

Attorney Timothy P. Crawford, CPA, CELA*, CAP**
wanted to share this information with you.

YOUR FAMILY AND WHO PROVIDES MOM'S CARE

GREATER MILWAUKEE AREA OFFICES IN BROOKFIELD, GLENDALE, MILWAUKEE, OAK CREEK & RACINE

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Have you ever experienced family envy? You know what I mean; it's where a particular family appears to have it all together, addressing and discussing Elder Care issues with an energetic, cordial courtesy toward each other? Now I am not going to say this is a Disney fantasy, but I will share what I have experienced within my practice of Elder law.

Most families are composed of the following members: there is one child who lives out of state; another lives with the elder parent; and one child resides close to the elder parent but is not actively involved on a regular basis. The key question is, how do we bring the family together to maximize care and positive interaction for the benefit of the elder parent? Here are my thoughts.

Support System

One topic that must be addressed is, who will be the elder's support system if they become ill? While it is true some fortunate elders will not become ill, the chances are greater that as we age, a health issue will develop.

All children should be involved in their parent's care. Having involved family and friends is the single most important way to ensure better, safer care for anyone, but especially the elder. This can be easily accomplished through direct communication by creating a schedule, a medication list, records, a care log and having a signed health care power of attorney.

Schedule

Organize a schedule for family and friends to visit a sick loved one. Stagger visits so you will always have someone with them. Try to rotate visits to avoid one particular family member present all the time, as caregiver burnout is a common factor in elder care. Perhaps the out-of-town child can visit and care for the parent, taking advantage of the Family Medical Leave Act. The close-by inactive child will need to enlist time on a schedule as well.

Hired caregivers and family friends may also be a part of the schedule. The goal is organization and planning where family and friends participate according to a written schedule, leaving little to chance.

Medication List

Medication errors injure 1.5 million people a year, so it is advisable to create a master medication list. In this way, all caregivers, including family, friends, doctors and hospital staff will know the prescriptions the elder is taking to minimize medication error. Prescriptions from different doctors can interact with each other and/or have an unintended negative effect. Include any herbs and vitamins the elder is taking, as this may have an effect as well.

Exact dosage and time the medicine should be taken should be included on the list to avoid over medication. The list should also include: drug name, description, why the medicine has been prescribed and from what doctor. The goal is to have everyone involved familiar with the medicines to be taken.

Records

Create a binder of medical records, surgical, lab, and test results.

Care Log

Lastly, everyone involved in care should journal or summarize what happened in a care log. The goal is to have everyone on the same page to maximize effective care for the elder and minimize conflict or caregiver burnout.

Health Care Power of Attorney

The role of the health care power of attorney is to make medical decisions on your behalf, based on your choices contained in a legal document in the event you are unable to speak for yourself. A designated health care power of attorney is an important component in an elder's care plan. Contact an elder attorney to create a health care power of attorney.

“Those Who Plan Ahead Win. Those Who Don’t Plan Ahead Lose.”

This article is for informational purpose only and is not intended as legal advice. It is recommended that you call Timothy P. Crawford for a free conference to discuss your situation in more detail. Attorney Crawford can be reached at 1-262-634-6659. Please refer to this article when you call.

*Attorney Timothy P. Crawford is a Nationally Board Certified Elder Law Attorney (**CELA**). He has been Board Certified by the National Elder Law Foundation which has been approved as the Sole Certifying Organization for Elder Law Attorneys by the American Bar Association.

Timothy P. Crawford was invited to join the Council of Advanced Practitioners (CAP**) of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys (**NAELA**) in August of 2005. **CAP** is a small group of premier elder law attorneys, all of whom have been members of NAELA for at least 10 years, are certified as elder law attorneys by the National Elder Law Foundation, and are AV rated by Martindale Hubbell, a service that provides an independent rating of the quality of attorneys, as one of the top attorneys in the nation.

Attorney Timothy P. Crawford has been selected as a **Fellow** of NAELA. **Fellow** is the highest honor bestowed by the Academy. Selection as a **Fellow** signifies that his peers recognize the lawyer as a model for others and as an exceptional lawyer and leader.

Attorney Timothy P. Crawford has a superb rating of 10 out of 10 with A V V O.

A V V O has awarded to Attorney Timothy P. Crawford the A V V O Client’s Choice Award.

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