



**motion picture  
pioneers  
assistance  
fund**

# SOCIAL SERVICES CORNER

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## LONG-DISTANCE CAREGIVING: DOES IT WORK?

**Question:** My dad lives alone in another state. As his emergency contact and power of attorney, is there a strategy to managing his care from a distance?

**Answer:** Yes. There are successful strategies you can use to help a loved one who lives far away. The key to success is having the right resources in your dad's community and the right support in yours.

Millions of Americans provide long-distance care for an older adult primarily by telephone. Can your loved one hear well enough to use the telephone? Most states have programs that provide an adaptive telephone free of charge, so check with your local utility or disability office. The telephone is the lifeline for daily management. It enables you to communicate with your relative's doctors, caregivers, neighbors, pharmacy, and local meal delivery services. Make sure you have legal authority, such as power of attorney (POA), allowing you to share information. Also keep copies of insurance policies, burial arrangements, medical records, and identification.

When the telephone is not enough, consider hiring a geriatric care manager (GCM), a professional with training and experience in handling the medical and

psychosocial affairs of seniors. GCMs may go to appointments, help complete forms, arrange transportation services, and most important, be there in an emergency. According to GCM Dorothy Fried, LCSW, "No senior should be alone in the emergency department." GCMs bill by the hour. The amount of hours needed is determined after an initial home visit.

Technological innovations are being developed that allow seniors to remain safely at home with distant supervision. There are automated medication reminders, alarms that can notify the long-distance caregiver, and emergency call devices that can be worn.

Finally, don't forget to set up support for yourself. You cannot be available by phone 24/7. You need a backup as well as breaks. Share the responsibility with a professional who'll keep in touch with you, a friend, online support group, or family member, and remember to ask for help.

Sources: "Caregiving at a Distance," Orly Avitzut, M.D., *Consumer Reports on Health*, September 2011. Family Caregiver Alliance, [www.caregiver.org](http://www.caregiver.org). National Association of Geriatric Care Managers, [www.caremanager.org](http://www.caremanager.org).

## JOKE OF THE MONTH

**Doctor: Nurse, how is the little girl doing who swallowed ten quarters last night?**

**Nurse: No change yet.**

—*Pretty Good Joke Book*, Highbridge Company (May 2012)

Laughter is known to boost the immune system, lower blood pressure, burn calories, and release pleasure-inducing chemicals in the brain.

### Go Green!

Receive *Social Services Corner* by email.

Call (888) 994-3863, ext. 2370, or email [info@wrmail.org](mailto:info@wrmail.org).

**Do you or someone you know need our assistance? Call toll-free (888) 994-3863 or visit [www.wrpioneers.org](http://www.wrpioneers.org) to find out more about our assistance programs.**



The Motion Picture Pioneers Assistance Fund is a program of the Will Rogers Motion Picture Pioneers Foundation.



## MAY IS NATIONAL ELDER AND DEPENDENT ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH



No one likes to talk about elder abuse—and this just allows it to continue. Elder and dependent adult abuse laws protect seniors over age 65 and adults younger than 65 who depend on others for their basic needs. What constitutes elder abuse is a matter of state law.

Forms of elder abuse include the following:

- **Physical:** The appearance of bruises, burns, cuts, scratches, welts, bumps, or rashes. Internally, there may be pain from injuries or infections.
- **Sexual:** Any nonconsensual sexual activity, including unwanted touching. People with advanced dementia cannot give consent for sexual activity.
- **Financial:** Asking seniors to sign checks, make purchases for others, make bank withdrawals, hire vendors for services (scams), or lend money.
- **Psychological/emotional:** Abusers may threaten or intimidate seniors verbally or nonverbally by giving someone the “silent treatment.” Isolation or social

abuse may involve withholding mail, intercepting phone calls, or socially isolating someone as a way to conceal malfeasance.

- **Neglect:** Failure to provide care as required or needed. Self-neglect is when a senior fails to provide for his or her own health, safety, and basic needs. Abandonment applies to someone who has physical custody of an elder and deserts them with no provision for their health or safety.

Reporting abuse is a matter of law. Anyone can report suspected elder abuse to law enforcement, adult protective services, or long-term care ombudsmen. These resources are available nationwide.

The threshold for reporting abuse is whether you have “reasonable suspicion.” Aside from physical evidence, if it feels like something wrong has taken place, if you sense an elder is afraid or hiding something, if you notice money disappearing, listen to your instincts. It is not your job to determine if the law has been broken—only to alert the proper authorities. It may seem intimidating, but you could be saving a life!

Source: Go to [www.elderjustice.com](http://www.elderjustice.com) to learn about abuse prevention in your community.

## NEW ADDITIONS TO THE MPPAF'S NATIONAL RESOURCE DIRECTORY

### National Eye Institute, [www.nei.nih.gov](http://www.nei.nih.gov), (301) 496-5248

The National Eye Institute conducts and supports research and educational programs that help prevent blindness, reduce visual impairment, and increase the awareness of services and devices available for people with low vision. Learn more about NEI's research and educational programs, and community resources at its website.

### [www.safercar.gov](http://www.safercar.gov)

Sponsored by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, this website provides information regarding crash test ratings, vehicle defects and recalls, and automotive safety technology. Sign up for vehicle recall notifications, register child safety seats, and locate child safety seat inspection stations by visiting the website.



### QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“ I tell you this thing of trying to keep the world amused is a tough job. ”

—Will Rogers

To view our entire National Resource Directory, please visit [www.wrpioneers.org](http://www.wrpioneers.org).