

Understanding Personal Care & Assisted Living in Pennsylvania

A look behind the scenes at Personal Care and Assisted Living and PALA's work

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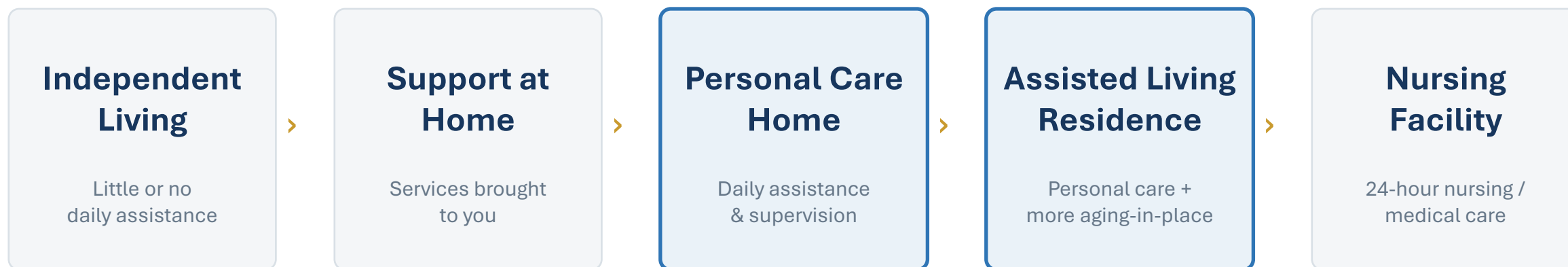


Today: clarity before a decision is urgent

- 1 Where PCHs & ALRs fit
- 2 What each license means
- 3 How support changes
- 4 How PALA supports PCHs & ALRs
- 5 Questions to ask when exploring options and planning

**You do not need to memorize regulations.
You do want to know the right questions to ask.**

A simplified view of Pennsylvania's care continuum



Real life is not always a straight line. Needs, preferences, health and available supports all matter.

Personal Care Homes (PCHs): support with everyday life

Housing & meals

Supervision

Bathing & personal
hygiene

Mobility & transfers

Medication assistance

Appointments &
transportation

A PCH may be a fit when...

You need regular help or supervision with daily activities, but you do not need 24-hour nursing care.

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Chapter 2600

Assisted Living Residences (ALRs): a distinct Pennsylvania license

ALRs offer the personal care services found in PCHs



A regulatory framework designed to support greater aging in place, independence, decision-making and personal choice

Important:

In Pennsylvania, “Assisted Living Residence” is a specific license.

A community’s marketing name does not tell you which license it holds.

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PCH vs. ALR: more alike than different at first glance

	Personal Care Home	Assisted Living Residence
Licensed by PA DHS	✓	✓
Meals, housing & supervision	✓	✓
Help with personal care	✓	✓
Medication assistance	✓	✓
Designed for people not needing 24-hour nursing	✓	✓
ALR-specific aging-in-place framework	—	✓

The license matters, but so does the individual community: staffing, services, culture, cost and your specific needs.

When might someone begin exploring more support?

Daily tasks

Bathing, dressing, toileting or mobility are becoming harder.

Medication

Managing medications safely is becoming complicated.

Safety

Falls, confusion or other concerns make living alone less comfortable.

Nutrition

Meals, hydration or maintaining the home are becoming difficult.

Caregiver strain

Family or friends are providing more help than is sustainable.

Social connection

Isolation or lack of engagement is affecting quality of life.

A change in one area does not automatically mean a move. It is a signal to ask what support would help.

What can additional support actually look like?

A little help

A reminder, medication support, help with a shower or getting to an appointment.

More routine support

Regular assistance with dressing, mobility, meals or other daily activities.

Support that changes

Needs can increase or decrease. The right plan should reflect the individual, not just the setting.

The goal is not to do everything for someone. It is to provide the right support while preserving choice and ability.

Independence can look different over time

Independence is not simply:

“I do everything myself.”

It can also mean:

**“I have the support I need
to keep making choices
about how I live.”**

Choice

Dignity

Safety

Connection

The best setting is the one that supports the person you are and the life you want to continue living.

Why learning now matters

More time

You can tour, compare and ask questions without pressure.

More voice

You can communicate your own priorities before someone else must guess.

More options

You can understand costs, services and availability before a crisis.

Better conversations

Family members know what matters to you and what you would consider.

You are building knowledge for yourself and the people you care about.

What PALA does behind the scenes

EDUCATION

Training, conferences, updates and resources that strengthen providers.

ADVOCACY

A voice in Harrisburg and Washington on policies affecting residents and providers.

REGULATORY SUPPORT

Helping members understand requirements and engage constructively with regulators.

CONSUMER EDUCATION

Helping older adults and families understand PCHs, ALRs and informed choice.

PALA is the only Pennsylvania state association exclusively dedicated to PCHs and ALRs.

What member support looks like in practice

UNDERSTAND Translating regulations, guidance and licensing expectations into practical information.

CONNECT Creating direct opportunities for providers to learn from regulators, experts and one another.

SOLVE Helping members work through questions and challenges before they become bigger problems.

ADVOCATE Bringing the realities of serving older adults to policymakers when laws, funding and workforce policy are debated.

PALA helps members turn complex policy and regulatory requirements into better day-to-day operations.

Advocacy and Pennsylvania's Long-Term Care Council

Helping shape the systems that support older adults

LONG-TERM CARE COUNCIL

A statewide forum for advice and coordination on long-term services and supports.

DCW BLUEPRINT REFRESH

Workgroup focused on strengthening Pennsylvania's direct care workforce.

PA LINK REFRESH

Work to improve connections to information, resources and long-term care supports.

AGING OUR WAY, PA

Council discussions help inform implementation of Pennsylvania's multisector aging plan.

PALA brings the PCH and ALR perspective to conversations about policy, workforce and access to care.

When comparing communities: ask beyond the brochure

?

What license does this community hold?

?

How are medications managed?

?

What services are included, and what costs extra?

?

What are the community's policies on visitors, pets and daily routines?

?

What happens if my needs increase?

?

Can I review the resident contract and recent inspection information?

?

How is staffing structured day and night?

?

Will my personal preferences be a part of my care plan?

Fit is personal. Compare the license, services, people, culture, costs and your own priorities.

Three things to remember

1

PCH and ALR are distinct Pennsylvania licenses.

2

Both support people who need help with daily life but do not require 24-hour nursing care.

3

Planning early gives you more time to compare options and make an informed choice.

Questions & conversation

Thank you!



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