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ELDERCARE RESOURCE SERVICES



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"HELPING YOU HELP YOUR LOVED ONES"

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### PLAN AHEAD

Although it is summer and all of us are focused on the hot weather, this is time of year when discussions and early planning should start for the fall/winter.

This is the time to review that Plan B and if there is no Plan B then to consider purchasing a Plan B.

For seniors at home and doing well consider getting the name of a home care agency to call if services should be needed. Over the winter many of the home care agencies can come into the house and provide not only help with personal care but they can clean, do the laundry, prepare meals, food shop and provide companionship. This could unload some of the responsibility the family shoulders in the snowy cold winter.

For any senior that is just getting

by at home this is the time to think about that 911 emergency. If my relative went to the hospital and could return home, then call the home care agency. If your relative could not return home immediately, what rehab setting is your first, second, and third choice? Talk with friends, take tours, talk with experts such as Geriatric Care Managers/Aging Life Care Professionals.

What if the heat went off in the house and a furnace part was not available—what is the Plan B? Would your relative move to your house or would a move to an Assisted Living under a respite program be best? For relatives at a distance it is a good idea to have that Plan B. Many Assisted Livings offer respite care—your relative would have their own apartment completely furnished, three meals per day, activities

and socialization. This is the time to put together a list of Assisted Livings and take a tour. Ask questions and find out the cost.

And finally, what if there was a catastrophic medical event and your relative could not return home and needed Nursing Home care. Have you thought about that?

Many families begin this Plan B planning by having the name of a Geriatric Care Manager who can make suggestions, provide families with questions to ask when they tour facilities, and be available when there is an event that changes the status quo. This person can offer advice, provide advocacy, answer questions, talk with hospital professionals as well as community professionals.

### 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](#)'

### DIABETES AND SENIORS

Many seniors are living with diabetes. Health risks that can be contributing factors in having diabetes may be related to genetics, high blood pressure, diet, depression, and high cholesterol.

It is important to take medication as prescribed and to wear identification (such as a bracelet) that they are diabetic. It is also important that a diabetic should keep fast acting carbohydrates with them at all times.

Glucose tablets or a juice box are two examples of what can be kept close for an emergency.

When blood sugars drop anyone is at risk of a fall or passing out. Consider wearing a Lifeline or having a cell phone close by at all times.

Exercise is important. Consider a few lessons with a personal trainer who understands diabetes. The trainer can tailor an exercise program. Remember it

is good to change up the exercise program every few months.

When diabetes is not well managed there can be complications such as: cognitive impairment, neuropathy, hearing, vision, and problems with joints.

Anyone who is a diabetic should have vision exams as often as it is recommended. The ophthalmologist is able to examine the eye to look for signs of diabetes.



Certified Members:

Aging Life Care Association

## UPDATES AND INFORMATION

In MA Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) is proposing a new payment system. The new system is called **Patient-Driven Payment Model (PDPM)**. This would replace the current program which is called Resource Utilization Group (RUGS). The new payment plan is scheduled to go into effect October 1, 2019. The current system has been in place since the late 1990's. There are many concerns with the proposed rule and we will keep you updated. This is very significant because in the current system, facilities are paid on what the patient is not able to do. The more care a patient requires in a Nursing Home the higher the reimbursement rate by Mass Health. With the proposed changes the system could change to what the patient is able to do and payment based on that. More to come.

The Mass Senior Care is opposed to the mandated **hospital staffing ballot**. You can read more at <https://www.protectpatientsafety.com>

The concern by the Nursing Home industry could result in exacerbating the current shortage of nurses in long term care facilities. Hospitals will need to staff to certain levels and may recruit nursing home nurses through higher pay, bonuses or other incentives to meet the staffing requirements. Currently one in seven nursing positions are not filled in long term care facilities.

If nurses are recruited and leave long term care facilities this could threaten the care at all facilities.

The Nursing Home industry also feels that staffing decisions should be made by experienced professionals not a state mandate.

In addition to the Nursing Home industry opposing this ballot question the Organization of Nurse Leaders, and the MA

Chapter of The American Nurses Association along with the hospital oppose this ballot question. It is important to read the facts (on both sides) before November.

The **NIH has proposed a \$425 million dollar increase** for the 2019 budget for research for Alzheimer's and dementia research. These additional monies could help find the cure for this disease. If this is signed into law the funding for Alzheimer's and related dementia research at the NIH could be as much as \$2.3 billion.

The increase in spending has been driven by Senator Blunt and Senator Patty Murray (chair) of the Labor –HHS Appropriations Committee.

<https://www.nia.nih.gov/about/sustaining-momentum-nih-takes-aim-alzheimers-disease-related-dementias>

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Q: My mother is doing very well in her Assisted Living. She has met many people and attends activities. What is affecting my mother's moral is when people she becomes friends with pass away. She becomes close with someone and they die. I can see the emotional drain it is taking on my mother. Any advice?**

**A:** You are absolutely right—in the Assisted Living or any community that people are alike, connections are made and then something happens. If you feel that it is affecting your mother consider having her talk with a clinical Social Worker. Maybe the Assisted Living can recommend someone who bills your mother's insurance. Ask your mother if she would like to send a sympathy card to the family. Maybe she would like to write a personal note about their friendship. This may be helpful to

your mother and to the family.

**Q: My father has dementia and he is becoming agitated later in the day. He lives with my mother who does not know what to do. Any ideas?**

**A:** Talk with the primary care physician about medications. Sometimes that is helpful. Other suggestions include making the rooms bright so there are no shadows or darkening of the room. Observe and take notes of the time of the escalation, how it presents, and how long it lasts. Think of ways your father could relax himself years earlier. Did he enjoy watching sports, did he enjoy music, did he fix things around the house etc.? If there was something he enjoyed try incorporating that into the evening routine. Sometimes a nice warm drink of tea with

a snack can help. If your father worked with his hands then maybe there is something he can do again. Try putting on a sports show. It is important to keep the same routine daily. Maybe consider hiring help in the evening to give your mother a break. Also contact the Alzheimer's Association who may have additional advice.

**Q: My sister has had development disabilities since birth. She has declined and cannot live at home any more due to her need for help with personal care. How do I find a facility that understands my sister's needs?**

**A:** If your sister is connected with any agencies in your state call them as they have resources. They often have a Social Worker who can assist you and your sister.