

To receive your newsletter via email send a request to eldercarerresource@hotmail.com



ELDERCARE RESOURCE SERVICES



INFO@ELDERCARERESOURCE SERVICES.COM
WWW.ELDERCARERESOURCE SERVICES.COM
"HELPING YOU HELP YOUR LOVED ONES"

DECEMBER 2015
A FREE PUBLICATION ON ELDER ISSUES
TEL: 508-879-7008

THE ROLE OF A HEALTH CARE AGENT

The Health Care Proxy is one of the most important legal documents. This document must be completed when someone is competent in the eyes of the law. The purpose of the document is to name someone who can make decisions on your behalf if you are not competent. It only goes into effect when a physician documents in a medical chart that the health care proxy is invoked due to a medical reason such as a dementia. Once the physician has written that statement then all medical decisions going forward are made by the health care agent. It is important for the health care agent to know the wishes of the person such as feeding tube, pain medications,

surgery, hospice etc. The agent is better able prepared to make decisions if they have a discussion prior to the health care proxy being invoked. Five Wishes, Living Will and Honoring Choices are places where a health care agent can search for discussion points. All topics should be discussed openly and if possible personal wishes should be recorded in writing and or on tape. This authenticates the wishes, holding more weight with the physician and possibly other family members.

In some families the health care agent is the decision maker but other siblings or children do not agree with decisions made. Having personal choices recorded

gives more validity to the decisions being made. The role of the agent is to follow the person's wishes.

It is important to name someone who you know will express and advocate your wishes. The agent is to follow your desires even if they disagree with them personally. This is why it is important to name someone as an agent who will carefully and willingly follow your instructions and not follow their own beliefs. It is not an easy role for someone. It is important to choose carefully your agent. Elder Law Attorneys can help you prepare a Health Care Proxy.

ABOUT US

ElderCare Resource Services is a certified aging care management company co-owned by Linda Sullivan RN, CMC, and Debbie Gitner 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 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 Questions and Answers](#)'

2016

This is a good time of year to consider making changes and getting organized. As we all have aging relatives it is important to have a 'go to' list of people, agencies, companies to call if there is a medical emergency, etc. If you are unsure about where to start, think about who will provide the most help with

answers to questions when someone is in the hospital. Who will best understand the system and help navigate the process. The next step is determining which is the best facility for rehab, what agencies to call to help at home. Some lists include Assisted Livings and even long term care medical settings. If you are

unsure of where to start, contact Linda and Debbie who, as professionals understand and are advocates for our clients. We tailor options based upon the needs of our clients.

We wish everyone a very Healthy and Happy New Year!



Certified Members:

Aging Life Care Association

STROKE

A stroke occurs when blood flow to the brain is cut off. Brain cells are not receiving oxygen and they die. The part of the brain that is not receiving oxygen is affected. The brain controls vision, language, memory, eating, muscle control, etc. The part of the brain without oxygen is affected by stroke.

Sometimes someone who had a small stroke may be affected by walking and someone with a major stroke can no longer care for themselves. Some people recover completely and some people are left with long term deficits.

There are two different types of strokes: hemorrhagic and ischemic. Hemorrhagic stroke is a brain aneurism burst or a weakened blood vessel. This type of stroke often leaves someone requiring care. Blood flows into the brain causing swelling. Approximately

15% of strokes are hemorrhagic. Sometimes death can occur with this type of stroke.

Ischemic stroke occurs when a blood vessel that carries blood to the brain is blocked by blood clot. This causes blood not to reach the brain. It can also be caused by a plaque fragment or blood clot that blocks a blood vessel causing a stroke. Approximately 87% of strokes are ischemic. There are medications that can help however it is important to get to the hospital as soon as possible because there are time limits as to when the medication can be given.

A TIA or transient ischemic attack occurs when blood flow to a part of the brain stops for a short period of time. These appear and go away within a few minutes to less than 24 hours. It is important to go to the hospital and be evaluated even with a TIA.

A stroke can present with a facial droop, speech difficulties, or muscle weakness

on one side. Strokes are the fifth leading cause of death. It is also a leading cause of disability among people. Think of a stroke as a brain attack. The brain is being affected by lack of oxygen.

You can reduce the chances of having a stroke; exercise, no smoking, keep high blood pressure in good compliance with medications, diabetes needs to be in good control, and high cholesterol needs to also be managed.

Family history increases the risk of a stroke. If you had a previous stroke the odds of another stroke increases.

Women tend to experience more strokes than men because women live longer and strokes occur more often at an older age. The chance of a stroke at a younger age is higher in men.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: My mother has been living in California for years. Now she is in and out of the hospital and I am wondering when is the right time to move my mother closer to me? The trips to California are getting harder and harder to do and I am visiting more frequently.

A: There is no right or wrong time. If your mother is able to express an opinion then ask her what she thinks, explaining to her the challenge in visiting often. Sometimes the exhaustion of traveling makes the decision, and other times requiring long term care makes the decision easy. As you approach this decision research facilities in your area, rehab, physicians, etc. so you can make the move seamless. Consider hiring a Geriatric Care Manager/Aging Life Care Specialist to help on both ends. The Care Manager can help you help your mother in CA by staying on top

of things, visiting your mother at home, in the hospital and coordinating services. The Care Manager locally can work with you to find the best option and can collaborate with the Care Manager in CA to bridge everything.

Q: I have a younger brother who is an alcoholic and who has not visited my parents in years. My brother has no contact with me. As my parents age I worry that he will find out they need care or passed away, and look for his share of an estate. My parents have made it clear he is not to get anything financially. What do I do if he finds me?

A: Your parents should review their legal documents with an attorney every few years to make sure their wishes will be honored. Ask the attorney if there should also be

a video recording with the date of the recording and your parents documenting their wishes.

Q: My sister and I share the care of my mother and we work well together. My sister is going to have surgery and will not be able to help out for a number of weeks. If I find myself overwhelmed is there someone I can call for help?

A: It is always good to have a back up plan or Plan B. Contact the local Council on Aging or speak with an Aging Life Care Specialist to give you the names of home care agencies that you can call, interview and schedule a home visit allowing you to have an agency to call if/when additional help is needed.