

Navigating the Hospital

Hospitalization can be a traumatic experience for older adults and their family caregivers. Aside from coping with their medical condition, a hospitalization means transitioning to the hospital setting, adjusting to a new environment, undergoing evaluations and treatments from hospital staff, preparing for discharge and transitioning back home.

Admission - Insurance information is taken before the patient is admitted for a hospital stay. Insurance information needs to be given to the admissions staff and to the discharge planner with the proper name and address of the insurance company, along with the patient's policy number, ID number, and employer if applicable. The patient's actual social security card should be presented to the admission planner. If the insurance is listed under the spouse's name, the same information will be needed from the

spouse's insurance. If managed care is covering the hospital stay, the client will need a managed care referral authorization if he or she is covered by an HMO or POS.

Medical Leave for Caregivers - If family members are involved during the hospitalization sitting at the bedside with the patient, these family members often must take time off from their job. The Federal Family Leave Act gives family members accrued periods of unpaid leave. Covered employers must grant an eligible employee up to 12 work weeks of unpaid leave during a 12-month period if they have to care for an immediate family member, which includes a parent.

During the Hospital Stay - Family members can have better communication with the doctor(s) by asking questions about the diagnosis, prognosis,

symptoms, and abilities and disabilities of the patient. The hospital social work staff are also available for additional support and access to services in the hospital. Understanding patient rights is also important during the hospital stay. For example, patients have the right to appeal their discharge if they are not ready to go home. In addition, keeping a notepad of daily events such as, medications given, blood pressure levels, doctors who visited, etc., will help family members to know what's occurred.

Discharge planning includes occupational therapy and/or physical therapy orders, training for family members on medical devices and equipment, home care arrangements, determining insurance coverage of post hospitalization care, instructions regarding the patient's medical condition, drug prescriptions, and medical equipment instructions. The discharge planner also identifies the insurance coverage for equipment and services post hospitalization and helps the family coordinate these things.

Long Island Elder Care Resource:

Day Haven Adult Day Care Center is a social model day program providing daytime care for frail, older adults and those with Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia. A typical day at Day Haven includes fun activities, trivia, current events, lunch and snack, exercise, and a variety of cognitive, physical, and social stimulation.

Day Haven has two centers in Suffolk located in Port Jefferson and Ronkonkoma. Their hours are Monday through Friday from 8 AM to 5 PM. Fees are based

on the number of days per week and the number of hours a participant attends the program. There are several methods of payment including long term care insurance, Medicaid through the long term home health care program, Guild Net, and the Nursing Home Transition and Diversion Waiver Program. Visit www.dayhaven.org or call 631-585-2020 for more information.



Family First Home Companions

150 Motor Pkwy. Suite 401
Happauge, N.Y. 11788
P: 631-439-6829
F: 631-813-4634