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New Help for CT Family Caregivers Begins October 1

Posted By *Jennifer Millea* On September 8, 2015 @ 10:41 am In Advocacy,Caregiving,Home & Family | [No Comments](#)



^[1]Jean, a former real estate planner from Old Saybrook, CT, was looking forward to retirement with thoughts of travel and more free time to do the things she loved. Her life changed dramatically, but not as she expected, several years ago when her mother suffered a massive heart attack. Jean was told by hospital staff to “say goodbye,” but her mother rallied. After being discharged home, Mom was living independently again. However, the ordeal had left her considerably weaker and more reliant on Jean than ever before.

Jean is not alone. She is one of more than [500,000 family caregivers](#) ^[2] in the state of Connecticut doing all they can to keep their loved ones safe and at home. The unpaid care they provide – everything from cooking, cleaning, transportation to doctor appointments and grocery shopping, to more medically oriented tasks, such as wound care and medication management – is valued at more than [\\$5.9 billion annually](#) ^[2]. Unfortunately, caregivers like Jean are not always recognized in hospital settings for the critical role they play in their loved one’s care. That is set to change on **October 1** when a new law called the **Caregiver Advise, Record, and Enable (CARE) Act goes into effect**.

The CARE Act, which passed with bi-partisan support during the 2015 legislative session, was signed by the Governor as Public Act 15-32. The new law will assist patients and their family caregivers when they are transitioning home from the hospital by requiring hospitals to:

Provide patients the opportunity to designate a family caregiver

Attempt to notify the caregiver before the patient is discharged back home

Instruct the caregiver on the medical tasks—such as medication management, injections, wound care and transfers—that they will need to perform at home.

[Request a free CARE Act wallet card](#) ^[3] to keep with your health insurance card. This card will provide you with quick access to the information you need to know about the CARE Act the next time you or a loved one is hospitalized.

AARP worked with the CT Hospital Association, state legislators and other caregiver/patient advocates to push for passage of this commonsense legislation that will not only help caregivers as they take on the task of caring for their family members, but will go a long way towards reducing costly hospital readmissions. By recognizing and providing caregivers with necessary information and instruction they need before leaving the hospital, they are better able to keep their loved ones safe and at home.

“At the end of the day, the primary goal is making sure my mother is safe,” says Jean. The CARE Act offers up a commonsense, no cost solution that would make things a little easier for her and the thousands of other family caregivers in Connecticut.

[Send a thank you email](#) ^[4] to your state legislator and the Governor for supporting the CARE

Act.

Download the [2015 Connecticut Caregiver Resource Guide](#) ^[5]

For additional AARP resources for caregivers, visit aarp.org/caregiving ^[6].

Share your caregiving story at iheartcaregivers.org ^[7]

Ian McDonald, a former AARP Connecticut intern, contributed to this story.

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URLs in this post:

[1] Image: <http://states.aarp.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Caregiving-Hands.jpg>

[2] 500,000 family caregivers: <http://states.aarp.org/ct-valuing-the-invaluable-2015-update-sc-ct-wp-advocacy/>

[3] Request a free CARE Act wallet card: <http://action.aarp.org/CTWalletCard>

[4] Send a thank you email: <http://action.aarp.org/site/Advocacy?pagename=homepage&id=5269>

[5] 2015 Connecticut Caregiver Resource Guide: <http://states.aarp.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/2015-Connecticut-Caregiver-Resource-Guide.pdf>

[6] aarp.org/caregiving: <http://www.aarp.org/caregiving>

[7] iheartcaregivers.org: <http://www.iheartcaregivers.org>

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