

**LONG DISTANCE CAREGIVING**  
By Attorney Elizabeth Ruthmansdorfer

**1. Basic facts.**

Why personal to me

Less recognized group of caregivers. Defined as caregivers over an hour away from the individual they are caring for. 5-6 million or 11% of caregivers are long distance caregivers.

Determined LD caregivers spend 1 day a week scheduling appointments, bill pay, phone calls, etc. They are likely to miss more work days than other caregivers.

OLD information out there. A lot of what I found was 8-10 years old. I found 1 video from last 12 months. Due to COVID, some new items starting to come out. Article from AARP from May.

**2. Legal.**

- a. Health Care Power of Attorney/Living Will/Advanced Directive
- b. Financial Power of Attorney (bank, brokerage and stand alone)
- c. Digital Access

**3. Finances.**

- a. Bank – potential suspicion (new law re elder abuse), not always good at doing right paperwork. Do what is easy for them, undo estate plans
- b. Brokerage – may request their own POA form to be completed
- c. Bill pay – can be set up online – if individual lets them!
- d. Taxes – not enough knowledge to caregiver of how medical is treated, miss many deductions or cash out wrong assets
- e. Hidden money – always! Lack of information or forgetfulness

**4. Health Care.**

- a. Guardianship or HCPOA or independent
- b. Place of care – resources (everyone in the room!)

- c. You all see this best.
- d. Many websites with videos and information
- e. ADRC with LOTS of information Kenosha County ADRC, 262-605-6646

**5. Technology.**

- a. Face-time, Skype, Zoom, Portal – all great ways to videoconference, be involved in care conferences better than a phone call because you see each other (can't make faces or do other work during call), good emotional support, see the house, mom/dad can't pretend everything ok as much
- b. Study being done – videoconference intervention for distance caregivers funded by national institute of nursing research (3 groups. 1 with full technology, 1 with just phone apps, 1 with nothing) Still ongoing
- c. Life Alert – works if used
- d. True-link – preloaded, controlled
- e. Texting – if person is capable good way to provide emotional support
- f. Care Zone – medical appointments, medications, insurance, Caring Bridge – schedule between multiple caregivers  
Lotsa – good reviews on long distance, organizes meals, errands, rides, times to call
- g. Google calendars – schedule times to meet with person, caregivers, etc.

**6. Other resources.**

- a. Family Caregiver Alliance
- b. National Center on Caregiving

Talking key – don't do it alone. Build a network. Inform family and friends of what is going on.

Make a plan – make a notebook (best clients have good notebooks) doctor's numbers, accountant numbers, etc.

Research illness and treatment