

# THE B&B ALERT

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**BEGLEY &  
Bookbinder, PC**  
ATTORNEYS AT LAW  
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Specializing in Elder & Disability Law

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## *Help in Evaluating Long-Term Care Facilities Part 2*

by Philip R. Saunders, Esquire

Last week's B&B Alert discussed considerations in evaluating long-term care facilities. This week we will focus on some of the issues to consider once you have made your facility choice. Even though you may have taken all the right steps, and asked the right questions when looking for a facility, your job is not done. Now that a facility choice has been made, there are many steps you can take to ensure your loved one is receiving the best quality of care.

The most important step you can take to make sure your loved one's needs are being met is to stay involved. This is not meant to imply that facilities make an effort to give better care to residents that have a loved one advocating for them. However, when a facility is aware of issues or concerns they can more easily take steps to resolve them. Nursing facilities have the expertise to provide for medical needs, but the staff may not be aware of the residents personal preferences unless someone can communicate this to them. There is often no better spokesperson for your needs and wishes than a loved one that stays involved in your care. After the resident has been admitted, there are two important events that family or caregiver friends should be involved in. They are the Resident Assessment and the Care Plan Conference.

The Resident Assessment should take place shortly after the resident is admitted. The purpose of the resident assessment is to understand that the resident needs to maintain physical, mental and social function. As part of the resident assessment information will be gathered on the residents physical condition, mental state, habits, activities and relationships. The best source of information on the resident's physical and mental condition is their medical records and examination by health care professionals. Without the involvement of family or friends, information about the resident's habits, activities and relationships cannot be acquired unless the resident is able to communicate and contribute to the assessment information himself.

This is the time at which family should introduce the resident to the staff, and communicate at least some of your loved one's background and circumstances. It is very important that family take steps to familiarize themselves with the staff and especially those that will most often be providing direct care to your loved one. Remember, the staff will vary depending on the time of day, so try to meet everyone not only those that work the shift during your normal visiting times. It is important to keep in mind that the nursing assistant you see regularly is likely not responsible for

making complex health care decisions, so if a medical question arises it would be more efficient to discuss this with a supervising nurse.

After the Resident Assessment has been completed the Care Plan Conference should be held. At this time the information obtained during the Resident Assessment will be used to develop an individualized care plan. There will likely be a physician, nurse, nurse aide, social worker, activities director and a family member involved in this conference. While the professional staff should formulate the care plan, the family member is a valuable resource to the team and can ensure all concerns of the resident and family are met. The care plan will state what each staff member will be doing and when they will complete the tasks.

After this has been completed, both the assessment and the care plan will be reviewed throughout the year, or when a change in the resident's condition occurs. Family should continue to be involved in these reviews to ensure the continuing needs are met. Please remember that family involvement is a good thing, but try not to interfere in the responsibilities of the facility. Interfering in issues that you do not possess the requisite information or technical skill will usually only have negative results. However, any facility should welcome family involvement and you should be able to participate as a member of your loved one's caregiving team.



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On Wednesday, April 5, 2006, our host will be **PHILIP R. SAUNDERS**. The guest will be **VAUGHN SCHILL** of **Lane Bridgers** and the topic will be **Long Term Care Insurance in your financial plan**. Tune in for an hours worth of lively discussion on this important topic. Call in questions are encouraged.



Begley & Bookbinder, P.C. is an Elder & Disability Law Firm with offices in Moorestown, Stone Harbor and Lawrenceville, New Jersey and can be contacted at 800-533-7227. The firm services southern and central New Jersey and eastern Pennsylvania.

The Firm provides services in connection with protecting assets from nursing home costs, Medicaid applications, Estate Planning and Estate Administration, Special Needs Planning and Guardianships. If you have a legal problem in one of these areas of law, contact Begley & Bookbinder at 800-533-7227.

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