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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Long-Distance
Caregivers Receive
Help
- Ask Allie
- Announcement
- Distribution of This
Newsletter

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LONG-DISTANCE CAREGIVERS RECEIVE HELP

Living in a different city or state, miles from aging parents, can be difficult. Keeping in touch by telephone and making long trips to help parents or aging relatives with their needs can be time-consuming and not nearly as effective as being available full-time in person.

According to a report by the Alzheimer's Association of Los Angeles and Riverside, California, there are approximately 3.3 million long-distance caregivers in this country with an average distance of 480 miles from the people they assist. The report also states that 15 million days are missed from work each year because of long distance care giving. Seven million Americans provide 80% of the care to ailing family members, and the number of long-distance caregivers will double over the next 15 years.

The long-distance caregiver is a new role that is thrust upon children and younger family members. Families used to live closer together, with children residing and working near their parents. But nowadays family members are more distant from each other. Society, today, is recognizing this. Some caregiver services have tweaked their programs to work as liaisons between long-distance caregivers, senior loved ones, and local medical professionals.

Professional care managers, also known as geriatric care managers, elder care managers or aging care managers, represent a growing trend to help full time, employed family caregivers provide care for loved ones. Care managers are expert in assisting caregivers, friends or family members find government-paid and private resources to help with long-term care decisions.

They are professionals who are trained to evaluate and recommend care for the aged. A care manager might be a nurse, social worker, psychologist, or gerontologist who specializes in assessing the abilities and needs of the elderly. Care manger professionals are also becoming extremely popular as the caretaker liaison between long-distance family members and their aging loved ones.

The most important thing is to find a geriatric care manager where your loved one lives. This geriatric care manager will have knowledge of all the services in the area and can be your eyes and ears.

The following is a partial list of what a care manager or geriatric care manager might do:

- Assess the level and type of care needed and develop a care plan.
- Take steps to start the care plan and keep it functioning.
- Make sure care is in a safe and disability friendly environment.
- Resolve family conflicts and other issues with long-term care.
- Become an advocate for the care recipient and the caregiver.
- Manage care for a loved one for out-of-town families.
- Conduct ongoing assessments to implement changes in care.
- Oversee and direct care provided at home.
- Coordinate the efforts of key support systems.
- Provide personal counseling.
- Arrange for services of legal and financial advisors.
- Provide placement in assisted living facilities or nursing homes.
- Monitor the care received in a nursing home or in assisted living.
- Assist with the monitoring of medications.
- Find appropriate solutions to avoid a crisis.
- Coordinate medical appointments and medical information.
- Provide transportation to medical appointments.
- Assist families in positive decision making.
- Develop care plans for older loved ones not now needing care.

Services offered will depend on the educational and professional background of the care manager, but most are qualified to cover items in the list above or can recommend a professional who can. Fees may vary. There is often an initial consultation fee that is followed by hourly fees for services. Health insurance usually does not cover these fees, but long-term care insurance might.

When you take into account the time absent from work and time to find the right care resources for your loved ones, along with the cost of travel expenses to monitor their care, you will probably concur that using a caregiver is money well spent. Add to this the stress of handling your own life circumstances combined with being a caregiver, and you will probably wonder how you could have ever done without the care manager.

The attorneys at Oast & Hook can assist clients with their estate, investment, insurance, long-term care, special needs and veterans' benefit planning.

Ask Allie

Hello everyone. This is Allie. It is with sadness in my heart that I announce my retirement as Oast & Hook's office mascot. Being in an office environment is taking a toll on my health, and my veterinarian has told me that I need to reduce my stress. I'm sure you can imagine what living with five busy attorneys must be like. So, on the advice of my veterinarian, I am looking for a new home and need your help.

I need a quiet and relaxing environment where I can sleep the day away and have space to roam indoors. It would be best that I be in an environment without a lot of busy bustling activity such as we have in the office. My perfect caregiver(s) would be a person, couple, or family who would love to have a quiet, friendly companion who is lovable and who can be affectionate. I do have a cat's normal independent streak, so I would love a home where I can be the queen of the castle. If I could be in a home as the only pet, without small children, that would be ideal.

I send a special thanks to all my fans who have read my weekly column and my friends at Oast & Hook who saved me from the alley and nursed me back to health. I will miss you all. Please phone Linda Gerber or Jennifer Lantz at 757-399-7506 or at mail@oasthook.com if you are interested in adopting me.



Announcement

Oast & Hook attorney Letha McDowell will participate in a panel discussion entitled "Senior Services 101" at 10:00 a.m., Saturday, June 27th at Churchland House, 4916 West Norfolk Road, Portsmouth, Virginia. The panel will consist of speakers from Oast & Hook, ElderLife Financial Services, Senior Services of Southeastern Virginia, Solutions Home Care, Tidewater Mortgage Services, and the Alzheimer's Association. This presentation is free and open to the public. For more information or to register, please phone 757-431-8825.

Distribution of This Newsletter

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