

# Working with an Advocate: What You Need to Know

## What does a Professional Advocate do?

An Advocate provides hands-on support for patients with complex needs and their family members. An Advocate's responsibilities may often include:

- Meeting with patients and family members at their residence, be it home, hospital, facility or rehab
- Accompanying patients to doctor and specialist appointments and documenting the conversations
- Finding and researching long-term care facilities compatible with patient needs
- Coaching the whole family on how to obtain and provide the best care for a loved one
- Referring and vetting professionals (e.g. attorneys, doctors, financial planners, therapists, etc.)
- Managing relocation of patients over a long distance or from state to state

By profession, an Advocate may be a Nurse, Social Worker, Physician's Assistant, Case Manager, Aging Life Specialist, Geriatric Care Manager or other professional. All Advocates bring specific experience navigating the challenges that come with caring for a loved one.

## Why partner with an Advocate?

**Advocates work for the patient.** Our responsibility is to represent the patient. For that reason, we must be private pay and not beholden to a hospital, insurance company or any other party involved with direct care.

**One point of contact.** When multiple doctors, specialists, therapists and other professionals contribute to the care of a single patient, consistent communication and record-keeping are essential.

**Experience and savvy in health care.** An Advocate has helped other families like yours. We know the nuances of the health care system and maintain a professional rapport with each member of the care team.

**Peace of mind.** An Advocate alleviates the stress of care management, allowing you to sleep well at night, knowing that your loved ones' needs are met and allowing you to spend more quality time with your family.

**We stay by your side.** Most care professionals you encounter only provide specific services. An Advocate acts as a generalist, assuming responsibility for the services you receive from your entire circle of care.

## **How does it work?**

Our Advocates meet in person with the patient and the family member(s) who will be primarily responsible for care. It is ideal for the meeting to take place in the patient's home, or at the care facility. The initial consultation is billed hourly, with a surcharge for travel to sites more than 40 miles from downtown Raleigh. There is no commitment beyond the initial session.

*Call us today at (919) 628-4428 to schedule a confidential, no-obligation 20-minute telephone consultation.*



## Frequently Asked Questions

### ***My parents have complex needs, and I live far away from Raleigh. How can you help?***

NAVIGATE NC specializes in handling this type of situation. We often serve as “local eyes and ears” for adult children who cannot physically attend to their loved ones’ daily needs. This may include accompanying patients to doctor’s visits, managing communication between multiple providers and caregivers, visiting patients in the home or facility, and much more.

### ***How quickly can you help find my parents a facility? I’m at a dead end.***

This is an area where NAVIGATE NC often helps families. Finding a compatible facility on short notice can be a challenge, especially for patients with dementia. Our Case Managers have extensive experience with this type of situation, as well as the requirements of different types of facilities.

### ***My parents are unable to sign documents. Is there still a way to set up Power of Attorney?***

When a patient is incompetent to sign documents, it is often too late for Power of Attorney, but there is another option: the Guardianship process. We can work with your family’s Attorney to help you take control of your loved ones’ financial assets so that you can make decisions on their behalf.

### ***Can you figure out if Medicare or Medicaid is an option, or if other programs are available?***

Yes. We often work with families to find payer sources depending on your financial situation and the type of medical need. Programs like Medicaid often have a five-year lookback, so it is beneficial to begin implementing a financial strategy ahead of time as this can affect options down the road.

### ***Can my parents age in place?***

Aging in place is an option. The specific approach depends on the patient’s physical and mental condition, the availability, proximity and accessibility of local services, the physical environment in the home, and numerous other factors. Various transitional living options exist in addition to assisted living. We often work with families to determine the best age-in-place strategy.

### ***The bills, medical records and financial documents are overwhelming. How can you help?***

It is not uncommon for us to manage situations where patients rely on ten or more providers. Our Case Managers coordinate the flow of information between providers. We ensure that time-sensitive matters are handled promptly, that record-keeping remains consistent, and that families have access to accurate and up-to-date information about the care of their loved ones.

### ***Do you accept insurance for your services?***

We work for patients and their families, not for the hospital or an insurance company. For this reason, our services are fully private pay. This allows us to focus on what is best for our clients without being beholden to or influenced by any outside entities. We also help families identify payor sources such as Medicare and long-term care insurance to offset the cost of care.

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