



THE CARE PARTNER PROJECT™

How to Get the Care You Want
for the People You Love

CHECKLIST

HOW TO SUPPORT A LOVED ONE'S MEDICAL CARE FROM AFAR

1. It's important to have critical medical history

info and related legal documents, in both in print and electronic formats if possible: Patients' charts could have error – get corrections, as needed. Know username and passwords for electronic records.

- Make paper copies to share with doctors or nurses who may ask.
- Store on your own phone and your loved one's phone. Keep paper records in a binder or folder.
- Make sure all of your loved one's doctors have the same set of complete and correct records.

2. Medical providers cannot share info with you about your loved one without the patient's legal written permission. Doctors may have their own Privacy/HIPAA forms, but you can also download from a .gov site from the state where your loved one lives.

3. Help your loved one complete these documents:

- Medical Power of Attorney
- Advanced Directives
- POLST/MOLST

Fill-in-the-blank versions are available for download on .gov sites in your loved one's state (forms can be customized).

Try to have good, detailed conversations when filling out these forms with your loved one. (Tough issues are raised, but very helpful in the long run.)

The patient's personal values and choices must be reflected in their documents

4. Go to your loved one's doctor appointment(s) via phone or iPad. Call office staff in advance to let them know. Expect possible reservations or push-back. Make your case: you are a help to them! For example, you can say:

"I can make this appointment go quickly for the doctor: I am prepared with questions that my loved one is concerned about."

5. With your loved one, create a list of questions and topics to cover before any doctor appointments .

- List questions in order of priority
- Take notes on doctor's answers or ask to record on your phone so you and your loved one can listen and take notes later. Explain as a benefit to the doctor, e.g., *"We will listen to the recording later, so we won't have to call your office if we miss something today."*



6. When your loved one is in the hospital, buddy up with a nurse for updates and Information.

- Call the nurse's station every day at the same time
- The best time is 2 - 5pm. Try to talk to the same nurse each time
- If your loved one is in Intensive Care (ICU), call twice a day, 7am and 7pm

7. For every call with a hospital nurse, ask about:

- Tests ordered and results
- Medications started and stopped (why?)
- Vital signs (any trends?)
- Daily case conference notes about your loved one
- Your loved one's spirits

8. Arrange for good communication during the hospital stay:

- Visit your loved one by smart phone or iPad. Ask to participate in doctor visits ("rounds") or any bedside shift change conversations by phone or iPad.
- Ask the nurses to let you know times for morning rounds and bedside shift changes
- This information is intended as a guide only. It is not medical advice. Please confer with your medical providers throughout the day. Hospital social workers, case managers and advocates may help coordinate this.

9. No matter how stressed or worried you may be, try for an attitude of gratitude. After your loved one is discharged, consider sending thank-you notes to those who helped you.

10. More great tips!

- Watch this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hFJE6NymC08>.
- And go here: <https://TheCarePartnerProject.org/TIPS>—and so much more!