



# ELDERCARE RESOURCE SERVICES



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"HELPING YOU HELP YOUR LOVED ONES"

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## ALZHIEMER'S DISEASE

Alzheimer's disease is a chronic, progressive disease. According to the Alzheimer's Association there are 5.4 million people are living with the disease. It is the 6th leading cause of death and currently there is no cure. It is costing our nation \$200 billion annually in healthcare costs.

There are 15,000,000 caregivers providing care to their relatives with Alzheimer's Disease.

The Alzheimer's Organization was started in 1980 after a number of families went to the National Institute on Aging in support of the organization.

Research is on-going and has made progress in understanding how the disease presents itself. Scientists understand what goes wrong in the brain to cause memory loss. Now the key is to find a medication to cure the disease. Research continues through clinical trials with the hope of finding a cure for Alzheimer's disease. The hope of the future is that there will be number of medications that will available.

If you are interested in participating in a clinical trial, contact the Alzheimer's Organization at 800-272-3900.

## MORE INFORMATION

Alzheimer's Disease can present itself with short or long term memory loss. Things that were once very easy to do now become more difficult. Repetitive questions on something that was just discussed is not remembered. Sometimes dates or rules to a game are forgotten. Sometimes joining in a conversation becomes difficult. Items get lost or misplaced and there is no ability to retrace steps. Withdrawal from familiar hobbies or even social activities. Sometimes changes in mood. There is age appropriate forgetfulness. Contact the doctor to discuss what is normal forgetfulness and what is not.

## 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 each have over 30 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'

## FUNDRAISER FOR RESEARCH

The Alzheimer's Association has organized a number of Walks to End Alzheimer's throughout The Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The money raised in these walks is money spent on research. Anyone can donate or walk individually or put together

a team. Each year the number of participants in the walk grows. The walks are fun and show support for the Alzheimer's Organization. If you are interested in participating in a walk, contact The Alzheimer's Organization at 800-272-3900 or

[www.alz.org/MANH](http://www.alz.org/MANH)

Check out the web site for additional information on the disease. There is also many articles on dementia to help families better understand the disease.



Member of:

**The National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers**

*"Helping you help your loved ones"*

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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Q: My mother is 90 years old and was diagnosed with dementia. She is forgetting more and more and I am helping her more and more even with getting dressed and showering. It is becoming more difficult and time consuming for me to help my mother. How do I find help?**

**A:** It is very important to bring help into the house so you do not get so exhausted that you become sick. To find out if there are free services in your community contact the local Council on Aging. If there are no free or reduced fee services then ask for a list of Home Care Agencies. Interview the Home Care Agencies asking about their services, if there is a minimum amount of hours per day/week, the cost, how to voice a complaint, how updates are given to family members, and

the role of the caregiver. Have a list of tasks that are needed as a discussion point for the agency.

**Q: My father is in the late stage of the Alzheimer's disease. He is unable to care for himself. My father spoke with me years earlier and told me that if this situation should arise he does not want to be kept alive by any machines. Is my father eligible for Hospice—just to be kept comfortable and not to be sent out to the hospital?**

**A:** Possibly. Hospice is a program that will allow your father to die with dignity and respect. The role of Hospice is provide care and comfort and not invasive procedures. One of the criteria to qualify for Hospice with

dementia diagnoses is significant weight loss. If your father is living at home with services first speak with his physician and also contact a local Hospice company. They can answer your detailed questions on eligibility. If your father is in a medical setting then speak with the Social Worker or Charge Nurse about Hospice. They can help direct you to Hospice and have your father evaluated to see if he qualifies. If your father does not qualify now, he may qualify in a few months.

**Q: My sister is only in her 50's and she is now diagnosed with early onset dementia. Her memory loss is progressing quickly. Is this normal?**

**A:** Early onset dementia does progress quickly. This is a good time to begin to plan for future needs and help for your sister. It is always better to have a plan in place than react when there is a crisis.