

4. Health Care

Managing your health care needs can be challenging. This section describes some of those challenges and provides helpful resources.

Record Keeping

In addition to having multiple health conditions, you may be under the care of multiple doctors or specialists and be prescribed a variety of medications. This can make keeping track of important medical information difficult. You may want to create a notebook or folder containing names and phone numbers for all the health care providers you see, as well as the dates of major medical tests and/or surgeries, a list of conditions, dietary restrictions, allergies, and a complete medication list with current dosages.

We have included a medication list you can use in **Appendix Y**.

Monitoring Chronic Health Conditions

Chronic illnesses such as diabetes and heart disease may require daily care to monitor blood levels, dress wounds, or give injections. There are national associations that address various chronic health conditions, such as the American Cancer Society or the American Diabetes Association. These organizations and their local chapters can provide training, support and assistance.

For individuals with disabilities, the prevention of secondary conditions (a condition that results from a specific primary disability, birth defect or medical condition) is an important focus of care. Many organizations provide an abundance of information on this subject.

To locate an organization specific to your disability or chronic health condition, use an Internet search engine like Yahoo or Google.

Finding a Doctor

Not every doctor who practices primary care medicine specializes in geriatrics or issues pertaining to individuals with disabilities. When managing your health care needs it is important to find a primary care physician who accepts your insurance and is experienced with conditions that are common for the aged and disabled populations.

Organizations that can help you find a doctor include:

- **The American Geriatrics Society (AGS) Foundation for Health in Aging** offers a referral service to physicians who are members of AGS

and are board-certified in either family practice or internal medicine. Their website is www.healthinaging.org. Their telephone number is **1-800-563-4916**.

- ❑ **The American Medical Association** offers an on-line search service by city and state or by specialty. Go to www.ama-assn.org. Their telephone number is **1-800-621-8335**.
- ❑ **The Medical Society of New Jersey** also operates an on-line physician finder service at www.msnj.org. Their telephone number is **609-896-1766**.

Making the Most of Your Doctor Visit

Time with your doctor is valuable - make the most of it. Write down and take with you those questions or issues you want to discuss. Ask questions or express concerns about your condition and recommended treatment regime. If something is unclear, ask the doctor to repeat or further explain what he told you. You may also wish to ask a family member or friend to be present during an initial consultation, the examination (if possible), and afterwards, when the doctor discusses findings and treatment recommendations.

Additional resources you may find helpful include:

- ❑ **The U.S. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality** has prepared a list of questions you can print off their website and take with you to the doctor. It is available on-line at www.ahrq.gov/questionsaretheanswer.
- ❑ **The National Institute on Health** has a "Talking with Your Doctor" section on its website at www.nihseniorhealth.gov/talkingwithyourdoctor/toc.html.

Hospitalization and Discharge

At some point in your life, you may be admitted to a hospital to receive medical treatment. When the immediate medical crisis is resolved you will be discharged with follow-up instructions and/or a doctor's note for further treatment. Whether you are discharged to a rehabilitation facility, health care facility or directly home, depends on your needs, abilities and wishes.

Discharge to Rehabilitation Facilities

When indicated, patients can be discharged for short-term follow-up care at a rehabilitation facility prior to returning home. These facilities provide continued medical monitoring, nursing, and personal care, as well as the needed occupational, speech and physical therapy treatments. It is during this rehab stay that continued strength and mobility training takes place prior to your return home.

Short-term rehabilitation stays are a covered benefit of Medicare as long as certain criteria are met. If there is a potential need for Medicaid to be a payer source, your discharge planner at the hospital will make a referral to the State

Office of Community Choice Options to send a Community Choice Counselor (CCC) to conduct a nursing facility pre-admission screening (PAS). Prior to discharge, the CCC will conduct an in-depth care needs assessment. This assessment is used to determine if you meet nursing facility level of care for Medicaid eligibility.

Once in the rehab, facility physicians and a multi-disciplinary team will assess your progress during rehabilitation and help you and your caregiver to understand your capacity to return home, including what in-home care services, home modifications and assistive devices/technologies might be needed, or if a supervised environment might be required.

Discharge to Home

Things to keep in mind prior to discharge to home include:

- ❑ **Timing:** Make sure that you agree with the doctor's assessment that you are ready to go home. You or your caregiver may need to advocate for more time in rehab, and this may involve complex insurance issues about coverage that exceeds certain predetermined time limits.
- ❑ **Transportation:** Make sure you have adequate support for getting home safely. A car ride may be fine, but sometimes you may need a wheelchair van or another type of accessible vehicle. You should receive help from the discharge planner in making these arrangements. Medicare may cover transportation fees if certain criteria are met. A medical necessity form signed by your physician is required for Medicare reimbursement.
- ❑ **Services:** Make sure that you have the necessary skilled nursing care, physical therapy, and/or other personal care services that you need in place before you go home. Medicare may cover your skilled nursing care if certain criteria are met.
- ❑ **Follow-up/contact person:** Before you are discharged, make sure you understand the kind of follow-up needed. Are there doctor appointments that have been made, or do you need to make them? Are there prescriptions that need to be filled by the pharmacy? Who should you call with any concerns or in an emergency situation?

Health Clinics – Centers for Primary Care

New Jersey's Centers for Primary Health Care (CPHC) are medical facilities offering community healthcare on a free or low-cost basis. Almost all clinics provide care for acute, non-emergent conditions. Care is generally provided to persons who have lower or limited income, and no health insurance, including persons who are not eligible for Medicare or Medicaid.

Many health clinics also provide a full range of primary care (including preventative care) and care for chronic conditions. Services provided by these centers may include:

- ❑ Pediatric Services
- ❑ Women's Health/Prenatal Care
- ❑ Adolescent Health
- ❑ Internal and Family Medicine
- ❑ Geriatrics
- ❑ Mental Health
- ❑ Dental Care
- ❑ Nutritional Counseling (WIC)
- ❑ Health Education
- ❑ Evaluation for Sexually Transmitted Diseases
- ❑ HIV/AIDS Counseling and Testing
- ❑ Laboratory Services
- ❑ Pharmacy Services
- ❑ Patient Transportation

A complete list of Centers for Primary Health Care can be found in **Appendix D**.

Veterans Medical Care

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides a comprehensive medical benefits package to certain persons who served in the active military, naval or air service and who were discharged or released under conditions other than a dishonorable discharge. Some family members of veterans may also receive medical benefits through the VA. The provision of services is dependent each year on federal funding of the VA program.

The VA provides coverage for basic and preventive health care, which includes inpatient and outpatient care for medical, surgical, and mental health care, including care for substance abuse. Also covered are prescription and over-the-counter drugs, home health services, hospice and extended care, periodic physical examinations, immunizations, vision care and many other health care services. Co-payments are sometimes required.

- ❑ For additional information, visit the **NJ Department of Military and Veterans Affairs** website at www.nj.gov/military or contact the **New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs**, or the **Veterans Service Office** in your county. A complete list can be found in **Appendix Q and R**.

Eye Health

Diseases such as glaucoma, cataracts and macular degeneration can significantly impact an individual's independence including their ability to drive, enjoy recreational activities, and read. It is therefore important that you maintain regular eye checkups.

- ❑ **Find an Eye MD** is a service coordinated by **The American Academy of Ophthalmology**. Visit www.aao.org/find_eyemd.cfm to locate an Ophthalmologist in your area.
- ❑ The **New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CBVI)** provides programs on the prevention of blindness and eye health

service. See **Appendix E** or visit their website at www.state.nj.us/humanservices/cbvi/home/index.html.

Ear Health

Depending on the cause, hearing loss can range from mild to profound and can be temporary or permanent. If left untreated or undiagnosed, it can contribute to depression, social isolation, and a loss of independence. Hearing aids and other devices can help enhance your quality of life by helping you adapt to hearing loss. Insurance coverage is limited for adults so be certain to check with your insurance provider as to the limits of your coverage prior to purchasing hearing aids.

Additional Resources that you may find useful include:

- ❑ **The NJ Division of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DDHH)** provides advocacy and assists consumers to gain access to programs, services and information routinely available to others. The DDHH also operates an equipment distribution program. For information call **1-800-792-8339 (V/TTY)**, fax 609-984-0390, or visit their website www.state.nj.us/humanservices/ddhh/home/index.html.
- ❑ **The NJ Department of Health and Senior Services** offers a program that provides a \$100 reimbursement to eligible individuals who purchase a hearing aid. For more information on the Hearing Aid Assistance to the Aged and Disabled program and to obtain an application, call toll-free **1-800-792-9745**.
- ❑ **The League for the Hard of Hearing** is a not-for-profit hearing rehabilitation and human services agency for infants, children and adults who are hard of hearing, deaf, and deaf-blind. Visit their website at www.lhh.org.

Dental Care

If you have difficulty accessing appropriate dental care due to insurance or financial restraints, you may need to get care at a dental clinic. Dental clinics are located throughout the state. You are advised to call a local clinic for an appointment and ask about required documentation to prove your income or residency.

- ❑ **American Dental Association (ADA)** at www.ada.org provides an online search for ADA Member Dentists.
- ❑ **The NJ Division of Family Health Services** produces a dental clinic directory, titled *Dial a Smile*. To request a directory or additional information, call or write the NJ Div. of Family Health Services, PO Box 364, Trenton, NJ 08652-0364; telephone: **1-800-328-3838 (TTY 1-800-852-7897)**; website: www.state.nj.us/health/fhs.

- ❑ To locate a dentist who accepts Medicaid, please call the **Medical Assistance Hotline** at **1-800-356-1561**.
- ❑ **The University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey**, the states dental school, provides a webpage dedicated to oral health at **www.healthynj.org/dis-con/tooth/main.htm**. It also provides helpful NJ related dental resources. For additional information call **973-972-4633**
- ❑ **The NJ Foundation of Dentistry for Persons with Disabilities** operates a donated dental services program offering treatment for senior citizens and persons with developmental and permanent disabilities. In southern and central New Jersey, call **732-549-8909**, and in northern New Jersey, call **732-549-8506**.
- ❑ **Senior Dent** is a program sponsored by the **NJ Dental Association** that affords eligible seniors the opportunity to obtain comprehensive oral health treatment at a minimum 15% discount. To obtain an application, call **1-800-792-8820** or **732-821-9400**.

Assistive Devices / Technology

Assistive technology is a term that describes devices and services created and used to help individuals with disabilities and the elderly live more independently and productively, therefore enabling them to participate fully in every aspect of life.

Types of Assistive Devices

Just as there are many different types of disabilities, many different categories of assistive devices and services are available to help overcome those disabilities. A few examples of assistive technology follow:

- ❑ Communication equipment, such as a telephone amplifier.
- ❑ Special computer software that enables access to the Internet, or basic hardware, such as a modified keyboard or mouse that makes the computer easier to use.
- ❑ Audio books or Braille writing tools.
- ❑ Job-related items, such as special types of chairs or pillows for someone who works at a desk or a back brace for someone who does physical labor.
- ❑ Power wheelchairs, stairways or wheel chair lifts.

Paying for Assistive Technology

No single private insurance plan or public program will pay for all types of assistive technology. However, Medicare Part B will cover up to 80 percent of the cost of assistive technology if the items being purchased meet the definition of “durable medical equipment.” This is defined as devices that are “primarily and customarily used to serve a medical purpose, and generally are not useful to a person in the absence of illness or injury.” A physician’s order is required for Medicare reimbursement.

- ❑ To find out if Medicare will cover the cost of a particular piece of assistive technology, call **1-800-633-4227**. For **TTY/TFF**, call **1-877-486-2048**. You can also visit their website at **www.medicare.gov**.

New Jersey Medicaid may pay for some assistive technology. Other payment options include private health insurance and out-of-pocket payment. Additionally, subsidy programs provide some types of assistive technology at a reduced cost or for free. Many businesses and not-for-profit groups have set up subsidy programs that include discounts, grants, or rebates to get consumers to try a specific product. Individuals are cautioned about participating in subsidy programs that are run by businesses with commercial interests in the product or service because of the potential for fraud.

- ❑ For more information on Medicaid coverage of assistive technology, call the **NJ Division of Medical Assistance and Health Services** at **1-800-356-1561**, or visit their website at **www.state.nj.us/humanservices/dmahs/home/index.html**

Assistive Technology Advocacy Center (ATAC)

The Assistive Technology Advocacy Center (ATAC) serves as the state's federally funded assistive technology project through a sub-contract with the NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development. Its purpose is to assist individuals in overcoming barriers in the system and making assistive technology more accessible to individuals with disabilities throughout the state. You can access the center through **Disability Rights New Jersey** by calling **1-800-922-7233 (TTY: 609-633-7106, or 711)**. Their website is **www.drnj.org**.

Additional resources that you may find useful include:

- ❑ **Back in Action** is a website that connects people with available assistive technology. The website is **http://backinaction.njpanda.org**.
- ❑ **Advancing Opportunities**, formerly Cerebral Palsy of NJ, operates a **Technology Lending Center** that provides a wide variety of assistive technology and adaptive equipment used for daily living. Go to **www.advopps.org**, or telephone **1-888-322-1918, ext. 536 (TTY 1-609-882-0620)**.

Medication

Medication Management

While everyone needs to be careful about taking medications, older adults need to be even more cautious because:

- ❑ Older people often take more medicines than younger people.

- ❑ Reactions from mixing two or more drugs in the body, called “drug interactions”, can cause side effects.
- ❑ Older people may react differently to medicine, especially when you consider the metabolism of older adults as being much slower, leading to a delayed response to the medication and a longer process to eliminate the excess.

The more you know about your medicines and the more you talk with your health care professional, the easier it is to avoid problems with your medication.

Medication Considerations

When being prescribed a new medication from your physician, it is important to ask:

- ❑ How may this new medicine interact with other prescriptions and over-the-count medicine (name them all) you are taking?
- ❑ If you are allergic to certain drugs, is this new drug safe to take?
- ❑ What is the name of the drug? Can a generic substitute be used?
- ❑ Why are you being prescribed the medication?
- ❑ What is the proper method for taking the medication? Are there guidelines about taking the medication with food, or foods/alcohol that should be avoided?
- ❑ What are the common side effects of the medication? What actions should you take if such symptoms occur?
- ❑ Is there a stop date?
- ❑ What if you skip a dose?

In addition to understanding your medications, it is important to maintain an updated medication list, which includes information such as:

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| ❑ Date prescribed | ❑ Directions for taking medication |
| ❑ Name of drug | ❑ Reason prescribed |
| ❑ Dosage | ❑ Stop date |

A blank Medication Form is available in **Appendix Y** for your use.

Medication Management Reminder Devices

People can be overwhelmed with the number of medications taken on a daily basis. It can be hard to remember what each drug is for, when you should take it, and how you should take it. There are many options on the market to help you organize your medication. There are also programs available to help manage your medicines safely. Simple methods you can use include a pillbox or a calendar.

There are also medication reminder devices available at medical supply stores or on the Internet to purchase. The devices come in many forms, shapes and sizes; from alarm and vibrating watches to a fully automatic dispenser with alarm systems. Costs vary from a basic two-dollar plastic pill organizer to a couple hundred dollars for an electronic pill dispenser with alarms and telephone reassurance. There are some public programs that will cover some or all of the costs of medication reminders or dispensers such as Global Options (GO) for Long Term Care, JACC or the Statewide Respite Care Program.

- ❑ To learn more about this option, contact your **Ageing and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) and/or Area Agency on Aging (AAA)** at **1-877-222-3737**.

Things to consider:

- ❑ Does the individual have the mental capacity to self-medicate?
- ❑ If a device is to be used, who will be responsible for filling the medication box?

How to Save Money on Medications

Medicines are an important part of treating an illness, often enabling people to remain active and independent. Anyone who takes medicine knows they can also be very expensive. Medicare and Medicaid have prescription drug benefits (see the **Insurance** section for more details). Here are some ideas that may help to lower drug costs:

- ❑ Request samples when prescribed new medications.
- ❑ Ask your physician for a generic drug prescription when appropriate.
- ❑ Buy large amounts of medicines that are taken all the time. Capitalize on mail-order plans, which frequently offer lower co-pays for a three-month supply.
- ❑ Call around to local pharmacies/department stores to check pricing and to ask about discount programs.
- ❑ Ask if senior citizen discounts are offered.
- ❑ Buy store-brand or generic-brand over-the-counter medications.

The following programs may also prove helpful.

Prescription Drug Price Registry

The New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs offers an on-line Prescription Drug Price Registry that helps consumers compare the retail prices charged by many pharmacies for the 150 most-frequently prescribed prescription drugs. The registry is posted at **www.njdrugprices.nj.gov**, or you may call **1-800-242-5846**.

Pharmaceutical Assistance to the Aged and Disabled (PAAD)

The PAAD program helps eligible New Jersey residents pay for prescription drugs and related supplies. Only drugs approved by the Food and Drug Administration are covered. Drugs purchased outside the State of New Jersey are not covered, nor is any pharmaceutical product whose manufacturer has not agreed to provide rebates to the State of New Jersey.

Eligibility Requirements:

- ❑ A New Jersey resident;
- ❑ 65 years of age or older, or 18 years of age or older and receiving Social Security Title II Disability benefits;
- ❑ Meet the program's annual income limit;
- ❑ All Medicare-eligible PAAD beneficiaries are required to enroll in a Medicare Part D prescription drug plan.

In 2009, the PAAD co-payment was \$6 for each covered generic drug prescription and \$7 for each brand name drug prescription. PAAD beneficiaries may pay less for generic drugs if their Medicare prescription drug plan charges them less than the co-payment for generics.

- ❑ For additional information on **PAAD**, call toll-free **1-800-792-9745**, or visit their website at **www.nj.gov/health/seniorbenefits/paad.shtml**.

Senior Gold Prescription Discount Program

The Senior Gold Prescription Discount program is similar to PAAD, but for individuals with incomes up to \$10,000 higher than the level established for PAAD eligibility.

Eligibility Requirements:

- ❑ A New Jersey resident;
- ❑ 65 years of age or older, or 18 years of age or older and receiving Social Security Title II Disability benefits;
- ❑ Meet the program's annual income limit (limit is \$10,000 higher than for PAAD);
- ❑ All Medicare-eligible Senior Gold beneficiaries are required to enroll in a Medicare Part D prescription drug plan.

In 2009, the Senior Gold co-payment was \$15 plus 50% of the remaining cost of each covered prescription. Once members reach annual out-of-pocket expenses exceeding \$2,000 for single persons or \$3,000 for married couples, they pay only a flat \$15 co-payment per prescription for the balance of that eligibility period. Senior Gold can help you when you are in the Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit Program's donut hole (see a description of Medicare Part D in the **Insurance** section).

- ❑ For additional information on **Senior Gold**, call toll-free **1-800-792-9745**, or visit their website at **www.nj.gov/health/seniorbenefits/seniorgold.shtml**.

AIDS Drug Distribution Program (ADDP)

The AIDS Drug Distribution Program provides life-sustaining and life-prolonging medications to low income individuals with no other source of payment for these drugs. Qualified participants receive free access to HIV-AIDS related prescription medications approved by the federal Food and Drug Administration.

Eligibility Requirements:

- ❑ New Jersey resident, 30 days prior to filing application;
- ❑ Annual income must not exceed 500% of the federal poverty level;
- ❑ Physician certification indicating medical necessity of receiving the covered medications;
- ❑ You must sign a consent form which attests to the accuracy of the information and allow for verification;
- ❑ If you have other forms of reimbursement through private insurance you may not be eligible for the program unless you have received the maximum benefits allowable under the plan.

- ❑ For additional information or to apply for the **AIDS Drug Distribution Program**, call the **NJ Department of Health and Senior Services** toll-free **1-877-613-4533** or **609-588-7038**.

An additional resource that you may find useful includes:

- ❑ **RX4NJ**, New Jersey's Partnership for Prescription Assistance, provides a website designed to help low-income, uninsured New Jersey residents get access to patient assistance programs where they may qualify for free, or nearly free, prescription medicines. Go to **www.rx4nj.org**.
- ❑ There may be **pharmacies in your neighborhood** selling generic drugs at a low cost, such as \$4 for a thirty-day supply. You may wish to call around to find a pharmacy in your area that offers such a program.

Mental Health

Just as it requires effort to build or maintain physical health, so it is with mental and emotional health. The more time and energy you invest in your emotional health, the stronger it will be. The good news is that there are many things you can do to boost your mood, build resilience and get more enjoyment out of life including spending time with others, joining groups and volunteering.

If you've made consistent efforts to improve your mental and emotional health and you still don't feel good, it may be time to seek professional help. The NJ Division of Mental Health Services funds 120 private, not-for-profit community

agencies to provide a full range of mental health services. Services are provided on a sliding-fee scale.

- These agencies are listed in the phone book under Mental Health Services, or you can call your local **County Mental Health Administrator's Office**. Go to www.state.nj.us/humanservices/dmhs/services/admin/index.html or **Appendix K** to see a list on these offices.

Services accessible through these agencies may include:

- **Outpatient Services.** Periodic therapy, counseling and supportive services are provided to clients who possess a psychiatric diagnosis, including clients who are seriously and persistently mentally ill but excluding substance abuse and developmental disability unless accompanied by treatable symptoms of mental illness.
- **Adult Partial Care Services.** Comprehensive, structured, non-residential health services provided to seriously mentally ill adult clients in a day program setting to maximize client's independence and community living skills.
- **Intensive Family Support Services.** Offers supportive activities designed to improve the overall functioning and quality of life of families with a mentally ill relative.
- **Designated Screening Center.** This is a public or private ambulatory care service that provides mental health services including assessment, emergency and referral services to mentally ill persons in a specified geographical area.
- **Emergency Services.** Emergency services offer immediate crisis intervention services and service procurement to relieve the client's distress and to help maintain or recover his or her level of functioning. Emphasis is on stabilization, so that the client can actively participate in needs assessment and service planning.

- For additional information related to mental health contact the **NJ Division of Mental Health Services, 1-800-382-6717** or visit their website at www.state.nj.us/humanservices/dmhs/home/.

Addiction Programs

Many people suffer from one or more addictions including, but not limited to drugs, alcohol and gambling. Facing an addiction can start you on the road to freedom.

The NJ Division of Addiction Services operates the Addictions Hotline of New Jersey, a service that has helped over one million people find alcohol or drug treatment programs, locate 12-step support meetings, or find answers to questions concerning drugs and alcohol. Trained telephone counselors are

available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to educate, assist or counsel individuals and families battling addictions. Calls are toll-free and shared information remains confidential.

- ❑ Call the **Addictions Hotline of New Jersey** at **1-800-238-2333** or the **Gamblers Addiction Hotline** at **1-800-426-2537** to start your journey on the road to freedom.

Additional resources that you may find useful include:

- ❑ **The NJ Division of Addiction Services** is responsible for providing effective treatment and prevention for alcoholism and drug abuse and for enhancing public awareness of the dangers of such substances. Visit their website for additional information at **www.state.nj.us/humanservices/das/home/index.html**.
- ❑ **The NJ Prevention Network, Inc. (NJPN)**, on-line at **www.njpn.org** provides a statewide coordinated approach to advocacy, collaboration and education.
- ❑ **The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration** is an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) created to focus attention, programs, and funding on improving the lives of people with or at risk for mental and substance abuse disorders. Go to **www.samhsa.gov**.

End-of-Life Care

If you are facing a life-threatening health crisis, you and your caregiver must make many important medical, legal and practical decisions. Being informed about your choices can help ease some of the burden.

Palliative Care

Palliative care is any form of treatment that focuses on reducing the severity of disease symptoms rather than providing a cure. The goal is to prevent and relieve suffering and to improve quality of life for people facing a serious illness.

Hospice Care

Hospice care is provided for people with a terminal illness when life expectancy is limited, generally six months or less. Hospice services may be chosen by you or your caregiver, or recommended by your physician. In all cases, the physician must be involved to verify that the patient has a terminal illness that cannot be cured.

Hospice care can be provided in the home or at an extended care facility, such as a nursing home or assisted living facility. There are also free-standing hospice centers, sometimes called residential hospice centers. Some families prefer this kind of setting because it feels more like home and less like an institution.

Hospice services are available through private and nonprofit hospice agencies and programs, home health or visiting nurse associations, group medical practices, hospitals and extended care facilities, such as nursing homes.

Medicare, Medicaid and most private insurance plans cover the costs of hospice care, or you may pay out-of-pocket.

- ❑ For more detailed information on insurance eligibility, services, and payment options, go to **Hospice Net** on-line at **www.hospicenet.org**, a nonprofit organization that provides information and support to patients and families facing life-threatening illnesses.

Hospice Care Resources

There are several organizations that provide in-depth information on hospice care and can help you locate a hospice facility in your area.

- ❑ **The New Jersey Hospice and Palliative Care Organization** at **www.njhospice.org/** is a nonprofit organization that promotes hospice and palliative care in New Jersey, including education and advocacy, technical assistance, support, and information for professionals, families, and friends.
- ❑ **The Center to Advance Palliative Care** is a national organization dedicated to increasing the availability of quality palliative care services. Visit its website at **www.getpalliativecare.org**.
- ❑ **National Association for Home Care and Hospice** is a trade association that represents home care agencies, hospices, and home care aide organizations. It also offers a user-friendly tool on its website to locate agencies in your area that provide hospice. Go to **www.nahcagencylocator.com**.

Additional End-of-Life Resources

Here are a number of additional resources for those facing end-of-life decisions.

- ❑ **Americans for Better Care of the Dying** at **www.abcd-caring.org** is dedicated to ensuring good end-of-life care. The organization focuses on improved pain management, better financial reimbursement systems, enhancing continuity of care, support for family caregivers, and changes in public policy.
- ❑ **The National Cancer Institute (NCI)** has a helpful fact sheet on its website at **www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/factsheet/Support/end-of-life-care** titled “End of Life Questions and Answers.”

Bereavement

As our society continues to explore how to deal with death and dying, we are also learning and understanding more about grieving. A number of organizations

and agencies provide bereavement services and support groups to help you through this difficult time.

- **AARP** at www.aarp.org provides extensive information about end-of-life issues on its website, as well as links to resources about specific issues of law, grief, and loss. For a helpful checklist, click on “Family,” then “Life After Loss.”
- **Checklist Following Death** is another helpful list of tasks. It summarizes practical issues such as how to identify income and assets of the deceased, and how to minimize debts of the decedent. It can be found at www.tennant-ewer.com/Article_Checklist_Following_Death.shtml.
- **Griefnet** at www.griefnet.org provides access to 50 e-mail support groups and websites. The support groups are organized by the relationship the caregiver had to the deceased, including a group for adult children of elderly parents.

