CAREGIVERS ARE INVALUABLE, BUT SOME ARE DISHONEST

Paying a caregiver can be a fact of life for seniors, or for adult children arranging help for their parents as they age. While the number of dishonest caregivers is relatively small, the financial injury they can inflict should lead anyone to exercise great care in hiring. This is as much a concern for active, vital seniors as it is for those who have lost some ground.

Dishonest caregivers do not advertise themselves as such and often go to great lengths to gain your trust. Once they have that trust, they may start writing legitimate checks for groceries or bills – but move on to accessing those same accounts for their own personal use.

Thousands of dollars can disappear in moments.

There is a safeguard. This document includes a list of organizations that provide referrals to reputable home health care providers. Just as you would not engage an unlicensed electrician, or drive with an unlicensed driver, it is in your strong best interest to opt for a caregiver whose qualifications and skills have been verified.

MICHAEL W. MORRISSEY
NORFOLK DISTRICT ATTORNEY
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DESIGNATED HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

BayPath Home & Community Services ____________ **1.800.287.7284**
Dover

HESSCO Elder Services ____________ **1.800.462.5221**
Canton | Dedham | Foxborough | Medfield
Millis | Norfolk | Norwood | Plainville | Sharon
Walpole | Westwood | Wrentham

Old Colony Elder Services, Inc. ____________ **1.800.242.0246**
Stoughton | Avon

South Shore Elder Services ____________ **781.848.3910**
Braintree | Cohasset | Holbrook
Milton | Quincy | Randolph | Weymouth

Tri-Valley Elder Service, Inc. ____________ **1.800.286.6640**
Bellingham | Franklin | Medway

Spring Well ____________ **617.926.4100**
Brookline | Needham | Wellesley

HONESTY IN HOME HEALTH CARE

HOW TO...

SPOT FRAUD & ABUSE
FIND A CERTIFIED CAREGIVER
REPORT A PROBLEM

SAFE SENIORITY

NORFOLK DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

WARNING SIGNS

- If the caregiver insists on access to ATM or credit cards.
- The caregiver begins to open your mail, particularly bank and credit card statements.
- They whisk statements away without showing them to you.
- The caregiver asks the senior for a secret, short-term loan. Secrecy is a sign that they do not intend to repay the money.
- Friendship with the caregiver leads to being isolated from others.
- The caregiver, even if considerably younger, becomes romantically involved with their "client," perhaps even accepting expensive gifts.

TIPS FOR SENIORS

- Get references for anyone who manages your money.
- Get monthly accounts of all financial dealings.
- Save your receipts.
- Document what you have approved and not approved.
- Involve trusted family members early in your personal and financial affairs. This enables them to follow your wishes, should it become necessary in the future.

TIPS for FAMILY MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

- Make unscheduled visits.
- Talk openly about the potential for dishonest caregivers.
- Underscore the danger of keeping financial secrets.
- Negotiate permission to keep track of your family member or friend's bank accounts. Then watch for large withdrawals, unusual ATM activity or signatures on checks and receipts that don't appear authentic. Contact the banks holding those accounts and ask if they will flag large withdrawals – many institutions will do this.
- Immediately intervene if the caregiver appears to be trying to isolate the senior. Talk with the mail carriers, neighbors, meal delivery personnel and others who have frequent contact with your loved one. Give them a way to notify you if they are denied contact or sense something is not right.

SAFE SENIORITY

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HOW TO FIND CERTIFIED CAREGIVERS

Every town in the state of Massachusetts has a designated health care provider that will help you find agencies that are certified to meet your specific needs.

To find the name and contact information of the provider that serves your town, simply refer back to this brochure.

Additional services may also be offered through your local Council on Aging or other civic organizations.

Seniors and their families can also hire a private geriatric care consultant who will meet with the families, assess the client's needs and develop a comprehensive plan with input from caregivers, professionals, and others. A list of geriatric care consultants is available through Geriatric Care Managers of New England at the following phone number: 617.426.3533.

NURSE AIDE REGISTRY

If you are hiring someone privately, as part of your screening process, you can call the Nurse Aide Registry at the Department of Public Health to inquire of any complaints made in the past. 617.753.8143.

REPORT IT!

If you or someone you know has been the victim of a dishonest caregiver, please call your local police department immediately. You may also call the numbers listed below:

Department of Public Health

HOTLINE ____ 1.800.462.5540

To report fraud by a personal care worker or homemaker who is licensed or employed by a licensed organization.

Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs

HOTLINE ____ 1.800.922.2275

To report fraud by an unlicensed home health care worker, such as someone who has been privately hired by the family.

Attorney General's Elder Hotline

HOTLINE ____ 1.888.243.5337

To report fraud by someone who did not have a prior personal relationship to the senior (attorneys, financial managers, etc).

For TTY/TDD users, call the Massachusetts Relay Service.

TTY/TDD ____ 1.800.439.2370
(Hearing Impaired)

VOICE ______ 1.800.439.0183