

Voices for Quality Care (LTC), Inc.

What is Culture Change?

Culture Change is taking the hospital and the institutionalization out of long-term care facilities and returning them to their rightful place as residences. It is making them a place to live rather than simply a place to receive physical care.

Culture Change is about continuing the self-determination that comes with adult status. It is about the joy, the social interactions, and the daily inspirations and interests in events and in life that we all enjoy. It is about bringing all the aspects of life into communal long term care communities. It challenges the notion that when you have many people to care for, it can only be done in a regimented manner. In a Culture Change facility, residents really and finally have the freedom to choose that the federal government gave them back in the OBRA Act of 1987.

Residents choose when to get up and when to go to bed. They choose when to eat and when and how often to bathe. They choose activities and interests to pursue. Most importantly, they become actively involved in the activities of daily home life once again. Sitting at the table with a cup of tea talking with friends as apples are peeled for pies or biscuits are shaped for dinner is commonplace in a facility that has undergone a Culture Change. Here, a resident rises at 10 AM if he chooses and, upon reaching the kitchen and dining area, has a freshly cooked egg and a piece of toast right from the toaster in short order. In short, the model here is not the hospital but the normal daily living circumstances so familiar to all of us.

Yes, it can be done. Yes, it is being done. And, no, it is not prohibitively expensive. Culture Change can happen in facilities with high percentages of residents on Medicaid as well as in facilities with high percentages of private pay residents. All it takes is a will and a willingness to change and the courage to do it.