

Creating your preferred future
in retirement - now!



Navigating the Health Care System



A Four Part Series

- **The Family Doctor and Beyond...**
- **Overtaken By Illness...**
- **No Longer Independent...**
- **Advocating For Health**



Health Advocacy

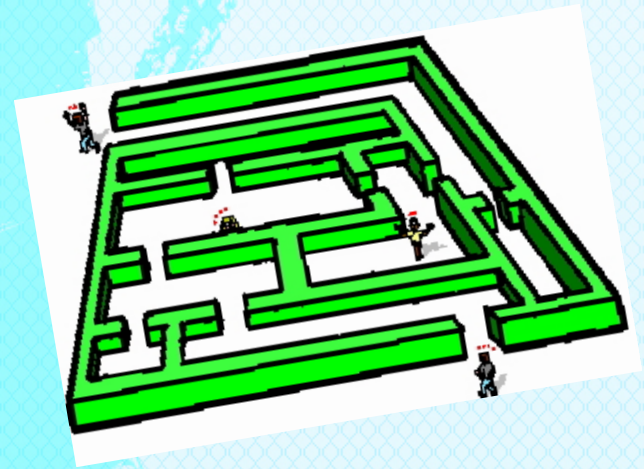
What's a Health Advocate? Why Do You Need One? Tools for Empowering Yourself and Others in Accessing Health Care



- What's in a title?
- How health advocacy can help you
- Become one or find one – a look at the pros and cons
- Basic how-tos for becoming a health advocate
- The burden of care

The Rise of the Health System Navigator – Why?

- Historical perspective
- Complexity of health care system
- Negative effects of unintegrated care
- Lack of knowledge and vulnerability
- Lack of time to take this on personally
- Trying to navigate the system can be frustrating and overwhelming – “like going through a maze”
- Advocacy gets faster care



What's In A Title?



- Health System Navigator/Patient Navigator/ Patient Advocate/Health Advocate
- Spokesperson/Supporter/Believer/Sponsor/Promoter/Campaigner/Backer
- Professional Patient Advocates – government/in-hospital/organizations/private navigators
- Volunteer Advocates – family /friends/associates

Advocacy for Health

How can a Patient Advocate Help?

- **Speaking up for patients in need of guidance through the health care system**
- **Creating a personal health record**
- **Attending appointments**
- **Getting information/asking questions**
- **Writing down pertinent info from your caregivers as well as your questions**
- **Knowledge translation**



How can a Patient Advocate Help?

- Exploring and clarifying your options
- Coordinating services and referrals
- Overcoming barriers to ensure prompt Dx and treatment
- Assuring your wishes are carried out when you can't
- Dispute resolution
- Visiting clients at home

A yellow sticky note is pinned to the bottom right of the slide with a red pushpin. The note contains the text "Advocacy Alert Act Now!" in red, bold, sans-serif font.

**Advocacy Alert
Act Now!**

Health Advocacy

Benefits for the Patient

- Better understanding of disease/treatment
- Improved emotional and practical support
- Improved coping
- Improved wait times
- Increased compliance with treatment plan
- Better preparation for medical appointments
- Increased satisfaction with care
- Potentially better treatment outcomes



Finding a Health Advocate to Work for You

- Niche market or growing trend?
- Publicly funded navigators
- Private navigators - “Buyer Beware”
 - Websites/referrals/interviews
 - Qualifications/experience
 - Wide range of costs/commission
 - Wide variation in services offered
 - Short-term or long-term?
 - Location



Advocacy for Health

What to look for in a Patient Advocate

- **Someone you trust**
- **Willing to act on your/your family's behalf**
- **Able to work well with the client and members of their health care team as a liaison**
- **Good communication skills**
- **Conflict resolution skills**
- **Assertive and tenacious**
- **Health care system experience**
- **Health professional**



Health Advocacy

How Tos



- Take courses/attend seminars or workshops on assertiveness training, mediation and conflict management
- Do internet research, read books and articles on advocacy, relevant diseases, conditions, treatments
- Learn about resources
- Expand your general knowledge of the health care system
- Make sure you're prepared emotionally
- Stay on top of "the case"

OR

- Reach out to a family member, friend or professional advocate



Health Advocacy

How to Complain Successfully

- Know your goal
- Define the problem succinctly
- Plan before you act
- Documentation and detail
- Learn the complaints process
- Use an advocate eg. in-hospital patient advocates
- Regulatory bodies/hospital quality committees/appeal boards/political recourse/the media



Health Advocacy

The Burden of Care

Maintaining Balance and Preventing Burnout

- Ask for help
- Give yourself a break
- Practice acceptance
- Take care of your health
- Seek support



Health Advocacy

Additional Resources

Healthy Debate

Free e-book “The Personal Navigator – a patient’s guide to Ontario’s health care system” and email access to a Patient Navigator

<http://healthydebate.ca/2014/12/topic/wait-times-access-to-care/free-e-book-healthy-debate>

Health Quality Ontario

<http://www.hqontario.ca/>

CARP

<http://www.carp.ca/>

Community Care Access Centres (CCACs)

<http://www.ccac-ont.ca>

Health Advocacy

Additional Resources

The Care Guide (including access to Care Connect Helpline)

<http://www.thecareguide.com/>

Advocacy Centre for the Elderly

<http://www.ancelaw.ca/index.php>

AdvoConnection

<http://advoconnection.com/>

Regulated Health Professions in Ontario

http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/hhrsd/about/regulated_professions.aspx

Ontario Health Services Appeal and Review Board

<http://www.hsarb.on.ca/>

Questions?

Rebecca Metcalfe RN, BScN, MScN, PRP

President, Life Ventures

Email: [rebecca @lifeventures.org](mailto:rebecca@lifeventures.org)

Phone: 416-497-4911

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