

## **Chapter 9: Conclusion**

This Handbook is designed to assist very special people: those who are willing to step up and help a vulnerable population: frail elders who are not only sick, but unable to cope mentally and financially with their current lot in life. Anyone willing to serve as a guardian for an indigent nursing home resident should be able to get whatever help, guidance, and assistance needed to do the job well.

The nursing home system will be better and safer as more and more guardians take their places as integral parts of the healthcare system, which we hope will treat us all fairly and competently. Guardians will not only assure the rights of incapacitated nursing home residents, they will also improve the quality of life in the long-term care system as they help nursing home staff, ombudsmen, and DPH surveyors to meet their goal of seeing that the system works well for all.

A guardian should not be reluctant to ask for help as the demands of the task undertaken become greater when the needs of the ward increase or become emergencies. Even well trained and experienced guardians find the job demanding and ask for help when needed.

A guardian should organize the affairs of the ward and maintain good medical and financial records. Maintaining a journal is a good idea, and using a checklist like the one at the end of this Chapter will help keep the guardian's thoughts organized, and make things run more smoothly.

A guardian should not be reluctant to seek counsel on issues grand and small. If the ward cannot help with information about his or her wishes regarding medical care, there may be other sources whom the guardian can consult: relatives, friends, or associates. At all times, the guardian must use the ward's values when deciding medical issues, whether they relate to minor treatment, surgeries, participation in research projects or studies, organ donations, Alzheimer's research involving the post-mortem study of the patient's brain, or any other issue. The guardian's decisions must be informed by the perennial question: What would be the ward's wishes if she or he could understand the situation and speak to me about those wishes? That is the challenge of the guardian: To enable the ward to enjoy life to the best of his or her capability and according to his or her own wishes.

GUARDIAN'S CHECKLIST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Ward

\_\_\_\_\_  
Social Security Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth

Date prepared:

The records and important documents of the ward are stored in one of the following locations:

(A) \_\_\_\_\_

(B) \_\_\_\_\_

(C) \_\_\_\_\_

**Item**

Guardianship appointment: decree of court \_\_\_\_\_

Birth certificate \_\_\_\_\_

Marriage certificate \_\_\_\_\_

Durable power of attorney document (original) \_\_\_\_\_

Health care proxy document (original) \_\_\_\_\_

Last will and testament (original) \_\_\_\_\_

Life insurance policy/policies \_\_\_\_\_

Health insurance policy/policies \_\_\_\_\_

Nursing Home care plan \_\_\_\_\_

Funeral contract/trust \_\_\_\_\_

Deed(s) to real estate \_\_\_\_\_

Military/veteran's documents \_\_\_\_\_

List of bank accounts \_\_\_\_\_

Retirement papers \_\_\_\_\_

Pension information \_\_\_\_\_

Motor vehicle title documents \_\_\_\_\_

List of creditors \_\_\_\_\_

Credit card statements \_\_\_\_\_

List of family, friends \_\_\_\_\_

List of stored or loaned items \_\_\_\_\_

List of treating physicians \_\_\_\_\_

List of medications \_\_\_\_\_

Records re: business income \_\_\_\_\_

Records re: Spouse or children \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Emergency contacts:**

Doctor \_\_\_\_\_

Clergy \_\_\_\_\_

Attorney \_\_\_\_\_

Accountant \_\_\_\_\_

Insurance agent \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_