



“Our Family Helping Yours”  
(925) 240-5770

The  
**HomeLife**

Fall 2017

# Connection

Serving all of East County, Tracy and Rio Vista!

## CAREGIVER PROFILE



Caregiver of the Season,  
Talitha Bertrand

Our caregivers are totally committed, highly qualified and carefully selected individuals who are personally and thoroughly screened, bonded and insured.

Most importantly our caregivers are dependable and extraordinarily caring of others. In addition to their previous experience, our caregivers receive continuous training that includes a specialized curriculum exclusive to The Senior’s Choice that results in them becoming Certified Companion Aides™. These highly qualified and trained caregivers are ready to help you and your loved ones with a variety of daily activities such as:

- Caring companionship
- Meal planning and preparation
- Incidental transportation
- Running errands
- Light housekeeping
- Medication reminders
- Assistance with bathing and grooming
- Assistance with bill paying
- Information and referral services

Our personalized and affordable services are available 7 days a week and can range from a few hours a day to 24 hour and live in care.

## Welcome to the Fall 2017 *HomeLife Connection*

Welcome to our Fall 2017 HomeLife Connection! We wish to congratulate our Caregiver of the Season, Talitha Bertrand!

Talitha moved to California from Louisiana with her husband and three kids last summer. Shortly after settling into her new home, she became a caregiver at HomeLife. Talitha has made a huge impression on our clients and staff over the course of her year with us!

Talitha’s passion for caregiving began when she became the caregiver for a member of her own family. She decided she wanted to help others by providing care for the elderly in her community. Upon our first meeting with Talitha, we recognized her compassion and love for seniors and appreciated the skills she had to offer, all of which became even more apparent when she began working with our clients.

Clients and their families request her by name and praise her for

the level of care she provides! She is also excellent at staying in contact with the office regarding concerns or client updates.

Talitha just recently went back to school and even though she had to make adjustments to her availability, she arranged her schedule around her clients’ schedules so she could continue caring for them. She also fills-in for other clients whenever she is able. The scheduling department knows they can count on her to help out in a pinch!

We are very thankful Talitha has become part of our wonderful caregiving team and we are excited to see the impact she will have on senior’s lives in the future!

— Felicia Buack  
Home Care Aide Director

Best wishes,  
Angela DiNicola,  
Founder  
HomeLife Senior  
Care



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**FINANCE & CONSUMER RESOURCES**

**Personal Care Agreements**

Many families reach a point when they recognize that an ill or older relative needs more than occasional assistance—they need full-time care. But who will provide that care? The answer is usually close to home: an adult child. A child might be the default choice, or is selected because he or she lives closer or has fewer family responsibilities.

The person providing care for a loved one may make a significant sacrifice: giving up a job and employment benefits. A formal agreement among family members can provide a way to compensate a person providing care if he or she is no longer able to hold other employment. While most family members may wish to help care for a loved one, it is a job with heavy time commitments and responsibilities. One way of protecting the caregiver as well as the person receiving care is by putting the care relationship in writing. This binding agreement is most often referred to as a “personal care agreement.”

**What Is a Personal Care Agreement?**

The agreement is a contract, typically between a family member who agrees to provide caregiver services for a disabled or aging relative and the person receiving care. The personal care agreement is most commonly between an adult child and his/her parent, but other relatives may be involved, such as an adult grandchild caring for a grandparent.

Drawing up an agreement clarifies for a family what tasks are expected in return for a stated compensation. It can help avoid family conflicts about who will provide care and how much money will change hands. For this reason, the agreement should be discussed with other family members to resolve any concerns before an agreement is drafted.

When contracting with a family member, it is wise to treat the agreement as a legal document. If your relative is receiving state supported in-home care, the agreement will show the state where the money is going and for what kind of services. In addition, a caregiver agreement can offset potential confusion among family members concerned about bequests to heirs, and avoid misunderstandings later over the reduction of the amount of money that may

be inherited.

**Components of a Personal Care Agreement**

A personal care agreement has three basic requirements for a person to pay a family member for care:

1. The agreement must be in writing.
2. The payment must be for care provided in the future (not for services already performed).
3. Compensation for care must be reasonable. This means tasks performed should match “reasonable” or “customary” fees typically paid to a third party for the same care in your geographic area.

A properly drafted personal care agreement will contain the following information: Date the care begins; detailed description of services to be provided, for example, “transportation and errands” (driving to medical, dental, adult day care, and other appointments) or “food preparation”; how often services will be provided (allow for flexibility in care needs by using language such as, “no less than 20 hours a week” or “up to 80 hours a month”); how much and when the caregiver will be compensated (weekly or biweekly); how long the agreement is to be in effect (the agreement should set time, such as a year or two years, or even over a person’s lifetime); a statement that the terms of the agreement can be modified only by mutual agreement of the parties in writing; and, the location where services are to be provided (home of elder/adult with disabilities, caregiver’s own home, other location)--allow for the location of the care to change in response to increasing care receiver needs); signatures by the parties; and date of the agreement .

**Do I Need a Lawyer?**

You don’t necessarily need to hire an attorney, but it may be advisable when entering into a contractual relationship. It depends on how complex an agreement your family requires.

A legal agreement template is available through nolo.com: <https://store.nolo.com/products/elder-care/elder-care-agreements>

*This article was reworked from a more extensive discussion of the topic at the Caregiver’s Alliance:*

<https://www.caregiver.org/personal-care-agreements>



**ROTATING TOPIC:**

**The New Senior Transportation: Ride-Sharing Services**

It’s a too-common scenario for seniors: Places to go, things to see, and a life to lead—but limited mobility or the inability to drive prevents them from getting out. Fortunately, ride-hailing services such as Lyft and Uber—and a new service tailored to the needs of seniors called SilverRide (which has launched in San Francisco, CA but is planning expansion in the US)—are all addressing senior transportation with new initiatives.

The Community Transportation Association estimates that 26 million older Americans rely on others for their transportation. With the elderly population growing, this number will only increase in coming years. Not being able to drive can affect more than just self-esteem. It can take a toll on physical health as well. In fact, a 2004 report found that seniors who don’t drive make 15% fewer trips to the doctor than their driving counterparts.

Ride sharing services could close that gap. How? With a little technology, senior housing partnerships, and special services for the mobility-impaired.

**How to Use Lyft and Uber**

Lyft and Uber are operated via drivers using their personal vehicles. They originally gained popularity among young urban dwellers as a safe option for those who have had too much to drink. However, these personal ride sharing options expanded very quickly in geographical range and popularity of use. While these services do require a little bit of tech savvy, that shouldn’t deter seniors from taking advantage of these services. All you need to catch a ride is a smartphone with the Lyft or Uber apps. Ask your children, grandchildren or a tech-savvy friend if you need a little help downloading and setting up the app.

*Continued on page 3*

## Urinary Tract Infections in the Elderly

Urinary tract infections (UTIs) aren't just a nuisance in the elderly—they can cause serious health problems. A UTI happens when bacteria in the urethra, bladder or kidneys multiplies in the urine. If left untreated, a UTI can lead to acute or chronic kidney infections, which could permanently damage these vital organs and even lead to kidney failure. These common infections are also a leading cause of sepsis, a potentially life-threatening infection of the bloodstream.

### Seniors Are Prone to UTIs

The population most likely to experience UTIs is the elderly. Older individuals are more vulnerable for many reasons, including their overall susceptibility to infections due to a weakened immune system. Elderly men and women also experience a weakening of the muscles of the bladder and pelvic floor, which can lead to increased urine retention (incomplete emptying of the bladder) and incontinence. These things all contribute to infection.

Typical Symptoms of UTIs are as follows:

Frequent or urgent need to urinate; pain or burning during urination; urine that appears cloudy or dark; bloody urine; strong or foul-smelling urine; feelings of pressure in the lower pelvis; low-grade fever; night sweats, shaking or chills.

### Lesser-Known UTI Symptoms in Seniors

Older individuals with UTIs may not exhibit any of the hallmark signs listed above because their immune systems are unable to mount a significant response to the infection. On top of the lack of noticeable symptoms, many seniors cannot express their discomfort to their caregivers.

Since aging adults' bodies respond differently to infection, it is important to look for different signs and symptoms. One symptom of UTIs in the elderly is often mistaken for the early stages of dementia or Alzheimer's disease, according to National Institutes of Health (NIH). Indicators of infection in seniors include the following: Confusion or delirium; agitation; hallucinations; poor motor skills or loss of coordination; dizziness; falling; and other atypical behavior.

These are often the only symptoms that present in the elderly, so it is crucial to keep an eye out for these sudden changes in behavior and mental state.

### Diagnosis & Treatment

In most cases, diagnosing and treating an elderly urinary tract infection is relatively straightforward: a simple urinalysis can confirm the infection's presence and, for someone in good health, antibiotics are the first choice of treatment. UTIs often clear up in only a few days. But depending on the age and health of the patient—and the severity of the infection—the course of treatment can take weeks and perhaps involve hospitalization for the administration of intravenous antibiotics.

### Risk Factors & Prevention

Older adults at greater risk for getting a UTI include: Those who require a catheter in the urethra and bladder; those who are diabetic; anyone with kidney stones; and, women who've gone through menopause.

After menopause, women produce less estrogen, which helps protect against UTIs. Hormone replacement therapy (HRT) or a topical estrogen cream can help protect post-menopausal women from UTIs. However HRT may increase other health risks, so may not be

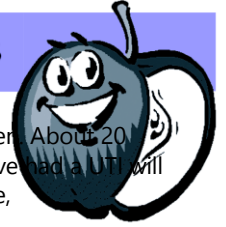
appropriate for all women. About 20 percent of women who've had a UTI will experience a second one, and 30 percent of those women will get third.

Other steps to take to reduce the risk of UTIs:

- Drink plenty of fluids (Older adults should drink four to six 8-ounce glasses of water a day).
- Drink cranberry juice (*without* added sugar) or D-Mannose tablets (which is the glucose-like compound in cranberry juice that help reduce the occurrence of UTIs.)
- Avoid or at least limit caffeine and alcohol intake, which irritates the bladder.
- Do not douche or use other feminine hygiene products.
- Always wipe from front to back (for women).
- Wear breathable cotton underwear and change them at least once a day.
- Take showers instead of baths.

—By Caren Parnes

Contributor for *The Senior's Choice*



## SENIOR HEALTH & LIFESTYLES

## The New Senior Transportation: Ride-Sharing Services *(Continued from page 2)*

Once a phone is equipped with the app, Lyft and Uber are easy to use. Provide a payment method (usually a credit card or PayPal) and then just type in the address of where you want to go. The app will automatically calculate the rate for the ride, so the cost is known upfront. A driver's description and car model will be provided, as well as the estimated time of arrival.

For more cost savings, you can take advantage of Lyft's Lyft Line, in which you carpool with other consumers riding the same route to split the tab. Uber's version of that option is uberPOOL.

Once at your destination, just say thank you and goodbye. The cost will be charged to your credit card. The entire transaction is handled online, so there is no need to exchange cash or give a tip (unless you want to). Ready to come home? Just perform the same action in reverse, using your home address.

### Special Services for Senior Transportation

For seniors who need extra assistance, Uber offers uberASSIST. This service uses drivers who are trained to help riders get into and out of the vehicle and can accommodate folding wheelchairs, walkers and scooters.

Given that seniors with limited transportation options might need to use ride-hailing often, Lyft and Uber have both been working to develop partnerships with local senior advocates, organizations, local retirement communities and municipalities around the country with the goal of increasing affordability. In many cities, programs are being tested in which seniors can get discounted—or even free—rides due to city support. Some of these initiatives also address ride-hailing options for seniors without smartphones. Check in your area for specific options.

by Mark Edelen

<https://www.after55.com/blog/senior-transportation-uber-lyft/>



## SPOTLIGHT ON CAREGIVERS

### Care Plans: The Secret to Confident Caregiving

*From the Editors: We found the following article a helpful primer about the importance of having a Care Plan in place for your loved one. This process can be facilitated by a reputable care service, who will typically perform a thorough assessment, help you develop a Care Plan customized to your loved one's needs and then provide the support you need to execute it, ensuring your loved one can safely enjoy life.*

Whatever your specific situation, be aware that the nature of providing care for someone can change in an instant. Therefore it can be especially beneficial to organize your myriad caregiver tasks into an plan of action. Then, should anything change, you will have a list of available resources ready to help you meet new and emerging needs. A care plan can be a casual organization tool, an informal or verbal agreement with a loved one, or a formal contract used to coordinate payment for care services. Plans can vary from daily to-do lists to detailed weekly accounts of amounts and types of care provided. The following steps can help you create your very first care plan or reevaluate your current plan.

#### **Assess the situation**

The first step in the process is an assessment of your loved one's home environment, activities of daily living (ADLs), medical and legal documents, and financial situation, to see what is working well and what is not.

#### **Identify needs and set goals**

Based on the results of the care assessment, make a list of all concerns with the highest priorities at the top. Your loved one's immediate health and wellbeing are the top priority, so for example if they are losing weight, this problems must be dealt with first.

Next, setting goals for their wellbeing will provide a proactive approach to ensuring their quality of life. A care plan is an ideal approach to longer-term objectives like financial, advance care, estate and funeral planning. These preparations are extremely important, so they should be a top priority to address. Your loved one's participation in this process is paramount, as long as they are still competent to make these decisions.

#### **Create a well-rounded care team**

A caregiver shouldn't have to coordinate and execute all of these tasks unaided. Embarking on this journey alone frequently leads to damaging caregiver burnout. The purpose of creating a care team is to gather all resources at your disposal and encourage cooperation amongst all those willing to participate in your loved one's care. Friends, family, neighbors, and other community members are the first tier of support. The more complex medical, legal and financial aspects of a care plan are then best handled by elder care professionals such as in-home or respite care services, elder law attorneys, therapists, benefits counselors, certified public accountants (CPAs), financial advisors, social workers, and geriatric care managers, who can be valuable additions to your care team.

#### **Match team members with solutions**

Some team member's specific tasks will be obvious. An elder law attorney will handle drafting POA and advance directive documents, whereas a financial advisor can assist with money management strategies. Assigning specific tasks to friends and family members can be a little more challenging. Make a list of possible solutions for each need in your care plan. For example, to help Dad eat healthier meals more frequently, your

sister who lives nearby could provide some pre-made meals or invite him over for dinner on a regular basis, and siblings who live far away could contribute to a food delivery service to make up the difference. Try to identify each person's abilities, and match them with feasible solutions. These can include proximity to the care recipient, free time in their schedule, monetary contributions, and skills like cooking, cleaning, and communicating.

#### **Put your plan into action**

The ultimate goal of having a care plan and care team in place is to promote communication and unified efforts for the welfare of care recipient *and* caregiver. Keep in mind that a care plan is an ever-evolving tool. Finding proper solutions may take some trial and error, and your loved one's needs are likely to increase over the long term. Even if your loved one does not currently need a care plan, beginning to put these pieces of the puzzle into place early can help you avoid a great deal of stress later on. Having them keep an updated file with financial and medical records including medications, health information, and legal documents can be vital in the event of an emergency. Should something happen, you will have the fundamental materials needed to make any decisions quickly and confidently.

<https://www.agingcare.com/articles/how-to-create-a-care-plan-195526.htm>