

Long Distance Caregiving

Long distance Caregiving has a special set of stressors to it. Here in Hawaii, hundreds of miles of ocean between islands and the mainland make caring for a loved one who does not live with you of special concern. The Hawaii Executive Office on aging recently listed these suggestions to help.

1. **Appoint a sibling and a doctor...**to have one person who is authorized to communicate with the Doctor and make health-care decisions.

Have a healthcare power of attorney established and designate a local Physician with whom you become familiar and who will communicate with you. This is essential. Critical decisions may have to be made over the phone.

2. **Fly in for a visit** with the appointed Doctor. As the appointed child, you need to know and be comfortable with the Doctor.

Airfare is not cheap so plan your visit carefully. Write out a list of things you know you need to accomplish on the visit. Take a video camera and/or digital camera and record your visit. Take pictures of the residence and neighborhood. Take pictures of your loved one. You may need a current photo if your loved one were to go missing.

3. **Establish a network.** Get to know the people around your loved one's home. Get phone numbers of neighbors, emergency services, hospitals etc.

Keep this information readily accessible. Have numbers programmed in to your cell phone and keep in frequent contact with your network. Don't become a nuisance but do become familiar. Little gestures of appreciation to those you call on for updates or to assist you in some way should be done frequently.

4. **Don't except thanks.** Nobody really likes getting older and your "butting" in will often be seen as a reminder that independence is being lost.



Understand that getting old often involves losing independence and that is something that frightens us and makes anyone unlikely to express appreciation for anything that reminds them of that situation. Changing

the way you expect your parents or loved one to react to your help can make your life easier.

5. **Logistical advice.** Remember to have Social Security numbers, insurance policy numbers and financial information on hand. Be able to refer to important medical records. Have a phone book from your parent's community on hand.

The more familiar you are with the area where your loved one lives, the less stress you will have. You will be able to visualize the surroundings and circumstances and make decisions about issues with less anxiety.

Long Distance Caregiving is not easy. The telephone rings and you begin to worry. But organizing yourself and your approach to this caregiving will help make the task more effective and less stressful.

For more information on Long Distance Caregiving [click here](#).

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