



FAMILYCARE Senior SolutionsSM inc.

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May is Older Americans Month—the Perfect Time for Families to Discuss Plans for Long-term Care

([Portsmouth, Va.](#), April 13, 2010) – Recognizing the diversity and vitality of today’s senior Americans who span three generations, the [Administration on Aging](#) is commemorating [Older Americans Month](#) in May with the theme, “Age Strong, Live Long!” In honor of the national awareness campaign, FamilyCare Senior Solutions is encouraging adult children and their parents to take time during the month to discuss and plan for future long-term care needs.

“Now is the time to talk to your parents about their future,” said Christine Warfel, a certified Geriatric Care Manager with [FamilyCare](#). “Don’t wait until there’s an emergency. It is important to have this discussion while your parents are in good health and can share with you their wishes for long-term care.”

Part of a burgeoning [industry of health and human services professionals](#), Warfel and her associate Angela Whitlock are two of only three certified Geriatric Care Managers who work in the Hampton Roads region. Their job is to help adult children and their parents create an overall plan that addresses the many facets of aging, including medical, social, financial and environmental concerns.

Broaching the subject with parents may seem daunting. Warfel recommends a simple approach.

“Tell your parents that you’ve been thinking about your own future and retirement—and that you’ve been wondering about their plans,” said Warfel, who urges all siblings to be involved in the conversation. “Then ask if they will share important documents and information.”

Warfel suggests having access to Social Security numbers, insurance policies, health insurance cards, deeds, financial records and safe deposit keys, to name a few. If parents refuse, “ask them to prepare a list of these items and let you know where it can be found in the event of an emergency,” she added.

In situations where the siblings cannot agree about how to proceed, a Geriatric Care Manager can act as a family moderator. Additionally, they can be instrumental in gathering materials and developing a plan for adult children who live far away from their parents.

“Geriatric Care Managers can open up the lines of communication among family members who are separated by distance,” said Whitlock. “We can coordinate medical and home care assistance, in addition to providing emotional support for everyone involved.”

If needed, they may also help families with decisions about alternate living arrangements and assist in the transition process.

As certified Geriatric Care Managers, Warfel and Whitlock must be re-certified every three years and log at least 1,500 hours of service annually and 45 hours of continuing education.

[Geriatric Care Management](#) is one of many services provided by FamilyCare Senior Solutions. Since 1983, FamilyCare has been southeastern Virginia’s leader in healthcare and home services for families. Through a staff of 200 screened, bonded and insured employees, FamilyCare helps its clients navigate the changes and challenges of aging while remaining in their own homes. For more information, visit www.forfamilycare.com or call (757) 399-9700.

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Questions To Ask Your Parents About Long-Term Care

1. Do you have an estate plan?
2. How would you describe your financial situation?
3. Should you become ill, who is to handle your finances?
4. What kind of health insurance do you have? Do you think it's enough?
5. Do you want life support intervention if you become seriously ill? If yes, for how long?
6. Would you talk with me about your thoughts for your funeral?
7. Has anyone recently expressed concerns about your ability to drive safely?
8. Does it make sense to explore resources and services that may help you maintain your independent lifestyle?
9. Where do you keep your important documents?
10. Would you make a list of all your important information? If you'd rather not share it with me now, please let me know where it can be found, if necessary.

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