



Aging Committee

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A person who is aging may be facing new health, financial and social challenges. One such challenge is making sure that all of one's doctors are talking to each other. Medical specialists in one area are not necessarily knowledgeable about hemophilia, von Willebrand Disease and related disorders. Hemophilia of Georgia wants to help.

Improved communication about aging is one of the goals of HoG's new Aging Committee. Nurses and social workers will be talking with clients over the age of 50 to make sure that cardiologists, neurologists, urologists, gynecologists and other specialists are talking to hematologists about medications and procedures. Of course this is important for clients of all ages. But additional doctors and other providers typically get involved as a person ages. This can include the staff of nursing homes, rehabilitation centers and hospice facilities.

Another topic being addressed by the Aging Committee is the importance of advanced directives. An advanced directive is a written document that protects your rights if you are unable to speak for yourself. It includes two sections—a living will, which details your wishes about how you want to be cared for, and a health care power of attorney that designates an individual to make decisions for you. In February, the Georgia House of Representatives passed a bill to provide for improvements in the medical advanced directives protocol. The revised document is simplified and easier to use than older versions.

You can get a free advanced directive form from the Georgia Bar Association online at www.gabar.org/public/docs/Form_GeorgiaAdvanceDirectiveforHealthCare.doc. The new document does not have to be notarized and the witnessing system has been simplified.

Another great document is called Five Wishes. This brochure helps you spell out who is to care for you and how you want to be treated when you cannot talk for yourself. It also allows you to share important things about yourself that you would want others to know, particularly people caring for you who are not members of your family. There is a small fee for this very user-friendly document, although discounts are available when they are purchased in multiples. For more information about this document, which is available in several languages, go to www.agingwithdignity.org/5wishes.html.

HoG staff welcomes your ideas, resources and insights about aging. Please feel free to contact your social worker or nurse with this information. The committee has gotten the ball rolling with two "Lunch and Learns" for staff about the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of older adults with bleeding disorders. The committee also is collecting books and articles that will help HoG enhance services.