



I'm wondering who else remembers going to the doctor's office, putting your name on the sign in sheet in the waiting room, and then waiting for the doctor to come out and call your name? There were no appointments necessary. I know I'm dating myself but that's how I remember it. The doctor did everything in his office: from vaccinations to stitches and setting broken bones. And, I remember him coming to the house when I was sick and following the ambulance when I needed to go to the hospital. He was the keeper of all medical history and the coordinator of care. It was a much simpler time.

Decades later, when my parents went into medical crisis, the medical system in which we found ourselves could not have been more different from what I just described. And it wasn't long before I realized we had to quickly learn what was needed in order to honor our parents' wishes, keep our parents safe and to get them the best care possible. *What we didn't know was that there were people who could have bridged the gap between us and the health care providers.*

But do you know what patient advocacy is? Why it's needed or what is required to be a patient advocate for your loved one? Is that a responsibility that you can or want to take on? My guest today is here to talk about what it takes to bridge the gap between you and your health care providers.

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protecting the rights of
a person in need of care.

Trish Laub

Through the Rabbit Hole, navigating the maze of providing care

The Independent Patient Advocate

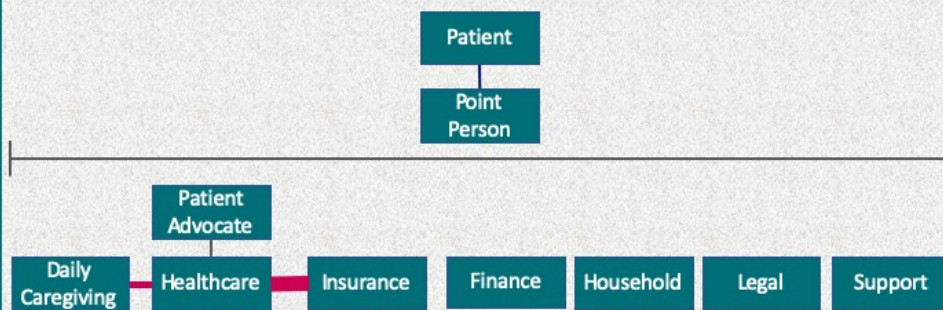
Independent patient advocate services:

- Stress reduction for patient and loved ones
- Medical guidance, research and care planning
- Accompaniment to appointments and inpatient monitoring
- Communication and mediation with medical team and family members
- Insurance benefits, claims and appeals
- Medical bill review
- End-of-life decisions and advance directives

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Where does the patient advocate fit into the care team?



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Bringing partnership and teamwork into your care.

An independent patient advocate:

- **Is the patient's voice.** Many patients find it hard to question a health care provider. Your independent patient advocate doesn't hesitate to do so. The advocate also makes sure that all the important questions are asked.
- **Explains everything** a patient's health care providers say, so the patient understands the treatment and reasons behind it. That puts the patient on a more equal footing.
- **Communicates with every medical professional** who is treating the patient, building teamwork because the providers know whom the patient's other doctors are and all have the latest information.
- **Wields a bit of clout to the patient's benefit.** Amazingly, showing a business card that says Board Certified Patient Advocate can sometimes get faster responses in the medical office or hospital setting.

Here's where to find a patient advocate:

 ADVOConnection.com

 GNAnow.org

 NAHAC.com

I didn't know about the need for patient advocacy until my dad was in the emergency room and needed me to be not only his protector but also his voice. The next several years showed me that *of all caregiving responsibilities, patient advocacy truly is the most important* ... so much so that I wrote about it in all three of my books, and dedicated an entire chapter to it in my book about providing dignified care, *Through the Rabbit Hole*. It ensures that your loved one's rights are protected, their wishes delivered and that they receive the best, and most dignified, care possible – allowing you, the CareHero™, to know that you've done your very best.

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