

The Texas A&M University System

Eldercare Guide

Taking care of an aging relative or friend isn't easy. Anyone who has ever been in the role of caregiver will tell you that. Even under the best of circumstances, assisting an elderly person who is no longer able to perform such everyday tasks as dressing or eating

can be exhausting, both physically and emotionally. This brochure is designed to aid the first-time caregiver. It contains:

- Contact information for a variety of eldercare service organizations,
- Definitions of common types of services available for the elderly,
- A list of books recommended by eldercare professionals, and
- Some key issues to consider when making decisions regarding the care recipient.

Eldercare service organizations

Assisted Living Federation of America (ALFA)

1650 King St., Suite 602
Alexandria, VA 22314-2747
(703) 894-1805 Fax: (703) 894-1831
www.alfa.org

ALFA is a nonprofit trade association devoted to the assisted living industry. ALFA does not charge a fee for its services.

Online information: ALFA's web site includes information on the philosophy of and the types of services offered by assisted living facilities. The site also provides information on the cost of living in an assisted living facility. Using ALFA's Online Directory, individuals can search for assisted living residences.

Aging Network Services (ANS)

Barbara Kane & Grace Lebow, LLC
Topaz House
4400 East-West Highway, Suite 907
Bethesda, MD 20814
(301) 657-4329
www.agingnets.com

ANS is a for-profit company that provides families with consultations, care management, referrals and psychotherapy for the middle and older generations. On request, ANS will select a local geriatric care manager to visit with the family at home. ANS charges a fee for its services.

Online information: ANS' web site includes information on the organization's services and seminars and on how to contact ANS. The site also lists frequently asked questions regarding eldercare.

American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging (AAHSA)

2519 Connecticut Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20008
(202) 783-2242 Fax: (202) 783-2255
tsnn.com/organizers/texas-texas-association-homes-and-services-aging-tahsa

AAHSA represents nonprofit organizations that provide quality health care, housing and services to the elderly. AAHSA's membership consists of 5,000 nursing homes, continuing care retirement communities, senior housing facilities, assisted living facilities and community service organizations. AAHSA influences public policy to ensure that aging Americans receive the services they need and to protect non-profit providers. AAHSA does not charge a fee for its services.

Online information: AAHSA's web site provides eldercare newsletters and other publications that keep members informed on congressional and regulatory action, trends and issues related to aging services.

Types of eldercare services

Assisted Living Facility

A combination of housing and services, such as personal assistance and limited nursing care, aimed at adults who need help to live independently.

Congregate Meals

Low-cost, nutritious meals served in group settings.

Focal Point

A facility that coordinates services for older individuals. Multipurpose senior centers are often designated focal points by area agencies on aging.

Home-Delivered Meals (Meals on Wheels)

Nutritionally balanced meals delivered to those unable to prepare their own.

Home Health Agency

Provides skilled nursing services and at least one of the following therapeutic services: physical, speech or occupational therapy; medical social services; or home health aid. The services must follow a written plan of treatment established by the patient's attending physician and agency staff.

In-Home Service

Services such as home health aid, family respite services, assistance with chores, and visitation, which enable older persons to remain in their homes for as long as possible.

Long-Term Care

Medical, personal, and social services that meet the physical, social and emotional needs of chronically ill and disabled persons. These services are designed to meet needs over a period and may be delivered in an institution, in the community or at home.

Nursing Facility

Institutions or parts of institutions that house people for more than 24 hours. Their main purpose is to provide health-related care and services, including rehabilitation, for people who need nursing care and other services in addition to room and board.

Residential Care Facility

An institution or agency providing accommodations and personal assistance with essential daily living activities for more than 24 consecutive hours. Residents must be unable to sufficiently care for themselves because of illness, or physical or mental infirmity, but do not need registered or licensed practical nurses, except for emergencies.

Respite Care

Allows family caregivers to have a brief rest for a few days or weeks by providing temporary care either in the care recipient's home or in a licensed facility.

Children of Aging Parents (CAPS)

P.O. Box 167

Richboro, PA 18954

(800) 227-7294

www.caps4caregivers.org

CAPS is a nonprofit organization that assists caregivers by providing information on caregiving resources. CAPS provides names and telephone numbers of nursing homes, retirement communities, eldercare law attorneys, daycare centers, medical insurance providers, respite care providers, assisted living centers, and state and county agencies. CAPS can also refer caregivers to appropriate groups for support. CAPS does not charge a fee for its services.

Online information: CAPS' web site contains information about CAPS and its services, how to prepare for being a caregiver and how to search for an eldercare facility.

CareGuide

1160 Battery, 4th Floor

San Francisco, CA 94111

(415) 474-1278

www.thecareguide.com

CareGuide is a for-profit national organization that provides information on eldercare issues such as selecting care, long-distance caregiving and financial issues involved in providing care. CareGuide does not charge a fee for its services.

Online information: CareGuide's web site includes free referrals to nursing and assisted living facilities, home care and care managers. A resource center provides information on topics such as selecting a type of care, long-distance caregiving and Alzheimer's disease. The site also provides a list of books on aging issues, providing care and retirement planning. Individuals can communicate with other families about choosing an eldercare facility, financial and legal issues, and other topics that relate to their situations.

ElderCare Advocates, Inc.

5810 Southwyck Blvd., Suite 100
Toledo, OH 43614
(419) 865-5700
www.eldercareadvocates.com

ElderCare Advocates is a for-profit private company that provides long-term care management to elderly people who wish to live in their homes but need assistance. When home is no longer the appropriate place, the organization assists in placing clients in the best possible environment according to their needs. ElderCare Advocates charges a fee for its services.

Online information: ElderCare Advocates' web site describes the organization and its approach, discusses eldercare topics, and provides links to other eldercare resources.

Texas Department of Aging

P.O. Box 12786
Austin, TX 78711
www.dads.state.tx.us

The Texas Department of Aging is a nonprofit organization that provides a variety of services and resources for the elderly. This organization does not charge a fee for its services.

Online information: The web site includes lists of local agencies and services, eldercare links, publications, information on nursing home care and a resource guide for seniors.

ElderWeb

Bloomington/Normal, IL
309-827-5531 (work)
309-452-1507 (home)
www.elderweb.com

ElderWeb is a nonprofit resource that provides information about the health of the elderly, living arrangements, finance/insurance, eldercare law, helpful organizations, professional resources and library materials. ElderWeb does not charge a fee for its services.

Online information: ElderWeb's web site includes links to more than 4,000 reviewed eldercare web sites.

Texas Association of Homes and Services for the Aging (TAHSA)

2205 Hancock Dr.
Austin, TX 78756
(512) 467-2242

wtsnn.com/organizers/texas-association-homes-and-services-aging-tahsa

TAHSA is a nonprofit organization with a membership that includes 170 nonprofit long-term care providers in Texas and 5,000 nationwide. TAHSA provides information on retirement/nursing homes in Texas. TAHSA does not charge a fee for its services.

Online information: TAHSA's web site includes articles on aging from Texas journals and links to related web sites.

National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys, Inc. (NAELA)

1604 North Country Club Road
Tucson, Arizona 85716
(520) 881-4005
www.naela.org

NAELA is a nonprofit organization that assists lawyers, bar organizations and others who work with older clients and their families. NAELA does not charge a fee for its services.

Online information: The site provides a description of the NAELA as well as eldercare law resources/links and publications.

Recommended reading

- Cadmus, Robert R. M.D., *Caring for Your Aging Parents: A Concerned Complete Guide for Children of the Elderly*. Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1984.
- Hooyman, Nancy, and Wendy Lustbader, *Taking Care of Your Aging Family Members: A Practical Guide*. The Free Press, A division of Macmillan Inc., 1988.
- Horne, Jo, *Caregiving: Helping an Aging Loved One*. Scott, Foresman and Company, Glenview, IL, 1985. (Published by the American Association of Retired Persons)
- Kenny, James, and Stephen Spicer, *Caring for Your Aging Parent: A Practical Guide to the Challenges, the Choices*. St. Anthony Messenger Press, Cincinnati, 1984.
- Love, Joy, *The Complete Eldercare Planner: Where to Start, Questions to Ask, and How to Find Help*. Hyperion, 1997.
- Mace, Nancy L., and Peter V. Rabins, *The 36-Hour Day: A Family Guide to Caring for Persons with Alzheimer's Disease, Related Dementing Illness and Memory Loss in Later Life*. The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1981.
- Rob, Caroline, R.N., with Janey Reynolds, *The Caregivers Guide: Helping Elderly Cope with Health and Safety Problems*. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1991.
- Silverstone, Barbara, and Helen Kandel, *You and Your Aging Parent: The Modern Family's Guide to Emotional, Physical and Financial Problems*. Pantheon Press, New York, 1982.
- Tomb, David A., *Growing Old: A Handbook for You and Your Aging Parents*. Viking Penguin, Inc., New York, 1984.

Some things to consider before making decisions



Before making decisions regarding your loved one, consider the questions on this page.

General Issues

- Who will be the principal caregiver?
- What involvement will family members have?
- Can responsibilities such as shopping, administering medications and driving the individual to doctor's appointments be shared?
- Is communication open and honest between the caregiver(s) and the elderly person? Do family members share feelings and information?

Financial and Legal

- What is the person's financial situation?
- Is there a list of assets, and does it include their values and locations?
- Does the elderly person have a private pension? Is it mailed directly to a bank?
- How much does the person receive in Social Security benefits? Is it deposited directly into the person's bank account?
- Are there other sources of income, such as annuities, stocks or IRAs?
- Does the person have debts such as a mortgage or auto loan?

- Is there a need to apply for Supplementary Security Income (a program administered by the Social Security Administration)?
- Does the person have an eldercare attorney?
- What is the time frame in your state for transferring assets before becoming qualified for Medicaid?
- Is there a will, a living will, a power of attorney or a durable power of attorney that lasts during and beyond incapacitation? Where are they kept?
- Is there a life insurance policy? Where is it kept? Are the premiums paid up? Are the beneficiaries current?
- Is there a long-term care insurance policy?

Housing

- What housing options are possible? Can the elderly person live alone?
- What about an assisted living facility?
- Is a nursing facility or a personal care facility needed?
- Is senior housing or shared housing an option?
- Does the person or family have any "up-front money" available for some period of personal pay in a nursing home?

Physical Well-being

- Does the person have adequate medical/dental coverage? A prescription drug plan? Medicare? Medicaid?
- Does the person have a doctor?
- Has the person had a recent physical? Has a geriatric assessment been ordered?
- Is the person taking any medications? Prescription or over-the-counter?
- Should the person avoid any medications or food, or does the person use any medications that should not be taken together?

After Death

- Are there any prepaid funeral expenses? Any specific funeral wishes?
- What funeral home? A viewing? A family plot?
- Cremation? Any specific desires such as organ donation?
- Can you discuss death with the person for whom you are caring?