Daughters of Naomi

Choosing Care in a Hurry

For the day the hospital says she can't go home.

Give yourself permission to make an imperfect decision. In a crisis, the goal is not the perfect solution. It is the safe next step. A placement made under pressure is not permanent. It is a bridge. — *Becky*

THE FIRST 48 HOURS

1. **Talk to the hospital social worker immediately.** Before you leave the hospital, ask for the social worker or case manager. They know what's available locally, what insurance covers, and what's realistic for your parent. Don't leave without this conversation.

2. **Call a senior placement advisor.** Search "senior placement advisor" in your parent's area. A good advisor knows the local facilities and can help you find two or three worth visiting, often within a day or two. The service is free to your family.

3. **Ask the fast-track questions below.** Write down the answers as you get them.

Social worker: _____ Phone: _____

Placement advisor: _____ Phone: _____

What type of care does she actually need, based on her medical condition?

Which facilities have an opening right now?

What will insurance cover, and what will we pay out of pocket? (Medicare does not cover assisted living or long-term nursing home stays.)

Is she safe enough to take a few days to decide, or does a decision need to be made today?

LEVELS OF CARE AT A GLANCE

From most independent to most care

In-home care	From a few hours of help with meals and medications to around-the-clock nursing, in her own home.
Adult day program	Daytime activities, meals and supervision while she still lives at home. A real break for the caregiver.
Respite care	A short stay, a weekend to a few weeks, so the family caregiver can rest or recover.
Independent living	Meals, activities and community for seniors who don't need hands-on care. No nurse on staff.
Assisted living	Licensed. Private or shared apartment, meals, medication management and a nurse on staff.
Residential care home	A licensed home in a neighborhood, usually about six residents and two caregivers. Smaller and more personal.
Memory care	Secure, specially staffed care for Alzheimer's and dementia, around the clock.
Skilled nursing	24-hour medical care for serious physical or cognitive conditions. The highest level outside a hospital.

Ask any place you consider: what happens if her needs increase? Can she stay, or will she have to move again? Moving is hard on aging adults. The fewer transitions, the better.

COMPARE THE PLACES YOU TOUR

Place A:

Place B:

Place C:

Address, contact, cost per month, openings:

WHEN YOU TOUR

Check each place: A · B · C

First impressions	A	B	C
Clean, well-kept, and it smells clean	☐	☐	☐
Staff greet you when you walk in	☐	☐	☐
Staff are patient and warm with residents, not hurried	☐	☐	☐

The residents	A	B	C
Residents look content and engaged, not withdrawn or sedated	☐	☐	☐
Activities are happening, not just TVs on	☐	☐	☐
The dining room is lively at mealtime	☐	☐	☐

The care	A	B	C
You understand what happens if her needs increase	☐	☐	☐
You know what the monthly fee includes and what costs extra	☐	☐	☐
Staff-to-resident ratio is clear, including nights and weekends	☐	☐	☐

Safety	A	B	C
A nurse is on staff around the clock, or you know who responds	☐	☐	☐
There's a clear plan when a resident falls	☐	☐	☐
The room has grab bars, good lighting, no trip hazards	☐	☐	☐

The everyday	A	B	C
You tried the food, and it's good	☐	☐	☐
Family can visit freely	☐	☐	☐
Faith or cultural resources she'd want are available	☐	☐	☐

Trust your instincts. If something feels wrong, if the staff seems rushed or indifferent, or the place feels joyless, pay attention to that feeling. You are not being difficult. You are doing your job.

What we decided, and why:

"You do not need to have it all figured out today.
You just need to take the next faithful step."