

Being in the Know-Part 3

Being in the know means being an informed consumer about significant areas in your life. Do you presently have aging parents who need more care than they did before? Many challenges exist that people face in making decisions for their loved ones. There is a fine balance between making these decisions while wanting to preserve their dignity and independence in later life. Have you had questions and concerns about:

1. Financial responsibilities that cannot be handled by the elderly parents; such as estate planning, and/or deciding on a power of attorney.
2. Future living arrangements for elderly parents.
3. Dealing with the emotional aspects of caring for aging parents and the impact on family members and/or significant others.
4. Resources for assistance with health concerns.

There are many valuable resources listed below that are available to seniors in the state of Michigan. The DOC Work/Life web page is a good starting point. You can access the web page at: www.michigan.gov/corrections, click on “Human Resources”, and click on “Work/Life Services”. The Eldercare Page and the Legal Page list several valuable resources such as:

- a. Area Agencies on Aging Association of Michigan
- b. Michigan Office Of Services to the Aging
- c. Medicare
- d. State Bar of Michigan (Michigan On-line Self Help Center, Consumer Tips and Alerts)
- e. American Association of Retired Persons-AARP (This agency will help AARP members with legal services for the fraction of the cost of a private practice attorney).
- f. United Way -211 (a free telephone number that connects people with community services such as health care, job training, mortgage foreclosure assistance and more).

The Michigan Office of Services to the Aging (OSA) is a beneficial resource for State of Michigan citizens. Their phone number is (517) 373-8230. To visit their website go to <http://www.michigan.gov/miseniors>, click “Search for Services”, and click on “Search by Service Type.”

The following topics will appear:

- Care in the Home/Housebound
- Employment and Volunteering
- Families and Caregivers
- Financial Help
- Health and Nutrition
- Housing
- Long-Term Care

- Protection/Legal Services
- Transportation

OSA also has an electronic newsletter, Resources for Aging that includes current resources and events. To access the *free* newsletter visit the OSA website at www.michigan.gov/miseniors, and locate “Resource Library”. The following topics are available:

- Fact Sheets and Guides on: Assisted Living, Guide to Hiring Paid Caregivers for In-Home Services, Health Fraud, What you Can Do to Protect Yourself, and more.
- Publications and brochures on: Nursing Facility Eligibility, Medicare Savings Program, and more.

The Office of the Attorney General provides Consumer Alerts to inform seniors of unjust and deceiving business practices, and to furnish guidance and information on various issues of concern. For more information you can reach this office by calling toll-free at 1-877-765-8388. Visit their website at www.michigan.gov/ag/0,1607,7-164----,00.html#helpingseniors, and click “Find Out More!”

Another valuable resource is the Eldercare Law of Michigan, home of the Legal Hotline for Michigan Seniors. Their phone number is 1-800-347-5297. This hotline is staffed by professionally trained attorneys, and is available to all Michigan residents 60 years of age and older regardless of income. Hotline attorneys determine if callers have a legal problem, give *free* legal information over the phone, and provide brief services such as calling a third party or writing a letter to resolve a legal problem. Problems that cannot be resolved by the hotline are referred to other legal organizations or to private practice attorneys who agree to charge a reduced fee.

If you would like to discuss your concerns with a licensed professional counselor please contact the State of Michigan Employee Service Program (ESP). You can talk with a counselor by phone anywhere in Michigan by calling 800-521-1377. You also have the option of speaking to a counselor in person at the Lansing or Detroit offices. Visit ESP’s web page at www.michigan.gov/esp

References

Michigan Office of Services to the Aging website: <http://www.michigan.gov/miseniors>

Office of the Attorney General website:
<http://www.michigan.gov/ag>