

Summertime
is the perfect
time to rally the
troops for a session
of Family
Planning.



Hayes/Cade family 2012 reunion in Campbell, CA

| Family Reunion: |

A Good Time For Family Planning

By Derryl H. Molina, Esq.

With family reunions, picnics, weddings and holiday celebrations to choose from, long distance family members can be easily induced to travel to a single spot where they can gather together to work out plans for their parents' care as well as to have some fun together.

With parents aging and their health and lifestyles changing, children need to discuss what procedures will be followed in the near future. Parents should take the time to tell their children where important documents are kept, who their agents are and what their wishes are as expressed in their health care directives, will, and trust as well as their preferences in long term care needs.

Whether you have noticed a decrease in your physical and mental abilities or you are well and active, the family reunion is a good time to hold a formal meeting and share with your children your plans and wishes. Tell them where financial and legal documents are located. Review health care directives, trusts and wills and long term care alternatives.

In my practice, I have seen that even in families that are close, individuals can quickly grow angry, jealous and hostile towards each other when an aging parent begins to need long term care. Today, many children move into their parents' home, causing other siblings to become suspicious of the caregiver's ulterior motives. They develop a fear about losing their inheritance. A family meeting will go a long way toward soothing everyone's anxieties.

Either the parents or a designated child who holds the Power of Attorney should conduct the meeting. Make sure the group starts out by listing the problems to be discussed. Finally, the leader of the meeting should put all the resolutions in writing and GET EVERYONE TO SIGN AND DATE IT.

If you need help conducting this type of meeting, find a lawyer or mediator who could be an uninvolved third party to make sure the meeting runs smoothly and results in an agreement.

Because it may be years after this meeting before the terms of the agreement are implemented, family members will forget their vocal commitments at the meeting to help with transportation to doctors or give respite to the caregiver. Be sure to write them down on the list or resolutions (officially called a care agreement) and get EVERYONE'S signature.

If you can make the summertime a time to meet with your family members and get all these important issues clarified, the whole family's minds will be at ease and the rest of the family reunion will be a lot of fun.

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