

Take Charge: Successfully Navigating the Senior Care System

by **NANCY WEBRE, BS, MS, of Evergreen In-Home Care Services**



Navigating the sea of eldercare can be very overwhelming and difficult to understand. Being equipped with the right tools, including a support network and accurate information can help to steer through the ebb and flow of the complicated eldercare system. Families are often bewildered when they are faced finding resources for a loved one. Concerns include: Where do I begin to find resources for my parents? How do I find care for my mother after she is discharged from the hospital? How do I decide between one in-home care agency and another? Who can help me determine the appropriate level of care for my mother? Often these concerns confuse and frustrate most people since we are not taught how to parent

and/or care for our elders. Many families often have a difficult time asking for help particularly since they may feel eldercare is their personal responsibility. The eldercare system is very complicated and disjointed and it is difficult to understand unless you work in the industry.

As baby boomers age and the demand for services increase, caring for the elderly has become big business. Because the elder population is growing, many people see eldercare as an opportunity for business and they may not necessarily have the background, experience and knowledge to provide services and guidance to this population. Consumers should conduct careful research before using any eldercare service.

es. People need to ask questions and check into the background of these businesses. Conducting thorough research can be extremely time consuming. However, asking questions and obtaining referrals and recommendations are steps people should take no matter what kind of eldercare services they may utilize.

Following are some pointers to keep in mind as you begin to navigate the sea of eldercare:

- Connect with a real person on the phone. It can give you huge peace of mind. Be sure to write down names, numbers and notes from all communication. Every contact should lead to additional contact and/or resources.
- Be persistent and keep on track. The navigation process can be frustrating. Keep in mind not one person knows everything.
- Eldercare resources vary from city to city

and state to state. Be sure to research all local resources in your community.

- Use the internet to educate yourself. There is a myriad of information relative to eldercare resources.

There is a Geriatric care managers or elder care managers offer an additional resource that can effectively help navigate the eldercare sea by guiding families or caregivers through the system. Care managers can put together all the pieces and help to educate, support and steer families in the right direction for those who do not want to navigate a complicated system alone, a system which seems to get more complicated every day.

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