

CAREGIVER HEADLINES

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8 TIPS FOR IMPROVING THE SAFETY OF A HOSPITAL STAY

Hospitalization is a common concern for caregivers—for **yourselves and those** you are caring for.

Korey Capozza for MSN Health & Fitness offers these eight tips.

1. **Pick a high-volume hospital.** Studies have shown that patients fare better when they are treated at hospitals that care for many patients with a similar illness or condition. So, if you have a choice, select a hospital with the most experience performing the surgery or procedure that you need done.
2. **Ward off nasty bugs.** According to the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, 2 million U.S. patients acquire an infection in the hospital each year. Insist that every hospital staff member washes his/her hands with soap before examining you. Wash your own hands often as well.
3. **Bring an advocate.** Ask a family member or friend to be a second set of eyes and ears, to ask questions of clinical staff,

and to double check your medications & other treatments with doctors & nurses. Being seriously ill is a high-stress, exhausting experience.

4. **Ask lots of questions.** Make sure you understand the medications & treatments you will be receiving—ask the doctor to explain them if you don't. If you need surgery or another serious procedure, ask what will happen, how long will it take, and what to expect during your recovery period.
 5. **Know who's in charge.** Find out the names of your attending nurses and the physician in charge of your care. Obtain a phone or pager number of the doctor who will keep track of your progress.
 6. **Disclose all medications.** The Institute of Medicine estimates that 2 out of every 100 patients admitted to a hospital experience a preventable adverse drug event. Keep a list that includes over-the-counter and herbal supplements.
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8 TIPS

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7. **Avoid surgical site errors.** Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) standards direct that you mark and verify the site of your surgery before anesthesia. Taking this simple step may help prevent a surgery location mix-up.
8. **Focus on getting home.** Hospitals can be dangerous places. The last thing you want to do is spend more time than you need to in a building where antibiotic-resistant germs and other infectious bugs proliferate. Focus your energy on getting home as early and safely as possible. Upon discharge, ask your doctor to explain the treatment plan for the rest of your recovery.

Fire Safety for Your Home

The American Red Cross has compiled the following list of ways to bring more fire safety into your home:

- ◆ Install smoke alarms outside each sleeping room. Test alarms monthly. Replace batteries at least annually.
- ◆ Have at least 1 fire extinguisher in your home. Know how to use it.
- ◆ Consider an automatic fire sprinkler system.
- ◆ Determine at least 2 escape routes from every room of your home. Consider escape ladders for 2nd or 3rd floors.
- ◆ Practice your plan, especially with older adults or people with disabilities, at least twice a year & revise as necessary.

A Family Caregiver's Guide to Hospital Discharge Planning

What is discharge planning? A short-term plan to get your relative out of the hospital.

Who does discharge planning? The discharge planner may be a nurse, social worker, administrator, or have some other title. Know who this person is, understand what the person can and can't do.

When should discharge planning happen? In theory—discharge planning should begin on the day of admission. This is not always practical. It is a good idea to begin thinking about options as soon as possible. Try to avoid making major decisions under pressure. Most times you can work out an acceptable arrangement with your relative & the discharge planner.

Sometimes there are disagreements and your relative may want to go home as quickly as possible and necessary supports aren't in place. As a family caregiver, you may have to balance your relative's preferences and the hospital's needs against the hard realities of the situation.

What will insurance pay for? Caregivers are often shocked to learn that insurance will not pay for many services & items needed at home that are routinely paid for in the hospital. Unless your relative has specific long-term care insurance, many home care needs will not be covered at all or beyond an initial short-term period.

What else should you know? You should be thinking of next steps while your family member is in the hospital. Talk with someone in the hospital about your concerns—social worker, nurse, doctor, patient advocate, or chaplain.

Be realistic. Be persistent. Be prepared.

Call the Caregiver Advisor at 1.888.560.8805 for your **free booklet**, "*A Family Caregiver's Guide to Hospital Discharge Planning*."

Publication of National Alliance for Caregiving & United Hospital Fund of New York. Funded by MetLife Foundation.

CAREGIVER RESOURCE/SUPPORT MEETINGS

Fayette County & Surrounding Area

August 7
 Sept. 4
 Oct. 2
 3:00-4:00 p.m.

First United Methodist Church
 127 North Fourth Street
 Vandalia
 Meets in the library

Jefferson County & Surrounding Area

August 14
 Sept. 11
 Oct. 9
 3:00-4:00 p.m.

Addus Adult Day Center
 108 North Third Street
 Mt. Vernon
 Meets in the North Room

Effingham County & Surrounding Area

August 20
 Sept. 17
 Oct. 15
 3:30-4:30 p.m.

Heartland Human Services
 1200 North Fourth Street
 Effingham
 Meets in Room 119

Marion County & Surrounding Area

August 21
 Sept. 18
 Oct. 16
 4:00-5:00 p.m.

St. Thomas Episcopal Church
 512 West Main Street
 Salem
 Meets in Church Basement

BOOK REVIEW OF THE MONTH

The **Caregiver Advisor Resource Center** is the recipient of a newly donated book—Compassionate Caregiving: Practical Help & Spiritual Encouragement written by Lois D. Knutson.

The author is a caregiver for her mother & has been a pastor for 25 years. Ms. Knutson has been a hospital chaplain, completed Geriatric Pastoral Care Institute, and is a nationally recognized speaker on older adult ministry.

Compassionate Caregiving includes tips for:

- ⇒ Caring for yourself as you care for your loved one
- ⇒ Choosing a nursing home or other care facility
- ⇒ Long-distance caregiving
- ⇒ Giving care to the dying

This book is only available from the Caregiver Advisor. You may go online or to your favorite book store & purchase it. Price ranges from \$10—\$15.

HEARTLAND HUMAN SERVICES WELCOMES DARCY MARKWELL AS CAREGIVER ADVISOR



Darcy Markwell begins her position as Caregiver Advisor on August 2, 2007. She will be meeting many of you at library resource hours, support groups and meetings throughout the month of August.

She will begin handling respite requests and home visits by the first of September.

Darcy may be reached at extension 1062 and her email is dmarkwell@heartlandhs.org.

SENIOR SEMINAR IN SALEM

The Marion County MHASI Advisory Group is hosting a Senior Wellness Seminar in Salem during the morning of **September 26, 2007**. **Mark your calendars now for this free event!** Registration begins at 8:30 a.m.

Round Table Discussion Topics will include nutrition, spiritual, legal, emotional, physical, and financial. Attendees will be able to attend three different sessions.

Informational exhibits, door prizes, and free refreshments are all part of the day.

We are still confirming the location so look for it in the September edition of *Caregiver Headlines*.

HEALTH FAIR IN EFFINGHAM AUGUST 2, 2007 11 A.M.—2 P.M.

Senators Watson, Jones, & Righter are sponsoring "Senior Fair 2007" at the Effingham Knight's of Columbus Hall. It is located at 1501 W. Fayette Street.

Free health screenings are available. It is a wonderful opportunity to gather information about prescription and insurance programs, veterans' benefits, unclaimed assets, financial fraud, and many other programs.

For more information contact::

Senator Watson at 618.664.9108

Senator Jones at 618.242.9511

Senator Righter at 217.235.6033.

Hope to see you there!

Senior Health Fair

Senator Frank Watson's Senior Health Fair is Monday, August 13th from 9 a.m. to 12 noon. It will take place at the Moose Hall located at 328 S. 3rd St. in Vandalia. Free coffee & donuts!

LIBRARY RESOURCE HOURS

Fayette County: First Tuesday of each month

10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Evans Public Library

215 Fifth Street

Vandalia

Next Visit: August 7**Marion County: Third Tuesday of each month**

1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Bryan-Bennett Library

217 West Main Street

Salem

Next Visit: August 21**Effingham County: First Thursday of each month**

10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Helen Matthes Library

100 Market Avenue

Effingham

Next Visit: August 2**Clay County: Fourth Tuesday of each month**

1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Flora Public Library

216 North Main

Flora

Next Visit: August 28**Jefferson County: Second Tuesday of each month**

10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

CE Brehm Memorial Library

100 South Seventh

Mt. Vernon

Next Visit: August 14

Please call at least one day ahead to schedule your appointment. Call the Caregiver Advisor at 1.888.560.8805 extension 1062.

Thank you.

For your Information...

Employees at Heartland Human Services have been on strike since July 2, 2007. This has not, nor will not, affect the programs and services of the Caregiver Program.

While most services of the Caregiver Program are provided off-site most of you will not be affected. We chose to go ahead and host our July Effingham Caregiver Support Group at Heartland Human Services as usual. Picketers did not bother participants who came.

However, if you do not feel comfortable crossing the picket line and you would like to attend the Support Group or access materials from the Caregiver Resource Center please call Linda Warner at 217.347.7179 or toll-free 1.888.560.8805 extension 1046 and other arrangements will be made.

It is my hope that this situation will be resolved prior to the September edition.

HEARTLAND HUMAN SERVICES

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Visit us on the web!
www.heartlandhs.org

ANNOUNCEMENTS

August 2 from 11 a.m.—2 p.m. Senior Fair 2007 at Effingham Knight's of Columbus Hall
(sponsored by Senators Watson, Jones, & Righter)

August 13 from 9 a.m.—12 noon Senior Fair at Vandalia Moose Hall
(sponsored by Senator Watson)

September 13, 2007 5th Annual Spa for the Caregiver's Spirit

September 26, 2007 Symposium for Seniors in Salem