Discharge Planning and Decision-Making

Discharge Planning
Discharge planning starts at admission. This may seem strange to you. It may feel too soon to think about such things since you don’t seem ready. It is important for staff to develop a plan early so that you are linked to the best resources as soon as possible.

Decision-Making
People who survive a stroke may not be able to make decisions about financial matters, healthcare needs or discharge planning. The nurse case manager and/or social worker may need to assist family in sorting through what can be complex systems.

Advance Medical Directives
These are legal forms that allow you to state your health care wishes in the event that you become unable to do so. These papers let others know about your health care wishes and can help guide care. They make it easier for doctors and family members to follow through with your health care wishes. There are two kinds of advance directives: the Durable Power of Attorney of Health Care and a Living Will. These documents are free of charge. You can ask the hospital social worker or chaplain to help you complete the forms.

Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care
This document allows you to name someone you know and trust to act on your behalf when you can no longer speak for yourself. This person, or health care agent, gives guidance to your health care team only when the patient is unable to do so. This form must be filled out by the patient when they are able to understand the information.

Living Will
The Living Will covers only “end of life” decisions when life-support machines and/or feeding tubes are being used. Unlike the Power of Attorney for Health Care it does not allow a person to choose someone to make healthcare decisions for them.
Guardianship
Guardianship of a person and estate may be needed for a patient who is unable to make decisions and has not completed a health care power of attorney form. The guardian will be able to handle health and/or financial matters. Temporary and/or permanent guardianship can be pursued as needed. There may be out of pocket legal expenses when pursuing guardianship. The social worker can assist you with this process.

Disability and Insurance Resources

Private Disability Insurance
If a person is employed and has health insurance, there is the chance they may have also signed up for disability insurance through their employer. This can be confirmed by calling their Human Resources office.

Social Security
There are two types of Social Security, SSI and SSDI. No benefits are payable for partial disability or for short term disability. This process can take several months. A person may be considered disabled if He/She can not do work they could do before, can not adjust to other work because of a medical condition and the disability has lasted or is expected to last for at least one year or to result in death. Benefits may be applied for by contacting Social Security at 800-772-1213, visiting your local county Social Security office or applying online at socialsecurity.gov.

Medical Assistance (also known as Medicaid or Title 19)
This is health insurance for patients who meet certain income and disability guidelines. Disabled patients often meet these requirements. One can apply for this program through the county Human Services Department or online at https://access.wisconsin.gov/. Ask your social worker for additional information and assistance.

Affordable Care Act Information
You may go online to healthcare.gov. or call your local Aging and Disability Resource Center: www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/ltcare/adrc/ for additional information on your options. You can also ask your social worker or case manager if you require additional information.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person’s health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 3/2014 University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#7427