

Is Your Physician Your Long-Term Care Quarterback?

Fast moving, continuous coverage, and goal-oriented! It sounds like football, but hopefully this describes your physician's practice and their dedication to your care. With hopes of football right around the corner, follow me with some corny analogies, but serious implications for your loved ones life. Your primary care physician (PCP) should be the quarterback in managing each yard of your health care offense. That means talking with you about your treatment decisions; giving long-term care recommendations; and working alongside your other team members to implement your preferred defense or plan of care. If your doctor provides no razzle-dazzle, you could fumble the ball before you make it to the end zone.

Our elder law team considers your PCP as a critical playmaker who helps us maximize aid and ultimately implement our sound long-term plan of care for you. A reoccurring theme amid this pandemic is the restriction of family visitation in health care facilities where loved ones reside, depriving them of the crucial mental and social support needed to thrive. Dire health consequences are the result of these tactics. As resident rights are stripped away for the promise of staying virus-free, your loved ones safety may now warrant additional layering of paid care for oversight. Is your doctor helping to bring in the special teams? Are they fighting for the rights of your loved one with dementia?

Surprisingly, in consultations with my clients, it is shocking to find that about 70% of them do not have a good relationship with their current provider. Ponder these questions about your current doctor:

- Does this provider give me clear answers to my questions? Do they return my calls in a timely manner?
- Does this provider listen to my concerns with courtesy and respect?
- How long do I have to wait for the visit to begin while attempting to occupy the time of my loved one with dementia?

If your answers leave you apprehensive, you may need a new offense. Because we are caregivers ourselves, the Chambliss elder law team understands that physician visits are exhausting at best and next to impossible as a sole caregiver. We encourage you not to delay your game because you and your loved ones' health care isn't fantasy football.

Here is a novel idea: change your doctor! If we've learned anything during COVID-19, it's our astonishing ability to adapt to change. During interviews with clients, "red tape" is the number one reason for staying with a physician even though you are unhappy.

Consider this: have you recently changed financial investments to better your wealth? Why not change your doctor to improve your health?

If you're ready to sideline your current physician and call an audible, these steps will help make the substitution manageable:

1. Don't worry about explaining why you're leaving.
2. Request your medical records ASAP.
3. Research new physician candidates thoroughly. Don't be afraid to ask your network who they like in your area.
4. Make sure the new doctor you select is taking new patients.

Perhaps you are interested in new industry options for physician services called Home Based Primary Care (HBPC). With this new option, many clients are having positive experiences and smooth conversions! What is HBPC? It's a team of licensed professionals that deliver appropriate primary and/or palliative care in your home according to YOUR preferences. These services target a group of underserved individuals who are vulnerable, high-risk, and home bound that could benefit from a new standard of care, and we have a handful of choices in our area. HBPC typically accepts most insurances.

Are you looking for additional resources or elder care advice? If you or someone you know could benefit from guidance or a "new play book" to improve your long-term care game, [contact me, Sally Brewer](#), or a member of our [Elder Care](#) team.

Visit our COVID-19 Insight Center for our latest legislative and legal updates, articles, and resources.

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