

Health Care Advocate/Legal Issues
Hospice of Holland Home Social Workers:
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In order to protect your loved ones from financial harm or legal stress due to your incapacity, unexpected or expected death, you must have some basic legal, financial and health documents in place. It is important to have your personal affairs in order, well organized and in a place where your loved ones can find them. Documents such as birth certificates, titles, deeds, insurance policies, retirement-plan records, stock certificates, tax returns, and veteran's papers are some examples of documents that are essential to have stored with your legal, financial and medical directives.

Please remember that it is important for everyone to have financial, legal and health affairs in order as a means of personal protection. Take the time now, with clear thought and reasonable health, to either complete or update your legal and medical affairs. Do not wait for a crisis or health event to arise before protecting yourself and your loved ones. As you know, you and your loved ones deserve the peace of mind that accompanies taking responsibility for yourself and your estate.

The below Top Ten list is designed to help you start, review, or update your records:

1. Determine with your attorney if you need a will or a trust.
2. Complete a "Durable Power of Attorney" form.
3. Complete a "Patient Advocate" form.
4. Complete a Medical Advance Directive."
5. To better understand Social Security Benefits, call 1-800-772-1213.
6. Begin gathering, in one place, all personal documents, including titles, certificates, policies, forms listed above.
7. Begin funeral arrangements; perhaps prepay from your trust.
8. Determine if it is time to complete a "Do Not Resuscitate" form.
9. Complete as many of these things as possible to avoid a probate fee.
10. Get Help! Contact an estate-planning attorney or, if you have computer access, Quicken or Family Lawyer.

Contact Numbers to help with these issues:

Family Independence Agency (to determine if you are eligible for Medicaid)

616-247-6000

Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan

616-456-5664

Senior Neighbors

616-459-6019

This fact sheet is provided as a public service of the Caregiver Resource Network. The Caregiver Resource Network is a collaboration of West Michigan organizations dedicated to providing for the needs and welfare of family and professional caregivers within the community. Funded by the Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan with Older American's Act Title III-E, Family Caregiver Support funds. For more information consult our website at www.caregiverresource.net or call toll free at 1-888-456-5664.