

Talking to **Your Parents** About Home Care

Guidelines for facilitating In-Home care for
your aging parents in West Texas.



Kendall Warren



**Located Just North of
Midland Country Club!**



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It can be hard for any of us to accept difficult truths, especially when it comes to our own abilities. As our parents age, they will slowly lose their independence. They may face frailty, memory loss or even chronic disease; everyday tasks such as preparing a meal or driving to the store pose a challenge. Your primary concern is for their safety but you also respect their desire for independence.

At **Heritage Care Advocates**, we have helped thousands of families navigate the difficult waters of aging. We create personalized care plans for seniors so they receive the lifestyle assistance, personal care and companionship that is suited to their needs while maintaining as much independence as possible. We provide families with peace of mind and older adults with security and comfort.

Our framework for an open and honest discussion about home care can help you and your loved ones recognize the need for care and understand how it can positively impact your lives.

Warning Signs That Your Parents Need Care At Home

- **Increasing Forgetfulness.** You might notice that dad is always searching for his car keys or mom has trouble remembering appointments. Though it is natural for older adults to become more forgetful, it could also be an early warning sign for Alzheimer's.
- **Messy Home.** You might notice that the garbage is not being taken out, dishes are left undone or laundry is piling up. A messy home may indicate that daily activities such as cooking and cleaning have become difficult for your parents.
- **Poor Hygiene.** You might notice that mom is no longer taking care of herself or dad hasn't brushed his teeth in a few days. Poor hygiene could be the result of Alzheimer's or other conditions.
- **Falls or Injuries.** You might notice bruising and other discoloration even though dad won't admit to falling. Frequent falls could be a sign that your loved one has diminished motor skills, has difficulty walking or balancing by themselves or suffers from vertigo or nausea.
- **Changes in Personality.** You might notice that mom has become withdrawn or moody and no longer enjoys the hobbies and activities she used to participate in. Changes in personality can be indicative of Alzheimer's or depression caused by the aging process and loss of independence.
- **Social Isolation.** You might notice that dad no longer makes any trips out of the house. Maybe he no longer keeps up with his friends or goes for walks around the neighborhood. Social isolation can have many causes, but it could be a sign that your parents are having difficulty managing their declining conditions.

How Can Home Care Help You?

A caregiver can be a tremendous source of support for seniors as they age. **Heritage Care trained** caregivers can provide support for all activities of daily living, including bathing, grooming, dressing, ambulating, household tasks, meal preparation and transportation. They also provide companionship, encourage mental and physical stimulation and promote independence and overall wellness. Caregivers are available for a few hours every day or around-the-clock, depending on each client's individual needs. Our care plans at **Heritage Care Advocates** are tailored specifically to the circumstance and we have trained caregivers for various situations including older adults who are transitioning home from the hospital, recovering from a stroke or a major medical procedure, or managing chronic conditions such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's or diabetes.

Arranging a Family Meeting to Discuss Aging

At HCA of West Texas, we recommend a family meeting with your loved ones to discuss your parents' care needs. It is critical to set an agenda and address all the difficult questions associated with aging, but it is even more important to understand how every family member feels about the various care options.

- **What are the signs of aging and what do they mean for your parents?** Perhaps you notice that mom has trouble remembering recent events, or that dad's meals are now limited to canned foods. It could be that one of them experienced a recent fall. Either way, it is important to be upfront and communicate your concerns; help your parents understand why you're worried about them and give them an opportunity to share their own concerns with you.
- **Do your parents prefer to age at home like 9 out of 10 seniors do?** Home care provides a solution that serves as a comprehensive alternative to an assisted living facility or nursing home. Care plans are personalized so your parents can receive care for a few hours a day

or around the clock, depending on their needs. Focus on the advantages: your parents can continue to age comfortably at home, they will receive personalized attention from the caregiver and the cost can be lower than facility care.

- **What concerns has aging presented for each involved party?** For your parents, it may be a fear of dependence or frailty or mortality. For you or your siblings, it may be feeling overwhelmed at the prospect of caregiving, or worried at the thought of your parents being alone in an emergency. It is important for everyone to communicate and address their concerns to prevent fear from overwhelming the conversation.
- **What is most important to your parents?** It could be safety, or independence, or cost. Many of our parents simply don't want to become a burden to us as they age. Draft a list of tasks that you or your siblings would have to take on without additional support. Make sure you communicate clearly so as to arrive at an informed and collective family decision.
- **What does a caregiver do, exactly?** Communicating the role a caregiver plays in your parents' lives is important. Caregivers are not there to take away their independence and do everything for them; caregivers are there to help them when they need it, stand back when they don't and provide a regular source of comfort, compassion and understanding.

Most important, make sure that you listen carefully to what your parents share with you. Maybe you're only able to introduce the possibility of home care and they need time to accept it, or maybe they recognize the need for home care right away. This is the most important decision of their lives and it is important to respect their choices.

Depending on your family situation, you might consider asking a **Heritage Care Advocate** care manager to facilitate your family meeting. We can help ensure that everyone effectively communicates their feelings about home care while addressing questions that arise. We're happy to help in any way we can – without any obligation.

AGENCY CHECKLIST

How Does Your Agency Choose Its Caregivers?

- ☐ What is the process for screening your caregivers? Do you complete a background check (criminal, driving, work permit status and past references)?
- ☐ Do you have a minimum for years of caregiving experience for applicants?
- ☐ What is the ratio of the applicants you hire to the applicants you interview?
- ☐ What is the training procedure for newly hired caregivers? What types of topics are covered?
- ☐ Do you offer continuing education training for your caregivers?

What Are Your Agency's Staffing and Scheduling Procedures?

- ☐ How do you match caregivers to clients? Do you guarantee a personality match and offer caregiver interviews? What happens if a senior wants a different caregiver?
- ☐ Is it typical to expect the same caregiver each time or do you rotate caregivers?
- ☐ What steps do you take to ensure reliable staffing?
- ☐ What happens in the event that a caregiver is unavailable or calls in sick?

What Is the Agency's Legal Responsibility?

- ☐ Are your caregivers screened, bonded and insured? Do you employ your caregivers and take care of taxes, withholding and workers' compensation?
- ☐ What protections are there against theft?
- ☐ What client services, caregiver services and confidentiality forms are used and can you describe the main points of each?

What Makes Your Agency Stand Out?

- ☐ What unique programs/trainings/materials does your agency offer its caregivers, staff, and clients compared with other agencies?
- ☐ What types of payments do you accept and what are your billing procedures (is there a contact? cancellation fee?)
- ☐ Is the care manager available on-call 24/7? Does he/she perform regular quality assurance visits?
- ☐ Is the company a recognized leader in the senior care industry with published books on senior wellness and caregiving?

	PROS	CONS
Private Hire	<p>Price: Costs, at least initially, may be lower</p>	<p>Burden of Responsibility: The family or senior is responsible as employer for the private hire and will have to adhere to local employment laws, including paying unemployment wages to dismissed caregivers</p> <p>Liability: Private hire caregivers are typically not bonded and insured</p> <p>Lack of Oversight: If the private hire is unavailable for any reason, the senior can be left alone and the family may not be apprised. Furthermore, there is limited management of the caregiver's time while she is working</p> <p>Lack of Professionalism: Private caregivers typically do not have the same professional standards as caregivers from agencies and there is the risk of abuse of privileges and taking advantage of a senior</p>
Home Care Agency	<p>Liabile for Caregivers: A reputable agency will be the sole employer of their caregivers and manage taxes, insurance, liability, etc.</p> <p>Caregiver Compatibility: A top agency will hire only the best caregivers and have a team of expertly trained caregivers to match with the senior</p> <p>Experts: The best agencies are up-to-date on trends in health and wellness in seniors and will constantly train their caregivers to provide the highest caliber care for their clients</p> <p>Resources: Reputable home care agencies will have well-defined scheduling and backup procedures so that there is constant monitoring and care management and the senior is never at risk for being left without care</p>	<p>Costs: Many of the top agencies may not accept Medicare or other types of insurance and so the out of pocket costs can be higher</p>
Family Caregiver	<p>Comfort: Knows the senior best and the senior may initially feel most comfortable having a family caregiver</p>	<p>Time Management: Caregiving responsibilities are often added to family, social and career responsibilities for the family caregiver, creating time pressure</p> <p>Extremely high burnout rates: Stress-related physical and emotional impacts such as back pain and depression. Around 55% of family caregivers have symptoms of depression</p> <p>Inexperience: Lack of formal training can prevent the senior from receiving the best possible care</p>



Choosing a Home Care Agency That Fits Your Needs in West Texas

At Heritage Care Advocates of West Texas, we are committed to helping families make the best possible decision regarding care for their loved ones. Our checklist of the most important questions to ask a potential home care provider is meant to assist you in your evaluation process.

		Company #2	Company #3
Has the company been responsive, informative and professional?	✓ We are available 24/7 as a professional resource for you and your family		
Are the caregivers screened, bonded and insured?	✓ We hire only 1 in 25 applicants and conduct extensive screening and background checks		
Does the company employ its caregivers and take care of taxes, withholding and workers' compensation?	✓ Our caregivers are employees, not contractors, to protect our clients from liability		
Does the company conduct any caregiver training such as the Balanced Care Montessori Approach?	✓ Our Balanced Care Montessori Approach training emphasizes healthy mind, body, and spirit.		
Does the company guarantee a personality match and offer caregiver interviews?	✓ We ensure a personality match and will not change your caregiver as long as you're satisfied		
Does the company offer back-up caregivers in case of emergency?	✓ We have an extensive roster of trained employees available for all our clients' needs		
Is the care manager available on-call 24/7, including nights and weekends?	✓ We are available 24/7 for our clients' needs including evenings, holidays and weekends		
Does the company perform regular quality assurance visits, client satisfaction reviews and caregiver evaluations?	✓ We conduct regular quality assurance visits along with other tools to ensure client satisfaction		
Does the company offer a satisfaction guarantee without any long-term contracts or commitments?	✓ We require no long-term contracts so you can use our services for as long as you need them		
Is the company a recognized leader in West Texas that has published books available on senior wellness and caregiving?	✓ We are a recognized leader in West Texas. Ask us for more information on our books		

For more information on our services, visit www.hcawesttexas.com or call 432-695-6489

Our mission at Heritage Care Advocates is to "Provide Concierge Level Whole Person-Directed Care for Mind, Body, and Spirit". Our Heritage is always being able to offer the highest standard of care for our clients and we are proud to have made a difference in the lives of hundreds of West Texas seniors and their families in the last decade.

Meet The Warren Family

Thank you for considering Heritage Care Advocates of West Texas. Our Family is always ready to foster people helping people, caring for your loved ones. Thank you for your trust. As West Texas Locals, we understand the challenges families face when caring for an elderly loved one. It will be our pleasure to help you answer any questions or concerns.

~ Kendall L. Warren



We are a Senior Home Care Company serving West Texas. Our office in Midland Texas is locally Veteran Owned and Operated since September 1st, 2013 when we started their first case with the owner Kendall Warren's grandmother. Identifying this great need in West Texas, it was not take long to grow into our motto. "Home Care Is Our Heritage". We believe the difference between being in the Home Care Business and just being another home caring company is the caliber of our team of caregivers, our guiding HCA core principles and the management team of HCA of West Texas. It is the enthusiasm that our staff displays in providing quality and dependable home care to our clients that makes Heritage Care Advocates special. They are our most valued resource and we treat them like it.

Heritage Care Advocates of West Texas where "Home Care Is Our Heritage". Visit with us today at (432)695-6489 to set up a Free In-Home Care Consult and learn more about our services. Our mission at Heritage Care Advocates is to "Provide Concierge Level Whole Person-Directed Care for Mind, Body, and Spirit". Our Heritage is always being able to offer the highest standard of care for our clients and we are proud to have made a difference in the lives of hundreds of West Texas seniors and their families in the last decade. Our care managers are on call 24 hours a day for client needs and our caregivers are professionally trained and personally committed. The Heritage Care office is located just north of Midland Country Club at the Houston Business Park.

Our Services – We are proud of our reputation for high-caliber caregivers. Our caregivers take a holistic approach to our clients by encouraging independence and engaging them in physical, mental and social activities. Heritage Care help with meal preparation, personal hygiene, bathing, medication reminders, transportation and more on both a regularly scheduled basis.

24 Hour Care Specialists – Our caregivers are specifically trained in around-the-clock care. Clients and their families have peace of mind with caregivers who monitor safety, attend to any immediate or daily needs and provide companionship.

We Are Available 24/7 – Do not let the upcoming Holidays put stress on the family dynamics. Even during evenings and weekends, so you can always be comfortable that someone is here to help.

Our Caregivers – We only hire one out of every twenty five caregiver applicants. All caregivers must have at least two years of senior care experience. We check references, criminal backgrounds, driving records and work authorization documentation. Finally, we administer our exclusive Caregiver Screening developed by field experts. Once hired, our caregivers attend our exclusive Balanced Care Method training, learning to provide moderation and variety to our clients in the areas of nutrition, physical exercise, mental stimulation and sociability.

Flat Rate and No Long-Term Contract – We have a flat rate fee structure, which means that as the level of need increases, our rates do not. There are no hidden fees for last-minute, short-term or weekend care. We don't require long-term contracts or commitments, so clients stay with us only as long as they are 100% satisfied.

Our Network – We're honored to be Preferred West Texas Providers for professionals in both the medical and senior communities. We are the trusted provider of home care services to the clients of care managers, assisted living and nursing communities, hospitals and senior centers throughout the West Texas area.



WE UNDERSTAND: "THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME"

WHY OUR COMPANY?

We provide a comprehensive **FREE** In-Home Care Consult to determine level of care.

We have a unique **wellness approach** to home care called the Balanced Care Montessori Approach.

We offer Cognitive Therapeutics Montessori Approach an **activities based** program for our Dementia clients.

We take great pride in the **experienced, quality** Caregivers we employ.

Continual **communication** from our office keeps the entire family informed.

We are on call **24/7**

We don't require a long-term contract, encouraging clients to **try us** to see if home care is the right fit for them.

It's not
"like home"...
it is home.



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