

ABC Home Healthcare
Professionals
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ABC in Action, Supporting the Community

Coming Home Program

ABC is pleased to be working with Minuteman Senior Services on the "Coming Home" program. "Coming Home" is designed to provide small scale community based, home like housing, with comprehensive, supportive services tailored to elders who otherwise would be in nursing homes.

In most cases only 4-5 residents live in a private home, have private bedrooms with shared bathrooms, and common space for socializing, cooking, common dining and relaxing. Supportive staff are in residence 24/7. Residents pay rent, and services may be covered by community and government funds.

ABC is looking for a suitable ranch style house, at a reasonable cost. If you know of one in the Woburn/Wilmington/Burlington/Winchester area, please contact ABC at (781) 245-1880.

Staff Training: Are You a Lion or a Lamb (or a Golden Retriever?)

Recently, forty-five ABC staff members joined Casey Cuthbert-Allman from Seasons Hospice in Newton to explore personality differences.

Casey helped staff learn to identify personality types by using zoo animals as models. Staff learned how people differ from each other,

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the ABCs of Homecare

Spring 2008

Vol. 1 Issue 2

Letter from ABC's President

In 1963, when President John F. Kennedy declared "Senior Citizens Month," there were nearly 17 million people age 65 and over. Now there are over 37 million senior citizens. That's more than twice as many! And May is Older Americans month—with the motto "Working together for strong, healthy and supportive communities."

ABC is pleased to display the Older Americans Month logo on p.2, and we've dedicated this issue to helping you plan for your life at home. Our feature article, "Looking Forward with ABC Home Healthcare," outlines the big picture, from getting started and making your home safe, to ensuring that over time your needs for safety and companionship are met.

Falls are a major source of injury among older Americans. So to help you be safe, we have an interview with Lisa O'Loughlin of the Massachusetts Falls Prevention Coalition (see "How to Prevent a Disabling Fall," p.5). We've also included a piece about financial planning, especially long term care insurance, something increasingly in the news and important for you to consider.

Deciding whether to stay in your own home is an important and sometimes challenging decision. ABC is ready to help you work with your family and your community to make the decision that is right for you. We hope this issue is helpful, and we look forward to hearing from you, as always. Just cut out and mail the response card on p.5, give us a call, or send us an email.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Jeannette Sheehan
President and CEO
781-245-1880
info@abchhp.com

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and how best to get along when you are a “lamb” and your client is a “lion.”

Not surprisingly, ABC staff were predominately Golden Retrievers, described as sensitive, tender-hearted, loyal, and faithful, and wearing signs that say “I won’t hurt you.” We agree with that description of our ABC staff.

ABC offers at least 12 hours of in-service training every year to help staff stay current, and well-informed about their work.

Save the Date: May 21st

A practical workshop on how to prepare for long term care. Join Jeannette Sheehan, President and CEO of ABC Home Healthcare, Jamie Knudsen, estate planning attorney with Whittenberg Knudsen LLP, and Jake Akoury, financial specialist with the Bulfinch Group to learn about planning for your future.

Wednesday May 21, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
401 Edgewater Place
Wakefield, MA

For information, contact ABC at
(781) 245-1880

ABC Home Healthcare works all year round to help older Americans:

- Learn how to stay safe and healthy
- Get the information they need about community support for their health and their long-term care
- Find ways to remain safely at home as long as they wish



Looking Forward With ABC Home Healthcare

“Committed to life at home” is ABC’s motto. We believe that staying in your own home as you get older can be a very good choice. In this article we’ll paint the big picture for you: making the decision to remain at home, how to plan for it, how to pay for it, and how ABC can help.

How ABC Can Help

ABC helps you do the planning for many levels of care for now and in the future, and we also provide the services you will need when staying at home. We are a nurse-run organization with a focus on patient care, and we supervise our home care staff while they are in your home.

Our president and CEO, Jeannette Sheehan, is a licensed nurse practitioner with 35 years of experience in home health. In planning home care for ABC’s clients, Jeannette draws on her wide experience in both the Medicare and private sectors of home care.

Once we have met you and learned about your health, your home and your family, we can help you make a plan for the future. We call this “looking forward”—because that’s just what it is, looking to the future. As time passes, your needs will change, and we will be there to assess the situation and help. This means stability, and the comfort of people whom you know and trust in your home.

Deciding to stay at home

The comforts of home

For most people, home is filled with memories. Maybe you’ve only been there for a few years—but you love the view out the window, or the shops at the corner, or the space where you eat breakfast every morning.

As you age in your own home, you enjoy the comfort and the sense of control that comes from being in a familiar and well-loved place.

Deciding with your family

The decision to stay at home as you get older is a major turning point, like deciding to retire, or to marry, or to go to college. If you have family, it usually involves them, too—husband or wife, children, nieces and nephews.

Sometimes children are eager for you to live with them, or to try assisted living. You want to please your children, but you also want to do what is best for you. Perhaps your spouse feels one way, and you feel another. ABC will work with you and your family to sort out the options and help you reach the best decision.

Safety and companionship

ABC can work with you to make adjustments to your home for safety, especially to avoid falls, and we can also help you stay connected to

The decision to stay at home as you get older is a major turning point, like deciding to marry, or go to college. ABC will work with you and your family to sort out the pros and cons and help you make the best decision.

Looking Forward

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friends and family. You want to avoid isolation—your social life is an important part of your health. We'll help you make these changes gradually, in response to your needs.

Planning in stages

Here's an outline of how your looking forward might go, with ABC's help:

Thinking about retirement

If you are 55-65, this is the time to start thinking about your retirement, and the financial planning that will help you be secure. If you don't have long term care insurance, now is a good time to look into it. (See the article "Looking Forward: Wills, Trusts, and Long Term Care" on p. 3.)

Moving into your seventies:

Maybe you can still run up and down the stairs, but you are probably facing new physical limits. Falls are an increasing risk. (See the articles about falls on this page and on page 6).

If you haven't already, contact ABC. During a home visit we'll evaluate your physical condition, do a safety check, and advise you about taking your medicine.

We can direct you to community resources like senior housing (if you don't want to stay at home) and daycare programs. We can also help you determine how to pay for your home care with the help of your community (including elder services), and programs such as Medicaid and other insurance sources.

Your early eighties:

By this time you may need more help getting around. Your vision and your hearing may be impaired, which increases the risk of falls.

ABC staff can provide you with more care: driving you to appointments and buying your groceries. If your family is caring for you, they may be calling on ABC for respite care—for an afternoon off, or a week's vacation.

Late eighties and beyond:

Perhaps you need someone to check on you every day. Because you have been looking forward, you already have the basic tools to prevent falls, and with ABC's help, you can add more support. By the time you celebrate your 90th birthday, ABC can provide you with a 24-hour assistant, if you need one.

Looking Forward to Life at Home

Deciding whether to remain in your own home is a milestone in your life and ABC can help you make this decision. Just as important, we will provide the services you need, whether this means light housekeeping or more intensive care. Our employees are chosen for their skill and compassion (see ABC in Action, p.1), and are supervised by ABC's nurses.

As time passes, we will continue to evaluate your health and your home to make sure your changing needs are met. ABC Home and Healthcare is committed to life at home, both now and in the future. With our help you-and your family-can make the right choices for a safe and comfortable life.

For further information, call ABC at (781) 245-1880, or email us at info@abchhp.com.

QA Fall Prevention: Questions & Answers

Fall prevention is in the spotlight during Older Americans Month. Whether you are living at home, with your children, or in a senior community, you will want to stay safe and learn how to keep from falling. See "How to Prevent a Disabling Fall" on p.5.

Q. Why is fall prevention such a big deal?

A. Falling is not just a matter of landing on the floor with a bump. A fall can cause you serious injury, including broken bones (see "Story of a Fall" on p.6).

Even a slight fall may cause you problems. You may become fearful of falling again, and the result of this can be increased weakness, poor balance, and—yes—another fall. And, if you're not out walking around you are probably isolated and at risk for depression.

Q. Is it true that the medicine I'm taking can cause me to fall?

A. Many medications can increase your risk for falls. Your blood pressure medication may lower your blood pressure, which can make you dizzy when you stand up. Sleeping pills and anti-anxiety medications also

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Looking Forward: Wills, Trusts, and Long Term Care

By planning for a safe and comfortable life while you are still fully able, you can make sure that you have arrangements in place to pay for the care you may need.

Long-term care refers to the many services beyond medical care and nursing care used by people who have disabilities or chronic (long-lasting) illnesses. Long-term care insurance helps you pay for these services, which can be very expensive. A policy also ensures that you can make your own choices about what long-term care services you receive and where you receive them. Many of these services are not covered by other insurance.

(source: AARP.org)

You can also protect your assets, especially your home.

ABC spoke with Jamie Knudsen, an attorney specializing in estate planning, who provided some valuable advice:

Paying for care:

If you are fortunate, you may have enough cash so you don't need to worry. Many people are considering tools such as reverse mortgages, annuities, and long term care insurance. A *reverse mortgage* is a kind of loan based on substantial equity in your home. An *annuity* is a regular payment based on your assets.

Join us on May 21st

Jeannette Sheehan, President and CEO of ABC Home Healthcare, joins Jamie Knudsen, estate planning attorney with Whittenberg Knudsen LLP, and Jake Akoury, financial specialist with the Bulfinch Group to learn about planning for your future. Contact ABC at (781) 245-1880 for more information.

Advantages of long term care insurance

Long term care insurance is a form of disability coverage. It's designed to help you when you are unable to provide for yourself one or more "activities of daily living," such as eating, bathing, or getting dressed. It can pay for your care at home, in a nursing home, or in an assisted living facility. Policies are available from many insurers.

Wills, trusts, and powers of attorney

An attorney can help you put your estate plan in order. An effective plan will usually include a will and a "living trust" to help you and your family maintain control of your assets while you are living and distribute them according to your wishes after your death, while minimizing taxes and costs. Jamie Knudsen emphasizes the importance of having a HIPAA Personal Representative, who can speak for you when decisions must be made about your health care and you are unable to do so.

Jamie Knudsen is with Whittenberg Knudsen, LLP. You can reach him at (781) 246-3030 or jrk@wealthdesign.com.

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increase the risk of falling if taken incorrectly. Check with your doctor about your medicine.

Q. How could my hearing or vision keep me from falling?

A. Your ears and eyes help you know what is going on around you. If you can't see the dog crossing in front of you, or hear the child on the tricycle, you are likely heading for a fall.

Q. It sounds like changes to my house could be expensive—won't I have to pay a contractor?

A. Many fall prevention measures are simple, no-cost steps you can take yourself. For example, night lights in your bedroom and bathroom help you see where you are going, and cost very little at your local pharmacy or hardware store.

Q. I'm afraid that if I start exercising I may fall and get hurt.

A. If you begin with kick-boxing, you probably will get hurt! There are many exercises and exercise programs perfect for older Americans, including Tai Chi and even yoga. You can practice balancing in your own home, with the support of a chair back.

Q. My children think I'll be safer if I move in with them, but don't want to leave my home. What can I say to them?

A. Safety needs attention no matter where you are. If you live with your children, does that mean someone will be at home with you? Do your grandchildren have toys you are likely to trip over? Give ABC a call and we'll help you think through the safety issues—it's one of our chief concerns.

How To Prevent a Disabling Fall

Everybody thinks that falling is inevitable as you age, but this is just not true, says Lisa O'Loughlin, consultant to the Massachusetts Fall Prevention Coalition, and a registered nurse experienced in home care. "Falling," she says, "is a matter of your physical condition and your environment." There are many ways to keep yourself steady and safe.

Falling has become a major, national concern. Even the National Safety Council, says Lisa, has put falls on its agenda. She points to a Centers for Disease Control report, which states that falls are the leading cause of fatal and nonfatal injuries for the elderly.

Everybody thinks that falling is inevitable as you age, but this is just not true. There are many ways to keep yourself steady and safe.

Even when injuries are minor, they can seriously affect your quality of life by making you afraid of falling. If you are afraid, you're more likely to stop moving around and getting out to see friends, and this can lead to physical weakness, and even depression. [See www.cdc.gov/mmwr.]

Lisa is enthusiastic about the many ways older adults can keep themselves from falling:

Physical strength: Lisa suggests Tai Chi, for example, or yoga, or even simple exercises at home. Here's one: Stand at your kitchen counter, holding onto the edge. To improve your balance, stand on one foot and hold for several seconds, then repeat with the other foot. Then walk in place to increase your strength. You can even walk in place while sitting in a chair.

Simple changes for a safe home: Remove clutter and other obstacles from areas where you walk, and be sure you have enough lighting—especially night lights. Stair rails and grab bars in the bathroom are helpful. Did you know that if your favorite chair is too low you risk falling when you get up?

Medication, hearing and sight: Check with your doctor: sometimes medicines can affect your sense of balance. If your hearing or vision are impaired, you may not hear the cat under your feet, or see the edge of a step.

Lisa says she is amazed at the amount of programs and information available about fall prevention. For example, there is a new program called *A Matter of Balance*, which offers group support, exercises, and education. Look for an upcoming brochure from the Fall Prevention Coalition that will list resources to help you make your home safe.

For more information: Department of Public Health falls hot line, 1-800 227 SAFE or (1-800 227-7233). Contact your local senior center about fall prevention.

Useful websites include:

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/duip/preventadultfalls.htm>
http://www.homesafetycouncil.org/safety_guide/sg_slipsfalls_w001.aspx

ABC Homecare can help make you and your home safe. Call us at (781) 245-1880, or email us at info@abchhp.com.

We want to hear from you!

Is there a topic you would like to learn more about? _____

Your Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email (optional): _____

Mail to: ABC Home Healthcare Professionals
233 Albion Street
Wakefield, MA 01880

Share the News!

Know someone else who might enjoy the newsletter?

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email (optional): _____

You can also email us at info@abchhp.com with questions regarding home care services and resources.

ABC Home Healthcare does not sell email addresses. Information provided here is to receive communication from ABC Home Healthcare Professionals ONLY.

Story of a Fall

In March ABC came to the aid of two of our clients—a married couple in their 90s living in their own home. They are frail but independent people, and their daughter wanted to be sure her parents were being cared for.

ABC has been sending a skilled home care aide to help them with personal care, remind them to take their pills, prepare meals and, most of all, make sure that they are safe.

Recently, when ABC's Danielle arrived for a regular visit, there was no response, so she followed standard procedure, phoning the couple and then calling ABC to contact neighbors on a list. The second neighbor was able to let

Danielle in. She found that both husband and wife had fallen, and the wife appeared to have broken her ankle badly.

Without Danielle's determination, the 92-year-old woman would almost certainly have experienced even more serious harm from her fall.

Danielle called 911 and ABC, which contacted the daughter. Danielle went to the hospital in the ambulance and stayed with the clients until the daughter arrived.

The good news about this story is that Danielle probably saved

her client's life. Without Danielle's determination, the 92-year-old woman would almost certainly have experienced even more serious harm from her fall.

ABC staff are trained always to find out why clients are not answering the door or not at home. If they can't get in, they will call to alert ABC, and it's our job to make sure someone can reach the client.

During our initial home visit we recommend, for safety, that all our clients begin fall prevention measures and provide ABC with an up-to-date contact list.

For more information about fall prevention and how ABC can help, contact us at 781-245-1880 or email info@abchhp.com.

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Coming Soon!
Our new website
www.abchhp.com
where you can find
health related news,
updates and more.
