

# The Lamplighter

The Lamplighter is a bi-monthly publication produced by the employees of Starlite Caregivers, with the purpose of providing useful information for family members, healthcare professionals and caregivers.

Byline articles and opinions expressed herein are not necessarily the opinion of Starlite Caregivers. These articles are intended to be a general discussion of the subject matter and should not be construed as medical advice.

Starlite Caregivers is a Texas based company that provides in-home care services to adults, primarily seniors. Starlite was founded in 2005 on the premise that people can maintain their independence best when they are in their own home.

For more information regarding your caregiving questions or any of the articles in this publication, please contact:

**Starlite Caregivers**  
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Austin, Texas 78756  
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## Helpful Websites

**Starlite Caregivers**  
[www.starlitecaregivers.com](http://www.starlitecaregivers.com)

**Area Agency on Aging - Capital Area**  
[www.aaacap.org](http://www.aaacap.org)

**National Family Caregiving Association**  
[www.thefamilycaregiver.org](http://www.thefamilycaregiver.org)

**Caring Today - Practical Advice for the Family Caregiver**  
[www.caringtoday.com](http://www.caringtoday.com)

**Family Caregiving**  
[www.familycaregiving101.org](http://www.familycaregiving101.org)

**Alzheimer's Association**  
[www.alz-austin.org](http://www.alz-austin.org)

**AGE of Austin**  
[www.ageofaustin.org](http://www.ageofaustin.org)



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## Organizing for Caregiving

Are you responsible for caring for a loved one? If so, you will need to organize your loved one's medical information and records to be an effective caregiver. Here is a list of information and records for you to gather:

### MEDICAL INFORMATION

*List of Doctors* - include name, specialty, phone number and address for each.

*List of Prescriptions* - include name of drug, dosage, and prescribing doctor.

*List of Known Allergies* - also include known drug reactions.

*Pharmacies* - include the phone number, address, and hours for local pharmacy; include phone number and website for mail order pharmacy.

### MEDICAL INSURANCE

*Patient Identification Card* - for each insurer.

*Policy* - for each insurer; Examples include health, disability, and long-term care insurances and drug coverage.

### MEDICAL / LEGAL DOCUMENTS

*Directive to Physician and Family* - (aka Living Will) this document communicates an individual's wishes about medical treatment if the individual is unable to make his/her wishes known because of illness or injury.

*Power of Attorney for Medical Decisions* - names another person to make health care decisions for an individual if he/she is unable to make such decisions himself.

*Who May Receive Medical Information Form* - (aka Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act or HIPAA) names who can receive your medical information.

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## Tips for Aging Gracefully at Home

### Planning Activities at Home (part 2)

Planning activities for the person with Alzheimer's disease involves continual exploration, experimentation and adjustment. Consider the following approaches:

- ♦ **Offer support and supervision.** You may need to show the person how to perform the activity and provide simple, step-by-step directions.
- ♦ **Concentrate on the process, not the product.** Does it really matter if the towels are folded properly? Not really. What matters is that you were able to spend time together and the person with Alzheimer's feels as if he has helped do something useful.
- ♦ **Be flexible.** When he insists that he doesn't want to do something, he might be telling you he can't do it or fears doing it. Or if he insists on doing it a different way, let it happen and fix it later.
- ♦ **Be realistic and relaxed.** Don't be concerned about filling every minute of the day with an activity. The person with Alzheimer's needs a balance of activity and rest.
- ♦ **Help get the activity started.** Most people with Alzheimer's still have the energy and desire to do things, but lack the ability to initiate and plan it.

- ♦ **Let him know he's needed.** Ask, "Could you help me?" Be careful; however, not to place too many demands on the person.
- ♦ **Stress a sense of purpose.** If you ask the person to make a card, he may not respond. But, if you tell him you are sending a special get-well card to a friend, he may enjoy helping.
- ♦ **Don't criticize or correct the person.** If the person with Alzheimer's finds a harmless activity that seems significant or meaningful, encourage him to continue.
- ♦ **Encourage self-expression.** Include activities that allow the person a chance to express himself. These activities include but are not limited to painting, drawing, music, conversation, gardening, etc.
- ♦ **Break activities into simple, easy to follow steps.** Too many directions overwhelms.
- ♦ **Assist with difficult parts of the task.** If you're cooking and the person can't measure ingredients, finish the measuring and say, "Would you stir this for me?"
- ♦ **Try again later.** If something isn't working, try again later or adapt the activity.

- By Alzheimer's Association, Action Series

## Odyssey HealthCare Introduces Specialized Hospice Program called CareBeyond

Patients who suffer from end-stage chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) can benefit from Odyssey's new hospice program. This program enables patients who experience repeated hospitalizations to remain at home or in their place of residence and still receive care.

As symptoms worsen, COPD patients experience increased difficulty breathing, lung infections, weakness, anxiety and stress. Families and patients often struggle to cope with the effects of the disease. As patients experience some of the symptoms with the disease they end up in the hospital rather than staying in their homes.

The CareBeyond clinical staff, includes RNs, Social Workers and Spiritual care staff among others. These staff are available 24/7 to assess and address symptoms and visit the patient if needed. Respiratory Therapists will evaluate and consult with patients and their families as well.

The Odyssey CareBeyond program offers education for patients and their families about what to expect as the disease progresses, proper use of medication and equipment, managing symptoms, and reducing anxiety.

**To learn more about Odyssey CareBeyond for COPD patients, contact Odyssey HealthCare at 1-888-ODSYCARE (637-9227) or 512-310-0214.**

### The Alzheimer's Project on HBO

The ALZHEIMER'S PROJECT debuted May 10 on HBO. It was created by the award-winning team behind HBO's acclaimed "Addiction" project. The series took a close look at groundbreaking discoveries made by the country's leading scientists, as well as the effects of the disease both on those with Alzheimer's and their families.

The ALZHEIMER'S PROJECT is a four-part documentary:

1. "The Memory Loss Tapes" which provides an up-close look at seven individuals living with Alzheimer's through the progression of the disease.
2. "Momentum in Science" takes viewers inside the laboratories and clinics of 25 leading scientists and physicians, revealing some of the most cutting-edge research advances.
3. "Grandpa, Do You Know Who I Am?" with Maria Shriver captures what it means to be a child or grandchild of someone with Alzheimer's.
4. "Caregivers" highlights the sacrifices and successes of people caring for their loved ones' with Alzheimer's.

**To watch the ALZHEIMER'S PROJECT go to [www.HBO.com](http://www.HBO.com), [www.alz.com](http://www.alz.com) or contact your local Alzheimer's Association Chapter to order or view a DVD.**

### Nursing Homes Get Rated

The federal government now has an online tool consumers can use in evaluating nursing homes. The program is called "Nursing Home Compare" and gives one to five stars to 16,000 nursing homes as well as flags the most troubled homes. It is available at [www.medicare.gov/NHCompare](http://www.medicare.gov/NHCompare).

The National Citizens' Coalition for Nursing Home Reform, an advocacy group, warns that some data provided by nursing homes to the Nursing Home Compare website may contain errors. Consumers should also check with states and other sources to get a better picture of facilities.

Consumers should check for updates which can appear every month because nursing homes often have high turnover rates, which affect patient care.

The government labels the most troubled facilities as "Special Focus Facilities" - a designation that shows up when a facility is found on Nursing Home Compare.

- By Jane Zhang, Health Costs, May 31, 2009

### Organizing for Caregiving cont.

#### MEDICAL / LEGAL DOCUMENTS CONT.

*Out-of-Hospital Do Not Resuscitate Order* (aka OOHDR) this is an instruction to EMT's or others in an out-of-hospital setting not to take measures to resuscitate the individual.

*Power of Attorney* - names another person to manage an individual's legal and financial affairs if he/she becomes unable to do so.

After a long illness, you may have one more act of caregiving: carrying out your loved one's last wishes. It can be source of comfort to know that you are doing what a loved one wanted. You will find this much easier to do if you have discussed last wishes and gathered these documents while your loved one is still well enough to communicate.

#### LAST WISHES

*Body Disposition Authorization Affidavit* - communicates an individual's wishes about disposition of remains.

*Appointment of Agent to Control Disposition of Remains* - names another person to make all decisions about disposition of remains after death; especially important if an individual names a non-family member.

*Body, Organ or Tissue Donation* - usually completed forms or a card carried in one's wallet.

*Preference Regarding Burial or Cremation* - best if put in writing.

*Preference Regarding Funeral or Memorial Service* - best if put in writing.

*Final Resting Place* - cemetery plot, columbarium, ashes scattered.

*Information for Obituary* - important dates and accomplishments, survivors, where donations may be sent.

Once you gather this information, it's very handy to file these records in an expanding file folder. Be sure to get one with a flap that closes so that you do not lose important papers. Bright colors are easy to spot and grab quickly in an emergency. It is also a good idea to copy all of the information for a second folder as a back-up as well as tell someone where to find the information.

- By Amy Praskac, On the Record  
[www.OnTheRecordOrganizing.com](http://www.OnTheRecordOrganizing.com)