

CRISIS Relief

By **Angelique Wells**,
Administrator, Barton House

I am often asked what is the biggest challenge I face when assisting families with Long Term Care choices. My answer is always that I see an increase in families in "crisis mode." Many times physicians, hospitals, families and caregivers are stricken with a crisis with little or no time to prepare. Almost daily I talk to someone in a crisis situation. Family members are looking for a facility, a physician, or financial assistance to handle a loved one's care needs. Most of these calls are from frustrated and confused spouses or children who have been given so much information they do not know where to turn. As a health care provider, it is equally frustrating to hear callers share information they have received that is more a selling tactic rather than the truth. With state regulations, facility requirements and company allowances to consider, who could keep it all straight? It is our ethical duty to educate our community with adequate resources that may help their individual needs and the needs of their loved ones when a crisis may arise.

Many callers have someone with Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia, the sixth leading cause of death in the U.S. Caregivers struggle with a nagging question that never fades: *If you're responsible for a family member with Alzheimer's, how much of your own life are you responsible for sacrificing in the process?*

As patients get older, the burden grows for caregivers. A recent survey showed that many Alzheimer's caregivers want more support from within their families and community. But they're reluctant to ask for it before a crisis.

In some cases, I discover that many other resources outside of Barton House need to be explored. In all cases having someone to listen to their situation is more than half the battle. Many cases families find themselves in crisis due to the rapid progression of their loved ones Alzheimer's.

Recently, I encountered a family in need of Alzheimer's care, that quickly resulted in our joined outreach for other resources, even after the Jackson's loved one had moved in. This family immediately utilized outside resources such as Hospice intervention.

Many people do not consider Hospice for "end of life" Alzheimer's care, but with careful planning and crisis management, this was the appropriate next step for their situation.

Hospice intervention may quickly allow families to be removed from the caregiver role, and back into the family member role.

With Hospice in place, other resources were also quickly added. Allam Senior Care, a local non-medical home care provider, was contacted, in conjunction with Spaid Nursing.

Scott Jackson states, "We needed top quality, in home 24/7 end-of-life care for my mom. Our goal? A home care company which exhibited high standards of, professionalism, integrity, and compassion. Allam Senior Care hit the ball out of the park on all three goals. For comparison we had had the 'big name,' 'long standing and well established' company in our home for a few days. They were found to be severely lacking any of the above tenets of home care. Bottom line, Jackson adds, if you have to have a large, well established home care company, go with Allam's competition...if your goal is compassionate home care folks that treat your loved one like their own...go with Allam Senior Care...you will not be disappointed."

While Allam was providing excellent one-on-one care, Spaid Nursing was hired to administer medications ordered and provided by Hospice.

Both these services may be provided in an individual home or facility type setting.

The Jackson family hopes to educate others that may be presented with a similar crisis. They also shared how impressed they were with the quality of clinical assessment, knowledge and care provided from the nursing team of Spaid Nursing.

I am so honored to include these new resources to Barton House library. My 2010 goal was to develop a resource area that would provide a fast way to get needed information into the callers' hands. This recent experience brought both education and resources that are now on hand to share with the public.

Our resource library has grown, and is made up of information provided by some of Louisville's finest resources. Some of these key people are Mary Rucker, with Magnolia Springs, Dr. Adrian Pelligrini who specializes in Geriatric Psychiatry, Virginia Hibb from Hibb Financial Management, Jason Runyan, ARNP with MD2U, Todd Cox, PT with Amedysis Home Health, GuardiaCare guardianship services, and Marsha Leistner Social worker, and memory care manager at Bashford East.

Our newest addition to our resource library, and spotlighted service providers, are Donnie Oglevie with Allam Senior Care, and the suburb nursing team with Spaid nursing. Thanks for a tremendous job!

There are 5.3 million Americans with Alzheimer's. Barton House instills an "extended family approach" in care not only for our residents and their families but for the community as well.

Feel free to contact me if I can be of any further assistance. Your crisis assistance is a phone call away!

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For information or
a tour, please call
423-7177.

Uncommon Alzheimer's Care