



June 2009



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Hospital Discharge – A Danger to Older Adults?

Recent news about the high rate of Medicare patients being readmitted within 30 days should alert families to the importance of good follow through and follow-up after any hospitalization.

We are announcing a program for families and individuals that assists the newly discharged elder with the transition home. The program is called “An Extra Hand”. This program will help with medication reminders and scheduling of follow-up appointments with primary care physicians.

A major reason for re-admissions, according to the *New England Journal of Medicine*, is medication errors or confusion around the discharge medication list. The senior can be perplexed with medications and, for example, might take one pill of a new generic drug and a brand name of the same medication – thus resulting in a reaction that leads the patient back to the hospital. Lack of follow-up is another major contribution to re-admits. At least 50% of those discharged fail to schedule a follow-up doctor appointment.

Nearly 20% of all Medicare discharges end up being re-hospitalized. The Obama Administration and Medicare are developing financial disincentives for hospitals that re-admit within 30 days.

Single individuals that have been hospitalized for any length of time are most often coming home to a house without fresh foods. They might lack the energy or stability they had prior to the illness and won't be able to safely bathe or prepare meals. Also, the single elder without 24/7 observation can suffer a change in status and often won't call the health care provider with symptoms that might be a sign that more significant interventions are warranted.

I suggest that families at a distance, or single seniors facing a planned hospitalization, prepare ahead of time with a program such as “An Extra Hand”, even for just a few days to allow for stabilization and readjustment to self-care. It might be that they need 24/7 care for a few days or just a few hours at morning or bedtime. It could be beneficial to have someone to remind them about medications and/or discharge after-care plans that

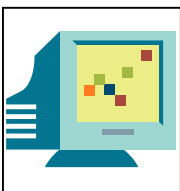
include things such as special diets, exercise or wound care.

Hospitals might propose in-house systems to ensure that discharge instructions are followed in the future. Individuals who are pro-active might consider a Professional Geriatric Care Manager to assist with all the little details of running the home: such as starting up the mail, stocking the kitchen, picking up medications as well as creating reminders of routines that will prevent re-hospitalization and get that individual back to their optimum functioning levels. This is short-time help for long-term wellness.

To learn more about “An Extra Hand” or to find out how we can assist someone you know please call us toll free at (866) 760-1808

Avoiding Hospital Re-admissions List

1. Check the discharge medication list
2. Schedule follow-up doctor appointments
3. Re-establish a healthy routine
4. Consider a Professional Geriatric Care Manager or program such as “An Extra Hand”



Have a question about elder care?
“Ask the Expert” on our new and informative website at EldercareAnswers.com

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Walnut Creek, CA 94595



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Community Classes

Walnut Creek

Dementia– Middle of the Road

Tuesday, June 16, 2009 from 6 to 8:30 PM

Caring for an Aging Family Member

Friday, July 17, 2009 from 9 AM to 3PM

Hands on Caring

Friday, July 24, 2009 from 9:30 AM to Noon

Dementia– In the Thick of It

Friday, August 21, 2009 from 9 to 11:30 AM

Families Dealing with Dementia

Friday, September 18, 2009 from 9 AM to Noon

Class Registration: Please call at least 3 days ahead

Support Groups

When concerns for aging family members are part of every day life, or when they interfere with work, your health or other relationships, you need to join a support group.

Caring for An Aging Family Member

2nd Thursday of every month from 7 to 8:30 PM

1808 Tice Valley Blvd., Walnut Creek, CA 94595

1st Tuesday of every month from 6 to 7:30 PM

605 A Chenery St., San Francisco, CA 94131

Cost for Support Groups and Classes: None

Support Group Registration: Not required

For more information regarding classes and support groups, please call (925) 937-2018, (415) 469-8300 or email us at

info@EldercareAnswers.com

Eldercare Services has offices in Marin, Oakland, San Francisco and Walnut Creek, CA.

Visit us on the web at <http://www.EldercareAnswers.com> for more information.