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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
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STAR RATING OF NURSING HOMES

Since 2009 there has been a five star rating of Nursing Homes. The more stars, the higher the quality. Some facilities learned what to report and when to increase staff so it would be reflected accordingly on the paperwork. There are new changes to the star system. There will be additional paperwork specific to the use of antipsychotic medications. There will be a review of residents on psychoactive medications to check that there is a diagnosis. Long term residents who have a diagnosis and who have been on antipsychotic medications for a long period of time will be reviewed to see if the medications can be reduced or if there was a trial of reduced medica-

tions. The staffing algorithms have changed and now the paperwork will reflect how many Registered Nurses are in the building per shift. Also, the system will now look at quarterly payroll systems for the entire year instead of three months. In addition state surveys will be added to the review. The goal is to introduce outcome based quality measures into this process. The question is: does the Nursing Home accomplish what it wants to accomplish and are the goals of each resident being met?

This new review will be reflected on the star system.

If you are looking for a Nursing Home for your relative and you want to see how the facility has done on past survey's and the star system, go to www.medicare.gov and in the search window put in *Nursing Home Compare*.

Remember, the survey is a snapshot of a few days and does not always reflect the quality of care. There are some very good Nursing Homes with good employees that sometimes do not do well on the survey. When touring facilities ask about their survey process and ask how they corrected any problems. No one can be perfect all the time.

ABOUT US

ElderCare Resource Services is a certified aging 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 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](#)'

ALZHEIMER'S UPDATE

On May 20, 2015 Linda and Debbie attended the annual Alzheimer's conference sponsored by the MA/NH chapter. There was a lot of information. One breakout session addressed the trials of new medications for dementia. Right now there will be some phase three trials starting this summer for a vaccination

to stop the disease. This seems to have the best results rather than medications to treat the disease.

Also specific PET scans can see the plaques in the brain which affects memory; however insurance does not cover for this testing.

The Alzheimer's disease Association is looking for volunteers under a program called Trial Match. They need volunteers to test medications to better understand the disease. For more information go to www.alz.org/research/clinical_trials/find_clinical_trials_trialmatch.asp



Certified Members of:

National and New England Associations of Professional Geriatric Care Managers

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: My husband has Alzheimer's disease and I am feeling frustrated and exhausted answering the same questions and watching him, telling what to do, and over-seeing everything. He can no longer pay bills or help me around the house. Any suggestions?

A: Caregivers burn out and get sick, and statistics show they die before the person with memory loss because of the stress they are carrying. Help is needed and it is up to you to decide what works best for you. Is it bringing someone into the house to help with the chores to give you free time? Is it someone with your husband to take him out of the house to lunch or a walk? Is it a combination of both services or a day program for your husband? Talk with a Geriatric Care Manager about the situation who can help make best suggestions. Change is not easy but

you cannot afford to get sick.

Q: My wife loves to listen to music but sometimes when she is listening to music she seems to feel antsy. I always thought music was calming. Do you have any thoughts?

A: Music is wonderful however we all have certain songs that bring back good and sometimes not so good memories. Dan Cohen has done research on how music affects people and what he has found; everyone has favorite songs. Songs that put a smile on faces. Ask your wife what songs she likes best. If she is unable to answer the question then name an artist and go through the song list and when there is a yes or a nod write down those songs. Put those songs together on a CD or iPod. Give your wife some headsets and

play the music. Playing her songs that make her feel good and bring back a happy memory should work. Remember, just because someone likes music from the 60's does not mean they like every song from that era.

Q: I feel like life is changing with my mother's disease (Parkinson's and Dementia) and I have little control. I feel angry that she is sick, sad, hopeless, and scared. If I am feeling this way how can I help my mother?

A: Life will always change in directions we do not like or choose. Attitude is important on how we deal with change. One options include seeing a therapist to talk about your feelings and another suggestion is to join a support group with others going through a similar situation. Talk with your physician about your feelings—you may need an antidepressant.