

## **Care Plan Meetings- Becoming an Active Participant in Your Loved One's Care**

Each and every person in a nursing home has a right to good care under the 1987 Federal Nursing Home Reform Law. The law which is part of the Social Security Act, says that a nursing home must help each resident “attain and maintain” his or her highest level of well being – physically, mentally and emotionally. To give good care staff must **assess** and **plan care** to support each resident’s life-long patterns, current interests strengths and needs. Care planning conferences are a valuable forum for residents and families to voice concerns, ask questions, give suggestions learn nursing home strategies and give staff information (such as resident background and daily routine). This requirement in the law is vital to making sure that residents get good care.

By participating in your loved one’s care plan meeting, you can help staff better understand and meet his/her needs. The care plan meeting consists of an interdisciplinary team of staff members (nursing, activities, dietary, and social services) who work with the resident and the family members to make sure that all medical and non-medical issues including meals, activities, therapies, personal schedules, medical and nursing care, and emotional needs are agreed upon and addressed.

### **Good Care Plans Should**

- Be specific
- Be followed as an important guideline for providing good care for the resident
- Be written so that everyone can understand it and know what to do
- Reflect the resident’s concerns and support his/her well-being
- Use a team approach involving a wider variety of staff and outside referrals as needed
- Assign a task to specific staff members
- Be re-evaluated and revised routinely

### **Be an Active Participant**

Residents and their family members have the right to be involved in the care plan meeting in order to make choices about care, services, daily schedule and life in the nursing home. Even if a resident has dementia, involve him/her in the meeting as much as possible. He/She may be able to communicate at some level and they can help the staff find ways to communicate and work with them.

### **Tips for Preparing for and Participating in Care Plan Meetings Before the Meeting**

- Ask staff to hold the meeting at a convenient time for you, and plan your list of questions, needs, and goals
- Ask for a copy of the current care plan so that you can examine each aspect thoughtfully
- Know about or ask the doctor or staff about your loved one’s condition, care, and treatment

**During the Meeting**

- Make sure the resident is involved and listened to carefully
- Discuss options for treatment and for meeting your needs and preferences
- Ask questions if you need terms or procedures explained to you
- Ask for a copy of the care plan, and find out who to talk to if changes on the care plan are needed

**After the meeting**

- Monitor whether the care plan is being followed
- Inform the resident's doctor about the care plan if he/she is not directly involved
- Talk with nurse aides, staff and the doctor about the care plan
- Request another meeting if the plan is not being followed

Participating in care plan meetings is a way to be heard, raise questions and come to a clear agreement with the facility about how the resident will be cared for.

Source: National Citizens' Coalition for Nursing Home Reform Assessment and Care Plan Fact Sheet