



*Sabrina Winters*  
Attorney at Law, PLLC

**ALZHEIMER'S AWARENESS WEEK FEBRUARY 14<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup>**  
**HAVING THE DIFFICULT CONVERSATION WITH A PARENT**

By: Sabrina Winters, Charlotte North Carolina Estate Planning Attorney

“Does dad consider living with Alzheimer’s or Dementia to be quality of life?”

“Is there legal documentation in place that ensures someone can act financially on mom or dad’s behalf if they are unable to?”

These are just two of many questions that experts are urging adult children to ask their parents during Alzheimer’s and Dementia Awareness Week (February 14<sup>th</sup>- 21<sup>st</sup>). Without the answers to such questions, families could be left battling over long-term care, struggling financially and not truly honoring their parent’s wishes should the disease unexpectedly strike.

So many families avoid talking about Alzheimer’s or Dementia until it’s too late. From a legal standpoint, if you don’t know your parents’ wishes or the documentation they have in place, you could be left with a huge burden on your hands in the wake of this debilitating disease”.

There should be 5 specific conversations adult children should have with their parents as soon as the opportunity presents itself. They comprise the following:

**1. Long-term care preferences**

Does mom or dad want to live in a nursing home or would they prefer in-home care if the need presented itself? If they prefer a facility, what amenities and activities are important to them at this point in their life? These are questions that if discussed in advance can make the transition into an assisted living facility or a home-health care program much easier on everyone when the time comes.

## **2. Current Legal Documentation**

It's imperative that adult children find out what legal documentation their parents have in place *before* incapacity occurs. This includes making sure their parents have a power of attorney, health care directive and HIPAA forms so someone can easily step in to make financial or medical decisions on their behalf. Otherwise the family will be forced to petition a court for control over their parent's affairs if they have passed the point of legal capacity.

## **3. Medical Preferences and Wishes**

Adult children are urged to find out what type and how much medical care their parents want after receiving a diagnosis of Alzheimer's or dementia. Do they have specific wishes about life support or other end-of life medical treatments? Who do they want to make such decisions on their behalf? The answers to these questions will help your parents to feel secure knowing their wishes will be carried out during an otherwise emotionally-charged time.

## **4. Current state of financial affairs**

To ensure finances stay properly managed after a diagnosis of Alzheimer's or Dementia, adult children should use this week to start asking tough questions about their parent's financial affairs. This includes finding out the location of any safety deposit boxes, bank accounts, investment or brokerage accounts, outstanding debts or other assets unknown to the family. Otherwise, necessary assets needed to cover long-term care or other expenses could be overlooked when memory loss ultimately occurs.

## **5. Important contacts and information**

While their memory is sharp, adult children should work with aging parents to compile a list of important contacts and information that will be useful to the family if memory loss occurs. This includes documenting key doctors, professional advisors (ie. accountant, attorney, financial advisor) and important passwords for online accounts.

Fortunately, we've made the process of meeting with a North Carolina probate lawyer easier than ever by offering free "Peace of Mind" Planning session (normally \$750) to anyone that takes the time to read this informational article. However, these sessions are limited to 5 per month, so call 704-843-1446 to reserve your spot today.

15720 John J. Delaney Drive, Suite 300  
Charlotte, North Carolina 28277  
(704) 843-1446  
[www.ncstateplanninginfo.com](http://www.ncstateplanninginfo.com)  
swinters@sabrinawinterslaw.com