

Telephone Lists

As I have talked about earlier, becoming my mother's primary caregiver/advocate was more involved than anticipated. It meant knowing and keeping a record of her medications. After our family's decision about which nursing home was best suited for Mother, we talked with the Director of Social Services to learn what documentation they needed upon admission. While Mother was still in the hospital, my father and I visited the different pharmacies to obtain a copy of Mother's prescription history for the past year. It should be noted that the pharmacist required a notarized statement from the patient before releasing this information, but, after telling him about Mother's stroke, who I was and why the information was needed, we obtained the printout. I also produced a copy of Mother's Social Security Card which I kept in my file. I had to sign a release stating this information was for nursing home use only, they would know what medications Mother was taking on a regular basis (although my father was with me at the pharmacies, he wanted me to take control and sign all documents). This action prompted me to keep a copy of all subsequent prescriptions so if there were ever any questions I would have the information readily available. Many pharmacies have ready access to medical books, (i.e. PDR - which describes medicines, its usage and side affects, etc.) or check with your local library.

It seemed every time Mother needed to see a specialist, I was fumbling to find a telephone book and the telephone number. After awhile I became irritated and frustrated with myself for not remembering numbers so I made a chart that had the physician's name, speciality and telephone number which resulted in making the following chart that became an invaluable tool. Here is what my chart looked like but you could add anything you need. It just helps when you need a name or telephone number in a hurry.

Physician's Name	Speciality	Telephone Number

Name	
Social Security #	
Medicare #	
Medicaid #	

Clergy Names/Telephone numbers

In our time of need, I quickly learned that other vital information was needed and the following charts proved invaluable.

Name of Church/telephone number: _____

Address/City/State/Zip code: _____

Name	Position	Telephone Number	
		Work	Home
	Minister		
	Associate Minister		
	Associate Minister		
	Minister of Music		
	Organist		
	Other		
	Other		
	Other		

Comments:

Family and Friends Numbers

Patient confidentiality is paramount with nursing homes, especially now with the new HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996)¹ law taking effect April 14, 2003. Upon admission of the patient, they will ask the family for a list of names and telephone numbers of people (brother, sister, aunt, uncle, friend, etc.) to be contacted for whatever reason. They will also ask that if any of the people mentioned or anyone happens to call, do they have your permission to give out any information over the telephone. If you agree, they will most likely require written permission or ask you to sign an information release form. If you say no, no information including that the person is a resident will be given out.

How do you want the nursing home to contact you: 1) at home; if not there, do you want them to leave specific messages on your answering machine or just the message the nursing home called; 2) at work; 3) cell phone; and 4) pager?

Family/telephone numbers		Friends/telephone numbers	

¹ U.S. Department of Health & Human Services - <http://www.hhs.gov/news/facts/privacy.html>