



Caregiver Tip of the Month – January 2010

Notes from Area Agency on Aging of North Idaho

Does Grandpa have “Advance Directives”?

If a stroke or serious illness left a family member unable to communicate, who would decide? Do you know what care he would choose? Would he want life sustaining procedures in all circumstances? Would he want comfort care? To ensure choice and personal control, find out about his values and choices. Before a crisis requires action, raise issues of care. Sometimes called “Advanced Directives”, a Living Will and Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care, can designate his preferences. It also gives you a chance to discuss the common attitude, “My family knows what I want”, or “They’ll know what’s best for me” or even “I’m not going to a nursing home.”

- A Living Will describes the care you want. Forms are available at the Area Agency on Aging and from the Secretary of State website- www.sos.idaho.gov and click on the Health Care Directive Registry and then the Living Will and Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care.

Be aware of the resources and options for help: For more information, contact Betsy Bullard, Options Counselor at Area Agency on Aging of North Idaho at 667-3179, ext. 222.

To understand the continuum of care resources in our community, attend the *Care and Recovery Services (CARS presentation-Navigating the Health Care Highway)* in a panel for the Alzheimer’s Association Jan. 14, 6:30 PM at Life Care Center in Post Falls, next to Walmart. Call PJ Christo of the Alzheimer’s Association, 667-2996, if you are interested in attending.

Did you know

- It takes 2 doctors to concur that you are unable to make your choice of care, before your Living Will goes into effect and the decisions are made by your designated health care agent.
- Anyone over the age of 18, that is of sound mind, and acting of his or her own free will, can complete a Living Will.
- Your Living Will does not have to be witnessed or notarized to be valid. As of 2005 it is no longer necessary to have either a witness to your execution of a Living Will, nor to have your signature notarized.
- Especially if your condition is terminal, you would want to have your doctor fill out a POST (Physician’s Orders of Scope of Treatment) which provides specific protocol for care. You can order a DNR wrist bracelet to designate care for EMS personnel by contacting: *Idaho End-of-Life Coalition, PO Box 496, Boise, ID 83701* (Order must include a copy of your physician-signed POST form). Find on the web at: www.abetterwaycoalition.org.