



Caring for Elders

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Today it's not uncommon to hear the term "sandwich generation" when talking about baby boomers. These are adults who are not only taking care of their own children, teens, and adult children, but also caring for their own parents. That often means making choices, perhaps because of a parent's failing health or an injury-causing fall that results in the need for immediate intervention and decision-making about caretakers. Being our parents' caretakers requires many things, including finding daycare for adults while we are at work or placing a parent in an assisted living facility.

If that person has a bleeding disorder, an extra layer of complications in terms of finding care is added. Misunderstandings still exist about bleeding disorders—some think hemophilia is contagious, or fear that a person with a bleeding disorder will bleed to death from a minor cut. There are times when placement of someone with a bleeding disorder in a hospital or nursing home brings frantic calls from family members for education to people who try to deny treatment, want to perform invasive procedures without factor, or do not understand factor products or how to manage bleeding disorders.

In those cases, HoG nurses and social workers are able to help out by providing an in-service to the caregivers and/or the facility staff. It's a good idea to include the Hemophilia Treatment Center (HTC) in the planning of your loved ones' care in order to coordinate care between other health care providers and hematologists who manage their bleeding disorders. It's important for a person with a bleeding disorder to wear a Medic Alert® tag and keep the Bleeding Action Plan current. An HoG outreach nurse or social worker can talk to you about the Medic Alert® or Bleeding Action Plan.

There are many resources for caring for the elderly, varying by county and community. Your HoG social worker can be an invaluable resource for helping you find care in your community and dealing with Medicaid or Medicare issues. If you would like to do some research, there are websites devoted to issues you may encounter. The National Council on Aging has two sites: www.ncoa.org and a benefits-specific site at www.benefitscheckup.org. The National Institute on Aging can be found at www.nia.nih.gov. The Eldercare Locator is a public service of the U.S. Administration on Aging and is a good starting place to finding resources for older adults in any U.S. community: www.eldercare.gov/Eldercare/Public/Home.asp. AARP has helpful information on a variety of topics concerning older adults: www.aarp.org. An excellent resource with free tip sheets on home safety, driving assessment, and a care-giving needs assessment is The Caregivers Library at www.caregiverslibrary.org. While the decision to be a caretaker or place an older loved one in an assisted living facility or nursing home may be an extremely difficult decision, you can get help. Many churches and community centers offer peer support, classes and support groups with others who are going through similar situations.