

TOUCHING ON TOUGH ISSUES

Should the diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease be disclosed to the individual with the disease?

The Alzheimer's Association believes that physicians should disclose the diagnosis to the individual because of his/her moral and legal right to know. The diagnosis may first have to be disclosed to the family in cases where the person with Alzheimer's may have difficulty understanding it.

As simple and straightforward as that sounds, it's certainly not always that easy. If you're struggling with whether to tell a loved one about the diagnosis, or if you've decided to disclose it but aren't sure how to approach him/her, please give us a call. We may be able to help.

When should a person with a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease give up driving?

At the Crossroads, A Guide to Alzheimer's Disease, Dementia and Driving from The Hartford states that "a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease or other kinds of dementia is not automatically a reason to take away driving privileges. Unfortunately, no examination or single indicator exists to determine when a person with dementia poses a danger to himself or others. Families must determine when a person's attention span, distance perception or ability to process information makes it difficult for him or her to respond safely in driving situations." If you're struggling with this issue, need to know some of the early warning signs of driving problems, or would like to talk about ways to approach your loved one, please call us at 1-800-491-2717. If you would like a copy of At the Crossroads, you can go to The Hartford website at www.thehartford.com.

How do you know when to move a loved one to residential care?

The decision to place a loved one in a long-term care facility depends on each family's situation. What works for one family may not be at all feasible for another. Does your relative more assistance and supervision than you can provide? Are family differences or

geographical distances a factor in providing care? Is it becoming to keep up with both family and caregiving responsibilities? Is the caregiver's health affected? Is it becoming unsafe for the person with Alzheimer's disease to remain at home?

These and other questions may influence the decision to consider placement of a loved one. For more information on moving a relative with Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia and make a smooth transition, contact any of our regional offices.