

Being a Medical Advocate for Mom

By Kjartan D. Armann, M.D.

I had the privilege of saving my mother's life, not once, but twice. These experiences included an emergency ambulance transport, hospitalization, intensive care, prolonged rehabilitation, home health and scores of medical appointments with varied medical professionals. I was her medical advocate prior to these experiences; however it was these experiences that taught me what it truly means to be a medical advocate.

When a family member is having a help with a variety of services. It person in charge of working with help both the patient and family The advocate needs to know what directives are in place. These loved one in the event they are for themselves.



medical crisis they usually need is advisable to have just one the medical professionals to get through this rough time. if any advanced medical directives are the wishes of the not able to make the decisions

Remember the physicians and are busy. It is easier for them to discuss the needs and status of the patient with just one family member. They can then pass this information on to everyone else. In this day and age, email is the best way to communicate with multiple family members. If health decisions need to be made, the advocate can coordinate a family meeting.



The advocate should have the ability to help with non medical needs as well. Such as writing checks to pay for ongoing expenses like rent, utilities, and so on. Life goes on even when we are in the hospital. Other family members can assume the responsibility of managing our loved one's personal needs to free up the time of the medical advocate.

As the advocate you will assist with transferring of the patient to other medical facilities and notifying the family of the transfer. You will learn about medications the patient will need and when these medications need to be given. In some situations you will be teaching the patient about these medications, when and how they are taken and even setting up a medication schedule. This would include the use of labeled plastic containers designed for dispensing medication. When multiple medications need to be taken it is useful to learn from the medical personnel (nurse, doctor, and pharmacist) the side affects of the medications and what to look for in the event of a reaction to the medications.

After discharge from a medical facility the patient may need help with setting up appointments, transportation to and from appointments, and even help at these appointments. We have Outreach transportation services available for those patients who are more independent and able to go to appointments unassisted.

It is so important for the medical advocate to help keep our loved one focused on the here and now. At each visit state the date, time, weather outside and what is going on in the world or neighborhood around them. Patients easily get mentally lost when they are in unfamiliar surroundings. They do not have the daily routines they are used to when they are in their own homes so it can be confusing.

As for my mom, she is doing great. It has been five years since her cardiac arrest. She has a good quality of life and a son who loves being her medical advocate.