



## Daniel P. Seink Co., Ltd.

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### THE ELDER CARE COORDINATOR

The life care planning Elder Care Coordinator works with the client and his family in conjunction with the Elder Law Attorney to achieve the best possible care, no matter where the client is living. Assistance is provided to senior clients in their homes, in the hospital, and in residential care facilities. The Elder Care Coordinator guides the client through the maze faced by individuals with chronic care problems.

Elder Care Coordinator helps clients by:

- **Reducing the frustration that is common when dealing with long-term care decision-making.** For most families, this is a new experience. The information and changes can be overwhelming. The Elder Care Coordinator arms the senior and his family with education and support to guide them through the process.
- **Providing caregiver coaching and care advocacy.** For those acting as a spouse's or parent's caregiver, the Elder Care Coordinator helps the caregiver become the best, most effective caregiver possible. Caregiver support and counseling, and finding additional sources of care, are crucial in order to be able to maintain a loved one in the home. If that pillar of support crumbles, a move outside the traditional home setting may be necessary sooner than would otherwise be required, resulting in increased long-term care expenses and a host of necessary healthcare decisions. The Elder Care Coordinator can help the client and family avoid this scenario and help the client stay in the home longer than he might otherwise be able to. The Elder Care Coordinator also acts as the care advocate for care recipients.
- **Helping the client understand a diagnosis, a disease process, or treatment options.** The Elder Care Coordinator provides information and answers questions needed for the client and family to understand and make decisions about the client's particular healthcare needs. She provides on-going education, support, counseling, and guidance.
- **Identifying shortfalls in home safety and current supports.** Are there dangers within the home, such as the stove, the basement laundry room, the front entrance stairs, the tub, that present an unnecessary risk of injury? Is there a need for medication monitoring or administration to avoid a medical crisis and hospitalization? Is there a need for bill payment services or asset management to avoid deficiencies or financial abuse? Is transportation for purposes of accessing food, prescriptions, and socialization causing issues with respect to driving or other problems? The Elder Care Coordinator identifies the risks and limitations inherent in living at home and helps address them to improve quality of life and avoid incidents requiring an early exit from the home and all of the additional care and expense that entails.

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Daniel P. Seink, Esq. is Certified as an Elder Law Attorney by the Elder Law Foundation, which is accredited by the American Bar Association and the Supreme Court of Ohio Commission on Certification of Attorneys as Specialists

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- **Guiding the client to anticipate and plan for inevitable changes, as well as to react to sudden changes that were not anticipated.** The Elder Care Coordinator knows that as a person ages and healthcare problems progress, things will change. She provides foresight where she can, as well as sensible planning to cope with the changing issues. The Elder Care Coordinator provides continuity and on-going support by maintaining long-term relationships with the client and client's family. She helps deal with the situation if a crisis does occur: The Elder Care Coordinator contacts the hospital discharge planner early in the process to coordinate transfer to a proper rehabilitation setting; identifies what caused the crisis and whether it is avoidable in the future; monitors care and therapy through the transition back to the home and ongoing transitional care until the senior has fully recovered from the incident.
- **Aiding the client in planning for placement and transfers.** Sometimes it is not possible to continue to provide care for the client in the home setting. The Elder Care Coordinator's assessment skills and experience can assist in determining if that time has come and what to do next.
- **Helping to make a decision about a nursing home or assisted living facility.** When the client can no longer remain at home, other placement is considered. The Elder Care Coordinator's assessment of the client's needs, her experience, and her knowledge of the best resources to meet the required needs help the client and family determine the best place for continuing care.
- **Helping to monitor changes in mood and behavior and address those changes.** If this occurs, the Elder Care Coordinator helps the family figure out the cause and solutions. If medications are part of the answer, the Elder Care Coordinator helps the client and family understand the benefits and risks.
- **Identifying symptoms of depression and getting it managed.** Although depression is not a normal part of aging, it has prevalence among those with chronic illness. Depression is sometimes hard to recognize. The Elder Care Coordinator helps both the client and family manage the client's depression.
- **Identifying changes in pain and getting it managed.** Seniors suffer pain needlessly because they cannot or do not communicate the intensity of their symptoms. Pain symptoms are sometimes misinterpreted as "behavior" and managed with the wrong medication. The Elder Care Coordinator helps stop that from occurring.
- **Assisting the client in understanding public benefits that can help pay for needed care (such as Medicare, Medicaid, and VA programs).** The area of healthcare benefits available to Americans is complex. The particular programs are frustrating to maneuver and confusing. It is crucial to have an advocate who can help the senior and his family through this process so that the senior receives the benefits he is entitled to receive and protects all of the resources that he is entitled to protect. Long-term care is expensive. Care coordinators help figure out how to afford to pay for the best quality care and protect the client's life savings.

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- **Personalizing meaningful “Care Plans.”** The Care Plan is what guides the care provided in a facility. It includes specific problems, goals, and approaches. The Elder Care Coordinator works with staff to create a Care Plan that best meets the needs of the client.
- **Helping the client and family understand and participate in “Care Conferences.”** State and federal regulations require nursing homes to complete routine, thorough assessments. Upon completion, a care conference is scheduled for staff and family to discuss the current status of a resident. The Elder Care Coordinator attends the conference with the senior and/or his family to raise questions and help cultivate solutions.
- **Providing frank communication about the client’s health status.** When there are problems or changes, the Elder Care Coordinator helps communicate that information to the family to avoid surprise and to enable the client and his family to make informed decisions. This results in peace of mind for the entire family and the ability to make well informed decisions.
- **Providing education about lesser known community services.** A few examples of additional services to which the care coordinator may link the client and family are: counseling, family mediation, respite care and reimbursement programs through private foundations and (non-Medicaid) tax dollars, specialized footwear, adaptive clothing, low vision testing, and driving evaluations. The above is just a sampling of the types of issues that the Elder Care Coordinator helps senior clients and their families address. Each situation is unique and requires personalized planning, and each client’s situation presents an ever-changing picture.

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