



STEPS TO TAKE AS A LOVED ONE BEGINS TO FAIL

It can be very confusing and complicated when a loved one begins to fail. Below are some basic steps to get you started to protect your loved one as well as to assist you through this difficult time. Individual needs can vary from one person to another. The agencies mentioned below are suggestions of agencies that provide such services and is not, by any means, a complete list.

1. Request a physical/cognitive evaluation from the doctor. Ask what the diagnosis and prognosis is for your loved one. Can the issue be treated with medication? Do you have the help you need to care for your loved one? A physician can often order Occupational Therapy or Physical Therapy in order to assess your loved one's ability with daily activities. Confirm what therapies are covered by Medicare and what is not covered. If you have long-term health care insurance, you should also know what services are covered and what will need to be paid privately.

2. Know where important information is kept:
 - Birth Certificate
 - Social Security Card
 - Medicare and other health insurance cards
 - Marriage Certificate
 - Death Certificate (for deceased spouse)
 - Divorce Papers
 - Military Records (branch of service, VA ID #, DD 214, dates of service)
 - Driver's License/Organ Donor Card
 - Passport/Citizenship Papers
 - Will
 - Trusts
 - Living Wills
 - Power of Attorneys/Letters of Guardianship/Conservatorship

- Advance Directives (end of life decisions, proxy decision making)
 - Life Insurance Policy
 - Disability Insurance
 - Long-Term Care Insurance
 - Bank Records
 - Safety Deposit Boxes
 - Address Books
 - List of Contacts
 - Information on cemetery plots, funeral and burial instructions
 - Plan for pet care
 - Routine bills including mortgage or rental documents, utility, telephone, homeowners insurance policy, property taxes, garbage and/or water bills, autos including titles and insurance
3. Is your parent able to stay at home alone? Do you need:
- In-home assistance with meal preparation? Dressing? Feeding? Bathing? There are many agencies that provide in-home medical and non-medical care such as BrightStar Care, 720-963-1000, Personal Touch Senior Services In Home Care Assistance, 303-972-5141, Seniors' Resource Center, 303-238-8151 or Touching Hearts at Home, 303-962-1276.
 - Does your loved one need an Adult Day Program? Seniors' Resource Center (SRC), 303-238-8151, as well as other agencies have them. SRC also provides transportation.
4. Are all members of the family in agreement with the plan for your loved one? Do you need mediation services through Jefferson County's Mediation Program, 303-271-5060 or Oval Options, 720-220-8683.
5. Does your loved one have the financial resources he/she will need? Resources/income guidelines vary for Medicaid long-term care programs and adult financial programs. For more information, call Aging and Adult Services at the Jefferson County Department of Human Services, 303-271-4707, or you can check out the Colorado Department of Human Services website at www.colorado.gov . St. Anthony's Health Passport Program through Centura Health can also assist you with what your loved one may be eligible for at www.myhealthpassport.org or 720-321-8940. For Spanish, call 1-866-665-9668. They provide application assistance as well as information about Medicare/Medicaid.

6. Navigators or geriatric care managers can be a great source of help in sorting through everything a person may need and is eligible for. Some resources can be found through Seniors' Resource Center, 303-238-8151, Lutheran Family Services, 303-922-3433 or a private consultant such as Pamela Wilson, 303-810-1816.
7. What other resources might you need?
 - Volunteers of America, Meals on Wheels, 303-297-0408
 - Home Modifications through Volunteers of America, Handyman Program (see above bullet) or Brothers Redevelopment, 303-202-6340
 - Transportation providers can be accessed through Seniors' Resource Center, access-a-Ride, Lakewood Rides, Yellow Cab, etc. Visit <http://www.gettingthereguide.com/>. to see what is available in your area
 - Mental Health issues, Senior Reach, 1-866-217-5808
 - Health and Wellness, call your local recreation center/senior center and ask what activities they offer older adults
8. How can I get more information?
 - Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) houses the Area Agency on Aging (AAA). They administer Federal and State Older American Funds and can be reached at 303-480-6700. They also have a website called The Network of Care with information for seniors at www.drcog.org. or www.drcog.networkofcare.org.
 - AARP: 1-888-687-2277 or www.aarp.org.
 - Blue Books: 303-393-1971 or www.seniorsbluebook.com .
9. Begin now to consider next steps by visiting independent senior apartments, assisted living facilities, retirement communities, and nursing homes in case these are needed in the future. The Blue Book (listed above in #8) and the Senior Housing Locator, www.chscico.org, or 303-831-4046 have listings of facilities. The Colorado Department of Health and Environment (www.cdphe.state.co.us) licenses nursing homes and assisted living settings. The quality of each facility is available on this website or it can be viewed at the facility. The Ombudsman Program for nursing homes and assisted living settings is another resource to gather information about the quality of a certain licensed facility, 303-455-1000.

This journey can be hard both emotionally and physically. Make sure you take good care of yourself along the way. Remember, you can only take care of another person if you are taking care of yourself.