

Caregiver's Dilemma

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Are you jeopardizing your own health to take care of a loved one? In 2009, according to the National Family Caregivers Association more than 65 million people in the U.S. provided care for a chronically ill, disabled or aging family, or friend during the course of a year and spent an average 20 hours a week providing care for them. The value of these services provided for “free” by caregivers was estimated to be around \$375 billion a year.

Caregiver's dilemma occurs when a caregiver's own health, safety, and sanity is ignored for the sake of caring for a loved one. This situation is not healthy and can be dangerous for both parties involved. Providing and meeting healthcare needs for a relative/friend holds many challenges and can be a volatile situation waiting to happen, in which caregiver's must make immediately adjustments and snap decisions that must be appropriate for their loved one.

If you find yourself in this situation, don't panic or worry there are organization to help you get the **“4-1-1 to avoid having to call 9-1-1”**. Your responsibility to your loved one is not to sacrifice your heart, mind, body and soul for them. Your responsibility is to ensure that they are safe from harm, receive the proper nutrition, and the best care that can be afforded to them. Part or all off this care can be delegated to someone else or arrangements such as adult daycare, home healthcare, assisted-living, or even nursing home placement can be arranged.

At Forest Street Compassionate Care Center, we make it a priority to partner with caregivers, it can be very stressful placing a loved one in a nursing home. Families many times feel guilt over placing their relatives and anger at the circumstances that made it necessary. Caregivers often have negative stereotypes about nursing homes and fears about the quality of care their loved one will receive. To help overcome these stereotypes and fears we encourage families to meet with our staff and visit our facility prior to placing their family member. We encourage visitation outside of normal business hours to give caregivers an opportunity to meet staff on different shifts and to see how our nursing operates outside of business hours. By working with families we feel we can communicate more effectively with one another, to help avoid problems and to solve them in a timelier manner when they do arise, and make families feel more empowered. To encourage this we offer the following:

- Regular meetings with family members
- Provide families with resident information handbooks at the time of admission
- Offer quarterly family council meetings
- Recognize and appreciate cultural and ethnic differences
- Strive to provide quality care

It is our goal in partnering with Caregivers at Forest Street Compassionate Care Center

- To make families feel they are important partners in their loved ones care
- To help families feel more comfortable with initiating communication with staff
- To help families feel less isolated and powerless
- To encourage policies that encourage a wider range of family involvement

To get the “4-1-1” on support for caregivers or more information on Forest Street Compassionate Care Center please visit the facility at 3345 Forest Street, Denver, CO 80207, or call (303)393.7600.