



Plaza Adopts Public Assistance Program Participation Policies

In response to the ever-increasing complexities of managing public assistance programs that serve older adults in assisted living, Walker Plaza has developed and adopted new policies that govern how we manage our participation in publicly funded programs that serve seniors.

Resident and Family meetings were held early in the month of July to provide a forum to share information and answer questions. Mark Anderson, Housing Director, presented the information during the two meetings held in the Plaza Community Room. Among the highlights of the newly adopted policies surrounding Plaza's active participation in public assistance programs for its residents are:

- Active participation in public assistance programs that serve older adults is consistent with the Mission and Vision of Walker Methodist
- No more than 8 subsidized apartment units (Shared Suite) are designated for public assistance client resident occupancy at any given time
- No more than 8 subsidized health services slots are designated for public assistance client residents at any given time
- Current residents who transition from private pay to public assistance status will have up to 60 days to relocate to a subsidized unit – if such a unit is not available, the resident will be assisted in relocating to another assisted living provider

- Public Assistance client residents must occupy a Shared Suite subsidized unit in order to remain a tenant of Walker Plaza
- Family members or other third parties may be required to become financially responsible for items not included in the rent
- Plaza may only provide the services to the public assistance client resident as indicated by the Service Plan established by the public assistance program Case Manager
- Plaza reserves the right to limit the Managed Care Organizations with which it participates
- Plaza maintains a Waiting List for both subsidized rental units and subsidized health services

During the Resident and Family meetings, Anderson strongly encouraged attendees to work with Plaza management in advance of a transition from private pay to public assistance status. Being able to work with a resident and their family up to one year in advance of the transition can mean the difference between remaining at Plaza or having to be relocated to another assisted living provider. Copies of the Policies are available from the Housing Director's office.

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Neighboring City of Ramsey Site for New VA Clinic

After more than a year of waiting for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to make a decision on the location of the new area VA clinic, the wait is finally over. On July 20th, the VA announced publicly that area veterans will be able to receive health services here in Ramsey.

The new VA Clinic will be an outpatient facility of about 20,000 square feet in size. Although the clinic's original plan was to open in late 2010, the clinic is now expected to be operational by late summer or early fall of 2011. The clinic is located at the northeast corner of Sapphire Street and Civic Center Drive in the Ramsey Towne Center development just off of Highway 10 between Anoka and Elk River. The clinic will be readily accessible due to its proximity to the Ramsey Transit Station, Highway 10, and a future Northstar Commuter Rail train station.

Instead of driving or arranging for transportation to either the St. Cloud VA Medical Center or the VA Medical Center in Bloomington, Plaza residents who are veterans will be able to take a short 10 minute trip away to receive needed medical care and services. Because of its close proximity to Walker Plaza, the new VA clinic will be accessible by the local van transportation we provide to residents each week. Use of our scheduled local transportation is included in each resident's rent.

There are currently over 27,000 veterans residing in Anoka County, making the Ramsey site a good choice for this area's veterans.

Plaza residents who are Veterans will soon be able to access their medical care and services just 10 minutes away at the new VA Medical Clinic

Plaza Occupancy Remains Strong Despite Market

Walker Plaza has been enjoying a strong occupancy rate all year long, despite the unstable economy and reports from other area providers of vacancies in their assisted living apartments.

Occupancy rates have been consistently around 96-98% all year. New and prospective residents report that it is the location and the friendliness that most strongly influenced their decision to choose Plaza from among this area's providers of senior housing with services and assisted living.

Market comparability studies continue to indicate Plaza as among the most affordable assisted living options in the Anoka community and the surrounding area.

Plaza residents report that they love the convenience of the building location – right in the heart of a small town – where a reasonable walking distance takes you to favorite cafes, banks, a co-op grocer, a medical clinic, a pharmacy, a dentist office, churches, and more. An added bonus is the local city park that follows the Rum River through town – about one block away are park benches, walking trails, a picnic area, and all the ducks you care to feed.

In addition to the location, Plaza is most often described as “friendly.” Visitors remark about the warmth they experience while in the building – we like to call it an aura of small town hospitality.

Plaza Celebrates 20th Anniversary in June

Walker Plaza celebrated its 20th Anniversary in June with a week-long series of special events to include residents, families, current employees, former employees, corporate leadership, and invited guests.

Originally planned as an independent living apartment building for seniors in downtown Anoka, Plaza has evolved over the years as the needs of its residents have changed. When the doors to Plaza opened in 1990 for its first residents, there were only apartments and a small community room where tenants gathered for social and recreational events. Now, 20 years later, residents enjoy the services and amenities from our commercial kitchen, resident dining rooms, library, general store, robust activities programming, and comprehensive health services.

The celebratory week of June 21 to June 25 began with a Watermelon Party on the West Terrace. On the Tuesday evening, everyone celebrated with an old fashioned street party. Monroe Street was blocked off in front of the building to permit party tents, lawn chairs, and more. Bob & The Beachcombers band provided the musical entertainment as residents and guests danced in the street. Refreshments of keg root beer, fresh fruit pie and popcorn were served. The street party also featured clowns and a juggler. It was estimated that nearly 300 people gathered that warm summer evening for the street party.

On Wednesday the 23rd, residents and employees were treated to a Coffee and Doughnuts Social, featuring assorted goodies from our neighborhood Hans Bakery – yum. On the following day, residents, families and guests enjoyed Root Beer Floats on the West Terrace.

The week of special events closed on Friday the 25th with a picnic lunch followed by a program recognizing the longevity of employees and residents. Ending the afternoon celebration, everyone participated in a chapel service of Rededication; an opportunity for all members of the Plaza community to rededicate themselves and the resources necessary to continue serving those who come to know the Plaza community as their home.

All-in-all, it was a meaningful and FUN week we won't soon forget. Here's to the next 20 years.....



Nearly 300 people came out to enjoy the Street Party during Plaza's Anniversary Celebration.



Residents Barbara Johnson and Marcella Willey danced to the live music entertainment during the Street Party.

Regulatory Update – Housing With Services Registration Process Delayed Pending Decisions from Regulators

The Minnesota Department of Health has notified senior Housing With Services (HWS) establishments that they are delaying the annual registration process for providers like Plaza. This delay will not jeopardize our registration status. As such, visitors may notice that our posted HWS Registration may be past its expiration date.

With the passage of new laws requiring the disclosure of more information to consumers, the Minnesota Department of Health has yet to determine the content of the Registration application form and the process, including the content to be included in the Uniform Consumer Information Guide. The Guide is now required to be provided to all prospective residents and not just to clients of assisted living programs.

The enforcement date for the new disclosure content to consumers has been set at October 1, 2010 and so we anticipate news soon as to the new HWS Registration requirements.

In Minnesota, different than all other states in the nation, housing and services are regulated separately – housing is largely overseen by the Statutes dealing with landlord tenant relationships; services (health services specifically) are overseen by Statutes dealing with licensed home care agencies (the assisted living program, not the building).

Minnesota's regulatory model is different than all other states in the nation – separating housing and services.

Walker Plaza Provides for Memorials & Honorariums Through the Walker Foundation

Walker Plaza, like all Walker senior housing and health care communities, maintains an account within the Walker Foundation, an arm of Walker Methodist, a non-profit organization, where donated funds create opportunities for the purchase of needed items among all of the senior communities within Walker.

Donations received on by the Foundation on behalf of Plaza are tax deductible and become part of the Walker Foundation. Over the past year, memorial donations have already provided for enhancements in our activities programs and our outdoor

programs held on our rooftop patios. And, Foundation donations have provided us with a new sound system for our Community Room.

Residents, families, and friends of Plaza are reminded of this unique opportunity to contribute to the ongoing success of our senior community through donations to the Walker Foundation.

For more information, or, to make your donation in memorial or honor of another, please contact Mark Anderson, Housing Director, at 763-422-1226, ext. 302.

2010 Legislative Changes That Affect Housing With Services

The 2010 Minnesota Legislature made several changes to the Statutes that oversee Housing With Services (HWS) establishments like Walker Plaza. These changes became effective July 1, 2010. Most of the changes are related to consumer protection efforts within a higher degree of disclosure regarding services and fees.

Effective July 1st, HWS establishments must:

- Provide to the Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Health information as to whether services are included in the base rate and whether these services are to be paid by the resident.
 - Provide to residents a description of the services to be provided to the resident in the base rate to be paid by the resident, including a delineation of the portion of the base rate that constitutes rent and a delineation of charges for each service included in the base rate.
 - Make available to all prospective and current residents information consistent with the uniform format and required components as found in the Uniform Consumer Information Guide, previously only required to be provided to residents receiving assisted living services.
- Include with the Notice of Termination of Lease information about how to contact the Ombudsman for Long Term Care along with a statement of how to request problem-solving assistance.
 - Include information about services offered by the provider that may be covered by Medicare.

Walker Plaza has, for a long time, been providing these new required levels of disclosure and information to consumers. Consumers are becoming better informed about HWS and assisted living, thanks in part to disclosure legislation but also thanks to the honest and open disclosure practices adopted by HWS providers like Plaza.

On a related note, all Minnesota HWS providers who participate in the public assistance program of **Elderly Waiver** have experienced provider rate cuts of an additional 5% effective July 1, 2010 as imposed by the 2010 Legislature. This cut is on top of cuts imposed during the 2009 legislative session. Due to federal stimulus dollars that prohibit states from changing eligibility requirements for public assistance programs that serve older adults, the only thing remaining available in cutting costs were rates paid to providers. Providers will experience an additional rate cut on October 1, 2010. These rate cuts mean that Plaza now receives an estimated 10–15% less in reimbursement for the provision of services to Elderly Waiver client residents than was received about one year ago. Rate cuts to programs serving older adults are expected to be a hot issue later this year in the state elected offices campaigns and during the 2011 legislation session – stay tuned.

Walker Plaza has, for a long time, been providing these newly required levels of disclosure to prospective and current residents.

Walker Plaza
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Anoka, MN 55303

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Walker Plaza is part of the Walker Methodist family, a non profit organization providing lifestyle options for seniors for over 60 years.

We're on the Web!

Check out our photo gallery, special events, and more.

Visit us at:

www.walkermethodist.org

or www.walkerplaza.com

Our Management Team

These individuals are the leaders that make up Plaza's great Management Team:

- **Mark Anderson**, *Housing Director*
- **Sue O'Donoghue**, RN, *Health Services Director*
- **Ellen Ingvaldstad**, *Resident Services Director*
- **Diane Knutson**, *Marketing Director*
- **Anita Dahlquist**, *Dining Services Director*
- **Malcolm Anderson**, *Activities Director*
- **Keith Gray**, *Maintenance Director*
- **Verlin & Donna Vedders, Scott Dorff**, *Caretakers*

Walker Methodist Mission, Vision, and Values Statement:

MISSION - Walker Methodist exists to champion the physical, social, emotional, and spiritual health of seniors through health programs and residential and management services.

VISION - Walker Methodist will be the leading provider of senior life enhancing and rehabilitative services.

VALUES - Respect for the individual; Service through partnerships; Responsibility.



131 Monroe Street
Anoka, MN 55303

