

Your Parent is Being Discharged from Rehab – Now What?

Imagine this: Your mom or dad was in the hospital for a few days. Then, they were sent to a rehab center to get stronger. Just when you think things are improving, you receive a discharge notice—and suddenly, you’re expected to bring them home in a day or two.

Many families are caught off guard by this situation and feel unprepared to take care of their loved one at home. If this is happening to you, it’s important to know you have options.

Why Is My Parent Being Discharged So Soon?

Most people don’t realize that Medicare only covers rehab stays for a limited time. Here’s how it works:

- Your parent must have spent at least three days in the hospital before being sent to rehab.
- Medicare covers up to 20 days in rehab at 100% if your parent is improving.
- After day 20, Medicare may continue paying, but only if your parent is still making progress.

If the facility determines that your parent is no longer improving, they may issue a discharge notice.

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How Much Notice Does the Rehab Facility Have to Give?

- The facility must provide a written notice at least two days before discharge if Medicare is paying.
- If the patient is being discharged for non-payment, the facility must provide 30 days' notice in most cases.
- The notice should include the reason for discharge, the planned discharge date, and instructions on how to appeal.

Can You Fight a Rehab Discharge?

Yes, families have the right to appeal a discharge decision if they believe their loved one still needs care.

How to Appeal a Rehab Discharge in Florida

- Call the Livanta Beneficiary Helpline (Medicare's Review Organization)
- The written discharge notice will have appeal instructions.
- If you file the appeal before the discharge date, Medicare will continue paying until a decision is made.
- Gather Evidence
- Ask the doctor or therapist if they believe your parent still needs rehab.
- Keep a daily record of what help your parent needs, such as assistance walking, dressing, or eating.
- If your parent cannot safely go home, document why.

Stay in Rehab While Waiting for a Decision

If the appeal is filed before discharge, your loved one can stay in rehab while the review is pending.

If the appeal is denied, you may have to pay out-of-pocket for any extra days in rehab.

Should You Appeal a Rehab Discharge?

Pros of Appealing

- Your parent gets more time to recover in rehab.
- You have time to arrange for home care or Medicaid.
- You avoid a sudden, unsafe discharge.

Cons of Appealing

- If the appeal is denied, you may have to pay for additional days in rehab.
- If your parent is no longer improving, the appeal may not succeed.
- The appeal process can be time-consuming and stressful.
- If you believe your parent is still in need of care, appealing is often the best option. However, if the appeal fails, Medicaid may provide another solution.

What If My Parent Still Needs Care but Medicare Won't Pay?

If your parent is being discharged but still requires ongoing care, Medicaid may be able to help.

- Medicaid can cover a long-term nursing home stay if your parent qualifies.
- Medicaid can also help pay for in-home caregivers if staying at home is a better option.
- A Medicaid planning attorney can help navigate the application process and protect assets.

Many families assume they will not qualify for Medicaid because they have savings or a home. However, there are legal strategies to qualify without losing everything.

How the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Can Help

If you believe the rehab facility is discharging your parent unfairly, Florida's Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program may be able to help.

- They advocate for patients' rights and ensure they are not being discharged too soon.
- They can investigate unfair discharges and work with the facility to ensure proper care.
- They provide free assistance to families dealing with discharge disputes.
- To contact Florida's Long-Term Care Ombudsman, call 1-888-831-0404.

What Should You Do Right Now?

- If you receive a discharge notice, do not panic. You may have options to fight the discharge or arrange better care.
- If your parent still needs care, speak with a Medicaid planning attorney to explore long-term care options.
- If you need help navigating the system, contact our office. We can guide you through Medicaid planning, appeals, and long-term care solutions.

Call Us Today for Expert Help with Medicaid and Long-Term Care Planning.

Many families find themselves scrambling when a discharge notice arrives. Do not wait until the last minute—planning ahead can protect your loved one's care and financial security. Contact us today to discuss your options.

Disclaimer: This guide provides general information on Medicaid planning in Florida and does not constitute legal advice. Laws and regulations may change, so consult an elder law attorney for personalized guidance.