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Coastal Companion Care Communicator

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Caregiver Margaret Roberts assists with annual training (top). Director Mike Ramsey and RN Sandy Cash confer about care plans (left).

CCC Values Caretaking Credibility, Quality

Mike Ramsey, director of operations, turned away a caregiver applicant because her background check revealed citations for abuse. This applicant may very well find private duty work as a caregiver.

Think carefully before hiring private duty care. You will be the employer responsible for payroll, benefits, taxes, Social Security, worker's compensation, and insurance. If a dispute arises, you are vulnerable. Government employment regulations favor the caregiver. Private duty care may require less cash outlay, but in the long run, the price may be heavy.

How will you know a caregiver you hire is skilled, trustworthy, and committed to care for your loved one? What do you do if you suspect theft, falsification of time reports, lack of skill, mistreatment of your loved one?

What do you do if the caregiver does not show up?

If you are with Coastal Companion Care, you're covered.

Coastal Companion Care has a multi-layered screening process for hiring caregivers: written application; reference checks; in-person interviews; and background checks.

Once hired, each caregiver has a four-hour orientation and a formal "meet-and-greet" at the home of each new care receiver. Annually, caregivers submit results of TB tests and documentation of auto insurance.

Every 12 weeks an RN supervisor visits a caregiver in a home where she is a companion. The RN talks with the care receiver about satisfaction with her care. Every six months an RN supervisor reviews and updates plans of care.

A 24/7 on-call staff person handles any coverage problems or other emergencies.

CCC caregivers attend an annual training meeting and receive annual performance appraisals.

As a company licensed by the state of North Carolina to provide care, CCC complies with another level of accountability and requirements. The state makes on-site visits and reviews an annual report that CCC submits to renew its license.

A family member, who recently hired CCC to care for his loved one, revealed: "I chose a state-licensed company because my lawyer says it offers protections."

Director Mike Ramsey sums it up: "CCC offers a team of trained professionals 24/7 to care for your loved one and to give you peace of mind."

FINANCE & CONSUMER RESOURCES



Every Patient Should Ask 5 Questions

Your doctor isn't the only one who should prepare for appointments, revealed the October 2013 issue of *The Oprah Magazine*. Asking the right questions prevents medical mistakes. Be prepared to ask five important questions.

One -- Do you need to see the tests my other doctor ran last year?

Call any doctor you've seen in the last five years to get copies of your records. These records could help avoid repeat testing or lead to a diagnosis your doctor might miss.

Two -- Do I have time to get a second opinion?

In up to 30 percent of pathology cases, second opinions can lead to a corrected diagnosis, yet 70 percent of Americans consult only one doctor.

Contact local chapters of medical associations that specialize in your condition, e.g. American Diabetes Association, Lupus Foundation of America. They can refer you. If your two doctors don't agree, get a third opinion.

Three -- Can we go over these questions today?

Patients tend to be silent in a doctor's office because they don't want to appear difficult.

Ask a friend or a family member to attend your appointment to be your second set of eyes and ears and to ask questions you may have not considered.

Four -- Can I take this medication with that one?

More than 10 percent of Americans take five or more medications. Medication errors cause at least one death a day and account for 1.3 million injuries a year. Take your medications to the doctor's appointment, including non-prescription meds. Or take pictures of labels with your camera phone. Don't forget, your pharmacist is a great resource.

Five -- Is there another option?

For many conditions there are several alternatives for treatment, often ranging from conservative to aggressive.

Each course of action has its benefits and its downside. The doctor, rightly or wrongly, may assume she knows what you want.

Have a frank discussion with your doctor about what's important to you so you can make the choice that best fits your life.

Trouble Sleeping?

AARP reports that almost one in two older adults report difficulty falling or staying asleep.

Many culprits create wakefulness: anxiety and stress; shifting hormone levels; medications; health problems; excess body weight. Below are a few tips to improve your sleep.

► **Exercise regularly.** About 30 minutes of moderate motion a day boosts mood and sleep.

► **Ban electronics from your bedroom.** Besides distraction of TVs and computers, backlit tablet devices emit light that lowers levels of the sleep hormone melatonin.

► **Nap smartly.** Try not to snooze between 3 p.m. and bedtime.

► **Use light therapy.** Thirty minutes of natural sunlight during the day may help adjust your internal clock. As evening approaches, dim overhead lights.

For better sleep, you can also modify what you eat.

► **Avoid big meals** late at night. Choose light snacks such as a glass of warm milk or cheese and crackers.

► **Skip chocolate.** It contains caffeine, and your system needs eight to 14 hours to clear caffeine from your system. Choose kiwis. They are rich in serotonin that promotes REM sleep.

► **Skip the nightcap.** Alcohol causes you to spend more time in light sleep and awaken more often. It can also impair breathing. Choose tart cherry juice because it contains the sleep hormone melatonin. (Excerpted from AARP *Strive*, fall 2013)

Emma Runion: A Lifetime of Many Loves

At age 90, Emma Runion is engaging and conversational, easily recalling her life as an educator, wife, mother, civic volunteer, grandmother, great grandmother, church volunteer and artist. The list goes on.

Her fondest memory: "When the seven of us were growing up. We had lots of company, big Thanksgivings and big Christmases. We all stood up for each other." Born in a small Indiana town, she met Bill Nash, her future husband, at a Baptist youth group when she was in seventh grade. Her first date was to a ballgame. "And my dad went with us," she mentioned. "Things were different then."

Young Emma graduated from Purdue with a degree in education and biology; she married Bill Nash at age 22; began a long teaching career in both secondary and higher education; earned a master's degree in education and raised three daughters and a son.



Emma Runion with her cat Miska.

Bill Nash's degree in electrical engineering and career with Pfizer Inc took the couple from Terra Haute, Indiana to Connecticut, New York and to their final stop in Southport.

Mrs. Runion recalls her most-loved teaching job in a junior high that served low-income students. "They had their problems, but they were good kids." She was the oldest teacher, so both kids and colleagues called her "Mom." Most students in trouble, in pain or just needing an ear, found their way to Mom who was the official unofficial school counselor.

Bill Nash died in 1990 after he and Emma had been married 45 years. She enjoyed 17 years with her second husband, Sam Runion. "I had two really good men. I met them both in church."

Emma Runion did more than meet husbands in church. Over the decades, she was a choir member, elder, deaconess, super-intendant of Sunday school, and on the church council, to name a few. Nor did her activities stop at the church walls.

She was an ardent volunteer for her country and the many communities in which she lived: a Gray Lady during WW II; Doshier Hospital pink lady; United Way board member for a 3-county area; member of the Woman's Club, the Garden Club and the cancer fund drive for Brunswick County; co-founder of The 55 and Older Club; and a member and officer of numerous academic honor societies. This, of course, is an incomplete list.

"I like to be active. You can't just sit." Glancing around at the

walls in Emma Runion's home tells one that even when she did sit, she was busy painting with water colors, needle-working or making unique picture frames with seashells.

Mrs. Runion describes her life now as living in an "outer world" where she takes an occasional ride in the car and in an "inner world" consisting of crossword puzzles, television, and modest exercise. "I try every morning to do some little thing, like cleaning out a drawer."

Emma Runion's lifetime of "little things" have made a mammoth difference to others; to her churches, generations of her family, and residents of every community in which she lived.

The Good Neighbor

It was Rosemary's first shift with the 93-year-old woman. She had just joined a team of seven caregivers who provide care daily, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

A friend dropped Rosemary off at 9 a.m. She hadn't been in the home 30 minutes when the Coastal Companion Care office called the home: "Just wanted to make sure you had arrived. We got a call from the neighbor who was concerned that no one had shown up."

The good neighbor had noticed that no car was parked in his neighbor's driveway. He knew the cars that all caregivers drove. He was worried. Reassured by the office that all was okay, the good neighbor walked next door to introduce himself to the new caregiver.

Thank you, neighbor. You are one in a million!



SPOTLIGHT ON CAREGIVERS

CCC CARES FOR COMMUNITY; SPONSORS LOCAL WALK

WANT TO LIVE TO 120?

Most people answer “no” to this question. The Pew Research Center telephoned 2,012 adults, age 18 and older to ask their attitudes about aging, medical advances and the possibility of slowing the aging process so that humans could live to be 120 or older.

Of those surveyed, 56% said they would not elect medical treatment to extend their lives. Age 90 (about 11 years longer than the current average U.S. life expectancy of 78.7 years) was cited as the ideal life span.

The hesitation of living to 120 years is partly practical. Two-thirds of those surveyed agreed that longer life expectancies would strain the country’s natural resources. Almost six in 10 said such treatment to extend life would be “fundamentally unnatural.”

(Excerpted from Wall Street Journal, October 28, 2013).



Coastal Companion Care was a patron sponsor for the Interchurch Fellowship Walk held November 3, 2013.

Old age can be a rocky road for some people living in North Carolina. AARP reports that North Carolina is ranked seventh in the nation for hunger among adults age 50 and over.

The 47 million Americans, including 22 million children, who receive food assistance under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps) saw their benefits cut beginning in October 2013.

Add this to another fact reported by the Associated Press. Since 1975, annual Social Security raises have averaged 4.1%. Only six times have increases been less than 2 percent, including this year when the increase was 1.7%. Preliminary figures suggest a 1.5 percent increase for 2014.

The Southport/Oak Island Interchurch Fellowship operates a food pantry, directed by Bill Hogue, in Boiling Spring Lakes.

Approximately 22,000 are served each year, Hogue announced to the Southport crowd of approximately 170 who gathered to raise money for the food pantry and other human needs.

More than 20 businesses provided financial sponsorship for the event. Coastal Companion Care was one of three in the highest tier of amount contributed. Stated CCC Director Mike Ramsey, “Part of caring for our older citizens is also caring for the community in which they live.”