and support, with pain medications available, and can be provided in any hospital, AL, SNF or in your own home. It is important to get into Hospice Care early enough to benefit from all the support they offer.