

ElderCare Solutions

Summer, 2008

....providing answers to difficult questions.

718-643-2864 (In New York City)
800-500-6681 (Outside New York City)



A Program of
Little Flower
Children & Family
Services

The Caregiver as Advocate

As a caregiver, being an advocate is one of the most important and challenging roles you may assume. The health care system is very complex and difficult to navigate and you may find yourself having to decide between several medical opinions or facing restrictions that impact on your loved one's care.

For example, the hospital may be insisting on an immediate discharge or your health insurance may be denying a procedure your physician believes is necessary. What do you do?

Advocating, like caregiving, is a process, not a onetime event. You need to learn some tricks of the trade to help you become more confident and competent in this new role.

Advocacy Pointers:

*Determine what information you need in order to proceed and try to resolve only one issue at a time.

*Learn the language of the care system so that you speak in a way the providers can hear.

*Prepare your questions in advance. If you do not understand something, ask for clarification.

*Write everything down or ask the care provider for written instructions. You may want to keep a log of all your calls and communication.

*Ask for names and contact information for your records and for follow up calls.

*Practice techniques that will get answers to your questions- be precise and be persistent. Repeated attempts do get results!

When dealing with physicians and insurance

companies:

*Do not make these calls when you are rushed. You will need time and patience as you may have to call several times or wait on hold before you can speak to the right person.

In a health care facility:

*Take time to get to know the staff. They can provide you with valuable information about the routine and the care. Your conversations can also give you the opportunity to share important details about your loved one.

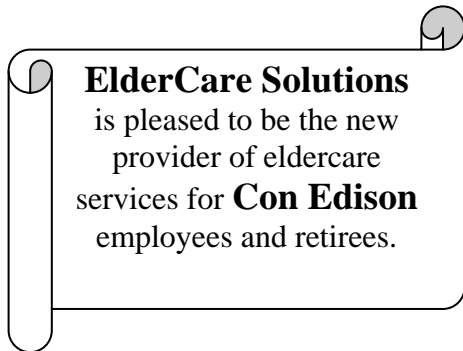
In a home care situation:

*Work with the care coordinator and the home aide to ensure they are aware of special needs, changes in condition or problems with the care. Frequent communication is the key to a successful relationship.

If you do not speak up when you feel there is a problem, the care team will assume everything is going well. You must remain confident that what you have to say is important and work at not being intimidated or overwhelmed by the system of care.. Try to stay calm, even when the situation has made you feel angry or helpless. **Keep the real goal in mind: the well being and quality of life of your loved one!**

ElderCare Solutions

Please call us for a confidential consultation to discuss any issues you may have about an older family member.

A graphic of a scroll with a black outline and a grey shadow on the left side. The scroll is unrolled, showing text inside. The text is centered and reads:

ElderCare Solutions
is pleased to be the new
provider of eldercare
services for **Con Edison**
employees and retirees.