

Dealing with the Sudden Crisis of Eldercare

Eldercare providers and advisers who deal with the public know from experience that the need for long term care can often arise without warning. In many cases, desperate caregivers are frantically trying to find services, advice or care funding sources to help their loved ones with unexpected long term care needs. This sudden need for help often occurs when the loved one needing care has recently demonstrated unsafe behavior, or there has been an injury or sudden illness or there is a pending release from nursing home rehab or the current caregiver can no longer cope. Help must be found right now.

Unfortunately, many of these caregivers -- who are typically operating in crisis mode -- don't know where to turn for help. It's not that there aren't advisory services out there to help them, it's just that the caregivers often don't know where to find these services.

Government caregiver resource services such as area agencies on aging and related ADRC pilot programs typically reach out to caregivers through referrals from hospitals, discharge workers, doctors, home health agencies and nursing homes. Caregivers seeking help outside of this referral network generally aren't aware of government advisory services. In the private sector, help with caregiving issues is generally provided when a caregiver calls a specific agency, nonprofit organization or an advisor. There is no nationwide, private sector one-stop shopping source of help for all the types of care provider services that are available in the community.

The national care planning Council has discovered an answer to help desperate caregivers find the one-stop shop support they need. A 2004 study by the National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP estimates nearly six in ten (59%) caregivers are currently employed. Many of these working caregivers will use their Internet access at work to find the caregiving support they need.

The National Care Planning Council is in the process of developing websites in every state that contain the Internet resources employed caregivers are looking for. Currently, results from websites operating in 10 states indicate that harried caregivers will indeed search out these state care planning council websites for help. For example, one state website sponsored by the National Care Planning Council -- the Utah Eldercare Planning Council website, www.careUtah.com-- last year produced over 1,000 inquiries for help primarily from younger family caregivers. Additional requests for help were also received by Utah Eldercare Planning Council members through traditional outreach networking channels such as eldercare advisers, eldercare service providers, government agency referrals, associations, brochures and community presentations.

The National Care Planning Council is currently seeking qualified individuals to be Directors and oversee geographic service areas of state care planning councils. The Director's job is to coordinate local requests for help from the community and provide needed eldercare services. If you are a professional care provider or eldercare advisor please contact us about this opportunity to help the community and at the same time expand your services by becoming a Director of a Service Area. Or you may simply want to become a member of your local state care planning council.

Contact the National Care Planning Council at **800-989-8137** or by email at inquiry@longtermcarelink.net. To read more detailed information about what about state care planning councils, please go to www.longtermcarelink.net/council.pdf