

# PLANNING EASES STRESS OF CARING FOR AGING PARENTS

What if one of your parents suddenly ended up in the hospital unable to communicate and the news from the doctor isn't good? Now you must decide whether or not to continue life support. And to make matters even worse, you're faced with thousands of dollars in medical bills not covered by insurance or Medicare.

It's a grim situation, and one we hope never to face. However, planning for legal and financial issues now will save you the stress of dealing with them in the midst of an emotional crisis and allow you the opportunity to honor your parents' wishes.

The longer you are in a care-giving situation, the more health issues both you and your aging parents will face. So, the sooner you work together to make arrangements to care for an aging and incapacitated parent (while you're both still healthy) the better off you and your entire family will be.

According to a survey conducted by the National Alliance for Caregiving several years ago, most caregivers don't adequately plan for the costs of caring for their loved ones. This high incidence of insufficient financial planning held true regardless of their age, income or the level of care-giving burden.

Sometimes caregivers pay large amounts out of their own pockets if they haven't planned ahead and this can be as high as \$171 per month for special food, home modifications and clothing.

Good planning offers lots of freedom later on when the need arises. The key to successful planning is working with your parents and other family members to reach decisions together. It helps the aging parent cope if they are part of the decision-making process.

Work with your parents and an attorney, if you can, to establish the documents that clearly state your parents' wishes. There are legal forms available on the internet or through the library and your Pastor can help you too. Here's what you need:

**Power of Attorney**

**Health Care Proxy**

**Living Will**

**Living Trust**

**Will**

*Contact us for further definition of these terms. We'd be happy to be of service!*

