

# Planning for Your Discharge:

A checklist for patients and caregivers preparing to leave a hospital, nursing home, or other health care setting

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_



# Planning for Your Discharge

During your stay in a hospital, nursing home, or other health care setting, the staff will work with you to plan for your discharge. You and your caregiver are important members of the planning team. (Caregivers are family members or others who will be helping you after discharge.) Below is a checklist of important things you should know to plan for a safe discharge.

## Instructions:

- Review the checklist early and often during your stay.
- Talk to the staff (for example, a discharge planner, social worker, or nurse) about the items on the checklist.
- Check the box next to each item when you or your caregiver complete it.
- Use the notes page to write down important information that you need to remember.
- Skip any items that don't apply to you.

- |  |                                     |   |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|
| <b>1.</b> Do you know where you will get care and who will be helping you after you are discharged? You may be at home or in another setting. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ask the staff to explain your options and make sure they understand your wishes.</li></ul>   | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>You</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Your family member or other caregiver</b> |
| <b>2.</b> Do you understand your health condition(s)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ask what is likely to happen with your health.</li></ul>   | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>You</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Your family member or other caregiver</b> |
| <b>3.</b> Do you know what problems to watch for and how to handle them? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ask what to do and who to call if you have problems.</li></ul>  | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>You</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Your family member or other caregiver</b> |
| <b>4.</b> Do you know what each of your prescription drugs does? Do you know how to take them, and what side effects to watch for? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ask who you should call if you have questions.</li><li>• Tell the staff what prescription drugs, over-the-counter drugs, or supplements you took before you came to the hospital or other health care setting.</li><li>• Ask if you should still take them after you leave.</li></ul> | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>You</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Your family member or other caregiver</b> |

**5.** Do you know what medical equipment (like a walker) you will need?  **You**  **Your family member or other caregiver**

- Ask who to call if you have questions about your equipment after you leave.

**6.** Do you know which of the items below you will need help with and for how long?  **You**  **Your family member or other caregiver**

- Bathing, dressing, grooming, using the bathroom
- Shopping for food, making meals, doing housework, paying bills
- Getting to doctors appointments, picking up prescription drugs

**7.** Do you feel comfortable doing other tasks that require special skill like using medical equipment, changing a bandage, or giving a shot?  **You**  **Your family member or other caregiver**

- Ask someone to show you if you're not sure. Then, show them you can do these tasks.
- Ask who to call if you need help.

**8. Question for the family member or other caregiver:**  **You**  **Your family member or other caregiver**  
Do you understand what help the patient will need from you? (This may be some or all of the items from Question 6 or 7.) Are you able to give that help?

- If you aren't able to give that help, ask the staff to change the discharge plan so you both get the help you need.

**9.** Are you worried about how you or your family are coping with your illness?  **You**  **Your family member or other caregiver**

- Ask to speak to a therapist or find out about support groups, if needed.

**10.** Do you know what doctor or other healthcare provider to call if you have questions or problems?  **You**  **Your family member or other caregiver**

- Write down their names and telephone numbers.

**11.** Do you know what appointments and tests you will need in the next several weeks?  **You**  **Your family member or other caregiver**

**12.** Do you have written discharge instructions that you understand, your list of drugs, and a summary of your current health status?

- Bring this information with you to your follow-up appointments.

**You**

**Your family member or other caregiver**

**13.** If you will get services from a home health agency, compare the agencies in your area.

- Visit [www.medicare.gov/HHCompare/Home.asp](http://www.medicare.gov/HHCompare/Home.asp). People with Medicare can also call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.

**You**

**Your family member or other caregiver**

**14.** If you will get services in a nursing home, compare the nursing homes.

- Visit [www.medicare.gov/NHCompare/Home.asp](http://www.medicare.gov/NHCompare/Home.asp). People with Medicare can also call 1-800-MEDICARE. TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.
- If possible, visit the nursing homes. For a tip sheet on what to look for when visiting a nursing home, visit [www.medicare.gov/Nursing/Checklist.pdf](http://www.medicare.gov/Nursing/Checklist.pdf).

**You**

**Your family member or other caregiver**

**15.** The back of this checklist has the names of agencies that can offer you and your caregiver more support. Find information on the following:

- Community resources to help you live at home.
- Other resources to help you make long-term care decisions.

**You**

**Your family member or other caregiver**

**16.** Do you understand how much of your prescription drugs, equipment, and services will be covered by your insurance and what you will have to pay?

- Ask to speak to a social worker about possible resources to help with insurance or payment.

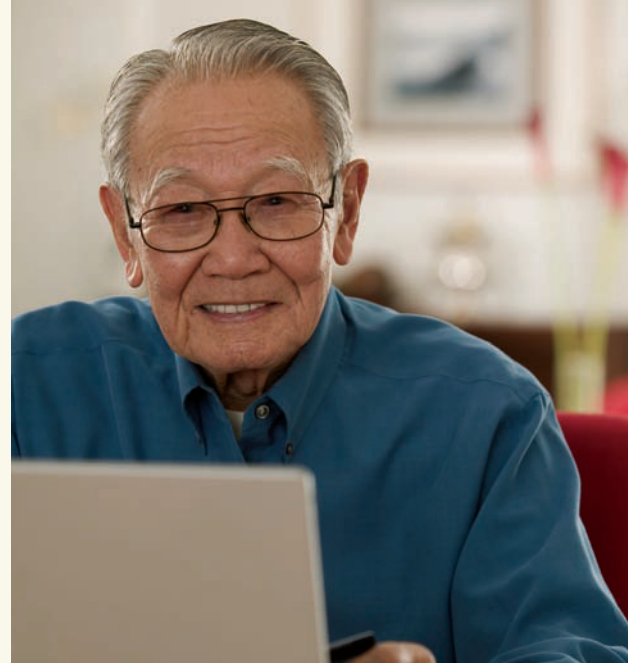
**You**

**Your family member or other caregiver**

**\* Important note:** If you have Medicare and feel you are being asked to leave a hospital or other health care setting too soon, you may have the right to ask for a review of the discharge decision by an independent reviewer called a Quality Improvement Organization (QIO). The QIO can explain your appeal rights. To get the number for the QIO in your state, call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048.

# Important Information

The publicly-funded agencies below can give you and your caregiver more information on community services, like home-delivered meals and rides to appointments. They can also help you to make long-term care decisions. Ask a social worker in your health care setting for more information on community services and support.



## Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs)

AAAs assist adults age 60 and older and their caregivers. To find the AAA in your area, call The Eldercare Locator at 1-800-677-1116 weekdays from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. (EST) or visit [www.eldercare.gov](http://www.eldercare.gov).

## Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs)

ADRCs assist people of all incomes and ages. Forty-three states have ADRCs. To find out if your area is served by an ADRC, visit [www.adrc-tae.org](http://www.adrc-tae.org).

## Centers for Independent Living (CILs)

CILs assist people with disabilities. A state-by-state directory of CILs can be found by visiting [www.ilru.org/html/publications/directory/index.html](http://www.ilru.org/html/publications/directory/index.html).

## State Technology Assistance Project

The State Technology Assistance Project has information on medical equipment and other assistive technology. Contact the Rehabilitation Engineering and Assistive Technology Society of North America (RESNA) at (703) 524-6686 to get the contact information for your state or visit <http://www.resna.org>.

## State Medicaid Agency

The State Medical Assistance (Medicaid) office provides information about Medicaid. To find your local office, visit [www.nasmd.org/links/links.asp](http://www.nasmd.org/links/links.asp). (Scroll halfway down the page to see a clickable map of the United States.) You can also call 1-800-MEDICARE, and say, "Medicaid."

## Medicare

For more information about the Medicare Program, call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048. You can also visit [www.medicare.gov/LongTermCare/Static/Counseling.asp](http://www.medicare.gov/LongTermCare/Static/Counseling.asp).

## Notes

**\*This checklist isn't a legal document. The official Medicare program provisions are contained in the relevant laws, regulations, and rulings.**