



April 2011

Doctors - A Wonderful Vocation in a Challenging Time

What is it that motivates individuals to go to medical school? Is it family tradition, passion for science, the amazing human body, potential high income or just an altruistic care for humankind?

Whatever it is that motivated all of the physicians who attend and treat our clients and/or our own families on the frontline, in the office or in research to cure diseases – we say, “THANK YOU!” We appreciate your patience, your curiosity and your fine skills that can bring quality and longevity to lives.

I would like to discuss two issues when it comes to physicians, medical school and the study of Geriatrics. The first is that we just don't have enough room in our medical schools for all the doctors who will be needed to serve the tsunami of aging Baby Boomers. The second issue is that medical students get very little focused study on the aging body and the special skills necessary to treat the very old.

What can we do as families, professionals and futurists? We can campaign at the Federal level for more support to provide fellowships or scholarships to those who commit to the field of Geriatrics. We can also support funding for medical schools to provide more education on the illnesses and treatment of frail elders.

Additionally, we can advocate for better reimbursement from Medicare for our doctors to care for the seniors. Physicians' rates have been cut at the time they should be



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increased – yes, the question is always, “Who will pay for this?” Well, maybe we bonus doctors who keep seniors well and out of expensive hospital care. Maybe we look for creative ways to expand their ability to serve more clients by using clinical Geriatric Nurse Practitioners and Professional Geriatric Care Managers. Maybe we have mobile clinics that move between senior centers to make it more convenient for seniors to receive preventative care.

As Geriatric Care Managers (GCM), we are often the channel for reporting symptoms that can assist a doctor in making a diagnosis with observations that he or she can't see in the clinic or the office. The relaying of updates regarding behaviors, changes in functioning and lifestyle patterns is a great help to the medical providers as they diagnose or treat clients. It is also critical for families at a distance to have someone to call about the changes in voice or the content of conversations they hear over the phone. Slurred words could indicate a need for immediate evaluation of a serious condition and early treatment. What do you do when you live 1,000 miles away and are

concerned with how mom or dad sounds over the phone?

We GCMs are also the key to preventing re-hospitalizations by providing oversight to new orders and follow up with attending physicians soon after a discharge. This is by and far the most critical period of time when errors can be made, especially when elders live alone. In the near future, hospitals are going to be financially penalized for re-admitting a Medicare patient within 30 days for some very specific issues such as Congestive Heart Disease. Appropriate post-discharge care can help prevent re-admissions.

Creative ways to deliver health care will include more “home-medical & safety” technology, mobile clinics and allied health care providers. We need to stay ahead of the need with as much creative thinking and planning as possible.

For each of you who clocks in 16 hours a day of work because you care, we say thank you and encourage you to self-care and work less by creating a large and comprehensive team. In doing this, communication will be a key to making this work – so let's all find better ways to stay connected when serving the needs of older adults and their families.

We need you, medical providers, and appreciate all you do to help each of us stay healthy which ultimately contributes to a better quality of life for all!

How to Make Healthcare Better for Aging Adults

Check List

- Campaign at the Federal level for more support to provide fellowships or scholarships to those who commit to the field of Geriatrics.
- Support funding for medical schools to provide more education on the illnesses & treatment of frail elders.
- Advocate for better reimbursement from Medicare for our doctors to care for seniors.
- Bonus doctors who keep seniors well & out of expensive hospitals care.
- Use Geriatric Nurse Practitioners & Professional Geriatric Care Managers in order to serve more clients.
- Provide mobile clinics to move seniors between centers for convenience to receive preventative and paliative care.
- Use “home-medical & safety” technology and allied health providers to stay ahead.

Eldercare Services provides Counseling, Support Groups, Caregiving, and Care Management to aid Family Caregivers. If you or someone you know could benefit from self-care, give us a call at (866) 760-1808 or email us at Info@EldercareAnswers.com.

Eldercare Services works with Seniors and their families in Walnut Creek, Alameda County, San Francisco and the Tri-Valley, CA. Visit us on the web at <http://www.EldercareAnswers.com> for more information.

*Eldercare
Services
Advocacy, Care, and Education*

Community Classes

Walnut Creek

Families Dealing with Dementia

3rd Friday of every month from 10 AM to Noon

1808 Tice Valley Blvd., Walnut Creek, CA 94595

Class Registration: Please call at least 3 days ahead

For more information regarding classes and support groups, visit us at www.EldercareAnswers.com or call (925) 937-2018, (415) 469-8300 or email us at info@EldercareAnswers.com

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: None
Support Group Registration: Not required