

Williams Senior Transition Services

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Why Every Caregiver Needs a One-Page Emergency Plan

Part of being a caregiver is to expect the unexpected and to create calm in moments of chaos. That pressure can be immense — so finding ways to lessen it can go a long way. One of the most powerful tools you can create is a one-page emergency plan: a cheat sheet of all the details, routines, and practices necessary to prevent delay and indecision during emergencies.

“I’ve seen firsthand how having a plan changes everything. When families know exactly what to do and where to find information, they can stop managing chaos and start being present for the person they love.”

— Stella Williams, Founder, Williams Senior Transition Services

That 2019 is easier said than done 2014 but having a clear, easy-to-reference plan removes the guesswork so you can focus entirely on your loved one in the moment that matters most.

In honor of National Caregivers Day, Williams Senior Transition Services is sharing this resource to help every family in Central Texas build their own plan. You want to strike a balance between being thorough and overly complicated — the point is to have necessary information readily accessible and easy to read. Keep both a physical copy and a digital version that you can share with friends and loved ones.

1. Identifiable Information About the Person Receiving Care

Start with the basics. This section should be immediately visible and easy to find.

- Full legal name and preferred name or nickname
- Date of birth
- Home address and phone number
- Primary language
- Blood type
- Medical conditions diagnosed
- A recent photo (especially important for dementia or memory care)

2. Medication Information

This section should include a full list of both prescription and over-the-counter medications the person takes, plus information about how they are administered.

- Full medication name, dosage, and frequency
- Time of day each medication is taken
- Prescribing physician for each medication
- Any supplements or vitamins
- Allergies — mark life-threatening allergies clearly in red
- Preferred pharmacy name, address, and phone number

3. Daily Routine

Include information about how the person you care for spends their days. Add eating preferences, daily activity schedules, and wake-up and bedtime routines. Include any tips that can make these routines go more smoothly 2014 especially for substitute caregivers who may not know your loved one.

- Wake-up time and morning routine
 - Meal times and food preferences or restrictions
 - Daytime activity schedule
 - Bedtime routine and sleep schedule
 - Any behavioral notes, triggers to avoid, or calming strategies
 - Mobility aids used (walker, wheelchair, hearing aid, etc.)
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4. List of Doctors and Specialists

Be sure to include contact information and names for the person's entire medical care team. It's also smart to include the location and contact information for the closest or preferred hospital or emergency room.

- Primary care physician — name and phone
 - All specialists — neurologist, cardiologist, etc.
 - Home health agency name and nurse contact
 - Preferred hospital or emergency room name and address
 - Case manager or social worker, if applicable
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5. Upcoming Appointments

Include a list of upcoming appointments so that no important follow-up care is missed 2014 even if you are unable to be present.

- Appointment date, time, and location
 - Doctor or specialist name
 - Purpose of appointment
 - Transportation needs
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6. Location of Advance Care Directives

This is one piece of information you don't want to search for in an emergency. Your plan should make clear where to find the care receiver's advance care directives — legal documents that communicate their wishes during a medical emergency.

- Who holds Power of Attorney (POA) — name and phone number
 - Whether a DNR (Do Not Resuscitate) order is in place, and where it is filed
 - Advance directive or living will — location of the physical document
 - Their wishes regarding life-sustaining interventions such as ventilation and CPR
 - Location of other legal documents: will, insurance policies, trust documents
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7. Dementia & Memory Care: Extra Layer of Detail

If your loved one has Alzheimer's or another form of dementia, your emergency plan needs additional information. First responders and substitute caregivers may not know how to communicate safely with someone experiencing memory loss.

- Stage of dementia and most recent cognitive assessment date
 - Preferred name and communication style that works best
 - Calming phrases, objects, or music that reduce anxiety
 - Known triggers — things that cause agitation or fear
 - Wandering risk level and any GPS or door alarm systems in use
 - Behavioral symptoms that may look alarming but are normal for your loved one
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Where to Keep Your Emergency Plan

Having the plan is only half the battle — it must be findable. Keep copies in all of these places:

On the refrigerator	First responders are trained to look there first — it's the #1 recommended location.
In your go-bag	Keep a copy with you for all medical appointments and hospital visits.
Near the front door	Especially important if your loved one has dementia and may open the door to strangers.
Shared digitally	Email a PDF to all emergency contacts and your loved one's primary physician.
At their facility	If your loved one lives in a senior living community, give a copy to the nurse's station.

Review Every 90 Days. An outdated emergency plan can be as dangerous as no plan at all. Set a calendar reminder to review and update medications, contacts, insurance, and care needs every 90 days — or after any significant change in your loved one's condition.

Need help navigating the next step in your loved one's care?

Williams Senior Transition Services provides FREE senior living placement guidance for families throughout Travis, Williamson, Hays, and Bastrop counties. We are bilingual (English/Spanish), veteran-owned, and available 24/7.

Call or text: 737-389-2130 | stella@stellawilliamstx.com

stellawilliamstx.com | tourseniorliving.org | Podcast: Navigating Senior Care with Stella

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