

## TIPS to Make Sure the CARE Act Helps You

Hospitals must comply with the CARE Act beginning April 20, 2017. After this date, all patients and their family caregivers should start benefiting from the supports provided by the CARE Act. To make sure you are receiving this help, here are a few steps you can take:

### While in the hospital

- ♥ Talk with hospital staff caring for you or your loved one. This would likely be your nurse or a hospital social worker who are in the best positions to understand and help.
- ♥ You may also ask about and reach out to the department dedicated to addressing patient concerns, like Patient Relations, Patient Advocate, Guest Relations, Ombudsman or Customer Service.
- ♥ If you are a patient, ask for the opportunity to designate a caregiver in your medical record.
- ♥ If you are a family caregiver, be proactive in asking to set up a time to receive instruction from hospital staff about any aftercare you will perform at home, and ask for a demonstration if you believe this would be helpful.

### After the hospital stay if there is still an issue

- ♥ Contact the Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) if you believe you did not get all of the support provided by the CARE Act.
- ♥ DOH licenses and certifies Pennsylvania hospitals and is charged with investigating complaints about them.
- ♥ Send DOH a written complaint. Be as specific as possible about your concern, and keep a copy of the documents you send.
  - ✓ By Mail:  
Division of Acute and Ambulatory Care  
625 Forster St.  
Health and Welfare Building – Room 532  
Harrisburg, PA 17120
  - ✓ By Fax: 1-717-705-6663
  - ✓ Questions? Call 1-717-783-8980.
  - ✓ Complaint form:  
[apps.health.pa.gov/dohforms/FacilityComplaint.aspx](https://apps.health.pa.gov/dohforms/FacilityComplaint.aspx)
- ♥ Trained staff reviews the complaint and decides how it should be investigated.
- ♥ An investigation could take several months to complete.
- ♥ If there is an investigation and it finds that there was a violation, DOH issues a report outlining the problem and the hospital responds with a plan saying how they will make corrections.
- ♥ You should hear from DOH about how they responded to your complaint. Contact them if you don't hear from them after a reasonable amount of time.

## What is the CARE Act?

More than 1.6 million Pennsylvania residents care for older parents, spouses and loved ones, helping them to live independently in their own homes. These family caregivers have a huge responsibility and now the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has taken action to help them when their loved ones go into the hospital and as they transition home.

In 2016, Pennsylvania passed a new law called the CARE Act. This law requires hospitals to:

1. Record the name of the patient's designated family caregiver upon admission
2. Keep that caregiver informed when their loved one is to be discharged to another facility or back home
3. Provide an explanation and demonstration of aftercare tasks – such as medication management, injections, wound care, and transfers – that the family caregiver will perform at home

**For free wallet cards with information about the CARE Act and other caregiving resources, call AARP's Caregiving Resource Center at 1-877-333-5885 or visit [www.aarp.org/pa](http://www.aarp.org/pa).**

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