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ELDERCARE RESOURCE SERVICES



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"HELPING YOU HELP YOUR LOVED ONES"

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A FREE PUBLICATION ON ELDER ISSUES

DEMENTIA UNITS IN NURSING HOMES

The Massachusetts legislation has developed standards new by which all Nursing Homes who define themselves as a specialized dementia unit must follow. All facilities must provide 8 hours per day of activities. Two of these hours can be unplanned. If there is outside space there must be a fence around the outdoor space. The paging system should be used only when needed. Loud noises can be disruptive to anyone with memory loss. All relevant staff members shall receive a minimum of four hours of training. There are guidelines for the training. All specialized dementia units must also provide a

minimum of four hours of ongoing training per year. Each facility shall have a therapeutic activity director for the specific dementia unit. That person needs to be a certified therapeutic recreational specialist or an activities professional. Activities need to be individualized and designed to maintain or improve the resident's level of functioning and the programs need to be suited to the needs of the residents on the unit. These changes are the first of more to come which benefit seniors with memory loss in a long term setting. These are new guidelines and facilities are working on ways to incorporate the changes.

HONORING CHOICES

Honoring Choices Massachusetts at <http://www.honoringchoicesmass.com/> provides "resources to create a personal health care plan and connect to quality medical care that honors values and choices through life". This is an independent non-profit organization that provides a resource to individuals but does not endorse or recommend services. Honoring Choices has information on how to start the conversation with a relative on topics such as feeding tubes, resuscitation, and end of life decisions. There is also information on health care proxies. This site has a great deal of information.

ABOUT US

ElderCare Resource Services is a geriatric care management company co-owned by Linda Sullivan RN, CMC, and Debbie Gitter LCSW, C-SWCM. Our unique Nurse/Social Worker team is able to provide both psychosocial and medical consultation to our clients. Linda and Debbie work together on each case. Families can consult with either of us. We are strong advocates for our clients giving them information to make them better consumers; getting their relative the best care. Together we are able to assist our clients and their families with information on Community Services, Home Care, Assisted Living, and Nursing Homes. Linda and Debbie have over 35 years working with the geriatric population. Now is the time to plan for the future. Call us today if you have a question about our services. We'll be happy to chat. Look for our monthly column in the Metro West News Senior Q & A

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW WHEN PLACING A RELATIVE...

When it is time to move your relative to an Assisted Living and or Nursing Home it is important to tour the facility. Ask questions about the staffing pattern, visitation, if there is a complaint what is the process, and how long has the staff worked together. Longevity with

staff can mean better communication. Look at the residents in the facilities and observe how the staff interacts with the residents. Is the staff smiling when talking to the residents, do they talk quietly etc. This is how your relative will be treated. Ask family mem-

bers that you may see in the parking lot of the facility their opinion on the facility. Tour a second time if you have a chance. You see more on a second visit. Have an Elder Law Attorney read all the legal paperwork before signing. This is very important.



Certified Members of:
National and New England Associations of Professional Geriatric Care Managers

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: My daughter does not listen to me. I am now in my late 80's and I've always had a challenging relationship with my daughter. My daughter believes she knows what is best for me. Many times I just nod my head and disagree. However now my daughter does very little to listen to me and I do not know how to make the changes. I know I created this situation but I do not know how to change it. I worry that my daughter will do what she wants when I need care that is in my best interest.

A: This is a genuine worry. It is never easy to make changes at any time. It is important that you discuss decisions such as end of life, staying at home, etc. if your health care needs change, and “what if” situations with another person in addition to your daughter. Discuss these situations with your attorney and ask

him/her to create a living will. Give a copy to the attorney and a copy to your physician. Consider hiring a Geriatric Care Manager to get involved before there is a crisis. The Geriatric Care Manager can get involved now and begin to get to know you and your wishes. Then the Geriatric Care Manager can talk with your daughter, when the time comes, and advocate for what you want. Also the Geriatric Care Manager can lay the foundation that your wishes are to be honored.

Q: My father was recently diagnosed with cancer. He went from the hospital to the rehab facility. My mother does not feel she can care for my father at home. My father wants to return home but my mother has said no. What do I do in this situation? Do I follow

my mother's wishes or my father's wishes?

A: Both opinions need to be considered and everyone needs to work together. Your mother must have fears of the amount of work your father may require and your father may think his wife will take care of him. This is a good time to sit down with the Social Worker at the facility or hire a Geriatric Care Manager who can facilitate the discussion with your mother and father. A Geriatric Care Manager would complete an assessment to determine if your father could be managed at home. The Geriatric Care Manager can offer resources to your mother to relieve her of some of the burdens and talk with your father as well. Other options may include moving to an Assisted Living where there are some built in services for your father and your mother has the ability to have her independence.