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Board of Directors: Smart Medication Management • December 28, 2016

EDITOR'S PEN

Gary Barg, Editor-in-Chief

Board of Directors: **Smart Medication Management**

One of my greatest joys is traveling the country to talk with family caregivers. Many times, of course, it is at our own Fearless Caregiver Conferences, but often it is as a speaker at other events. A few years ago, I was in California talking about the caregiver's role in medication compliance at a national aging conference. The room was filled with family caregivers concerned about making sure that their loved ones take their medications on time and correctly, even if they lived across the country from the family caregiver. The reasons for their concerns are actually borne out by statistics. Older women consume 60 percent of all prescription and over-the-counter medications; the number of prescriptions written for older adults averages 15 per person per year; and 83 percent of people over 65 are taking prescription medications. With 15 medications to take on a regular basis, accidental overdosing or even mis-dosing would be a problem for anyone; but for many of our loved ones, the risks are increased by memory loss, hearing difficulties and low vision.

These days there is a lot of technology designed to help our senior loved ones with their medication compliance. The challenge is that some of the technology seems more appropriate in a space station than on your grandmother's night stand. One really interesting solution we recently found actually utilizes your loved ones own pill bottles, which then beeps and flashes when pills are due to be taken.

Frankly, the older I get, the more I appreciate the most simple and effective answers to any challenge.

It reminds me of the bewildering frustration I faced when trying to explain a VCR to my grandfather twenty years ago. I see the same look of frustration on my nieces faces when they try to explain the newest twist on social media. Now, I understand what my grandfather was feeling during these sessions, since my technological wisdom peaked around the time I learned about mimeograph machines. And my nieces just look at each other and sigh.

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