

**Taking Charge: Good Medical Care for the Elderly
and How to Get It**

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APPENDIX F

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Appendix F

Finding a Geriatric Care Manager

One way to avoid long-term care placement is to retain the services of a geriatric care manager. If you do so, your loved one might be able to avoid nursing home placement.

WHAT IS A GERIATRIC CARE MANAGER?

The geriatric care manager (GCM) is a private practitioner in a relatively new area of practice. GCMs contract independently with families to provide medical oversight for elderly community-dwelling seniors. This service is particularly helpful for adult children who live hours away from loved ones. A GCM is a professional who specializes in assisting older people and their families in meeting their in-home health care and long-term care arrangements. GCMs are trained in gerontology, social work, nursing, and/or counseling. Some of the things a geriatric care manager may do include:

- Acting as a contact person for family members who live at a distance and providing information, support, alerts to problems, and reassurance
- Conducting care-planning assessments to identify problems
- Determining eligibility for assistance and need for services
- Screening, arranging, and monitoring in-home health care or other services
- Taking responsibility for financial, legal, or medical issues
- Arranging or offering referrals to geriatric specialists to avoid future problems
- Taking charge in case of emergencies
- Helping an elderly person find a retirement complex, assisted living, adult foster care home, or nursing home
- Assisting an elderly person with moving from her home to a facility
- Advocating for the elderly with physicians, hospitals, caregivers, and governmental agencies
- Providing counseling and support
- Some geriatric care managers also provide therapy (family or individual), money management, and guardianships or conservatorships. GCMs have extensive knowledge about services for the elderly in their community—availability, cost, and quality.

Appendices

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF HAVING A GERIATRIC CARE MANAGER?

One of the benefits of having a geriatric care manager is the flexibility of services that may be offered. A contract between a family member and a GCM will be tailored to the specific needs of your family. A GCM can be particularly helpful when you're the leader who coordinates care for an elderly loved one who lives far from your home. Other benefits of having a GCM include:

Short-term or ongoing assistance. This is important for caregivers who live far away.

Services that are individualized. GCMs can offer services that are client-centered and tailored to meet the client's specific wants and needs.

Flexible scheduling. Many GCMs are available after hours and on weekends.

Continuity of care management. GCMs can be the point man, making decisions to reduce miscommunications and to minimize time, stress, and cost to clients.

Avoidance of medical emergencies. GCMs can monitor your loved one's medical, physical, and psychological health consistently and can help prevent costly crises and unnecessary hospitalizations.

Reduction of nursing home care. GCMs can help your loved one to avoid inappropriate and costly institutional care and overuse of services.

To find a geriatric care manager in your loved one's geographic locality, use the search engine at the website of the National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers at www.caremanager.org or www.findacaremanager.org