

# ELDER CARE UPDATES



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www.rochestereldercare.com

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Elder Care Management

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## Home Health Care Agency vs. Private Duty Options

*by Karen Witkowicz*

Often, I am asked if I know someone who will provide home care for loved ones and be paid privately. There are also many home health care agencies that provide different levels of care, ie: home health aide and RN nurses. Should you use a home health agency or a privately paid provider? What are the advantages of each?

There are benefits to hiring a caregiver through a home care agency. These agencies carry liability insurance. They also perform all reference and background checks on workers, handle payment to caregivers and may provide backup care. If there is a problem with a caregiver, the supervisor at the agency can help to correct it or assign another caregiver to the case. On the other side of the coin, many agencies require that clients use a certain minimum number of hours per visit. There could be changes with little notice in the scheduled hours for a certain day or time because of juggling caregivers who are working on other cases. Sometimes there is considerable turnover in caregivers and clients may not have the same caregiver assigned every day that service is needed. However, there are many good home health agencies in this area. If your relative is ready to go home after a hospital stay, you have a choice of home health agencies. You do not have to use the



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one the hospital recommends. Ask friends, relatives and health care professionals for recommendations.

If you hire a caregiver privately, the job of finding, interviewing and background checking belongs to you. This is extremely important. Call the references that you are given. Also find out what agencies this person has worked for and call them as well. Ask to see the person's license ( home health aide or nurse) and find out if they carry liability insurance. You must have a back-up plan as well. Payment is also up to you and may involve calculating taxes, etc. However, some of the best caregivers work privately. You will usually be able to count on the same person coming each time. He/she will provide a continuity in developing a relationship with the elderly relative. Because you are doing the interviewing, you can look for the

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*"Excellent care for your loved one . . . . .*

*. . . . . Peace of mind for you."*

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## Is There Life After Caregiving?

As a family caregiver, your life becomes more and more involved in the person you are caring for. As your elder loved one's health declines, the time it takes to care for another increases as dependency does also. Often we give up our jobs, family time, our friends and our own independence. We give freely to our elderly relative out of love. When our loved one is no longer with us, we are often left with a feeling of emptiness and purposelessness. The reason for our being is gone. We must grieve and move back into the world to start up our lives again. How do we do this?

- Remember that everyone grieves at their own pace. It may be a "two steps forward, one step back" process.
- Renew old friendships and be open to new ones.
- Find a job that you enjoy doing or do volunteer work.
- Renew an old hobby.
- Join a grief bereavement support group to talk to others going through the same experience.
- Find a friend you can talk to who listens and will help ease the way back into the world.
- Find solace in nature – a sunset, watching waves come in on the shore, watching a bird or butterfly. Feel yourself becoming part of the wonder of the world and life again.
- Become active in whatever religious community you are a part of.
- You will learn that there is, indeed, life after caregiving and that you have grown tremendously because of your commitment to your loved one. ☐

## Home Health Care

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best fit for your loved one's situation and have control over who comes into the home. Private caregivers are located by asking trusted people in the health care profession for referrals. In some cases, private caregivers can be friends or relatives of the family. They may also know who might be interested in private duty.

Lastly, be involved with the professional caregivers. Drop in unexpectedly when he/she is there to see what is going on. Ask your relative what went on during the day. Listen carefully and check out any concerns he/she may have. Keep in touch with the caregiver as to what activities your relative is involved with during the day. Communicate any health care concerns as well. Hiring and making the best use of a professional caregiver needs a team approach. You, your elderly relative and the caregiver working together can provide the best environment for your loved one. ☐

## Brrr!!

### Don't Let High Fuel Costs Get You Down This Winter



Yes it is almost here, the season Rochester is known for, winter. Because of recent tragedies and rising costs in general, the price of heating your home will increase this winter dramatically. Here are few tips to save you money this winter season.

- Replace all weather stripping around windows
- When your windows are shut-lock them. That seals any gaps better
- Caulk all gaps
- Close all blinds and window treatments when you are not home
- Vacuum your vents
- Install those storm windows and doors
- Have all fuel burning appliances checked by a professional annually
- For safety, make an emergency box with: blankets, flashlights (extra batteries) non perishable food (enough for a few days), bottled water, plastic utensils, handheld can opener, emergency candles and matches/lighter.



As there is not as much air flow in your home during the winter, it is important to do the following to maintain air quality and safety:

- Use a high efficiency furnace filter
- Use bathroom fans to draw away moisture



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