

For Immediate Release  
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### **Five Essential Tips and One Fundamental Reminder for Reluctant Caregivers**

San Diego, CA (February 19, 2013) – Also known as the “substitute caregiver,” not all caregivers are equal in their interest to serve in the role. In the U.S. at any given time, 20% of the population is serving in the role of caregiver for a loved one – and not always enthusiastically. Based on family dynamics and the cost of assisted living and nursing facilities, many families choose to share the role of caregiving for a loved one until such time that the loved one needs greater ongoing medical oversight than the family is capable of providing. This interim stage of at-home caregiving can offer time for enjoying cherished moments and connection with the loved one, but is often also seen as a time of hardship and resentment by family members who may not be wholeheartedly willing to take on the role of caregiver. For the reluctant caregiver, these five essential tips and one fundamental reminder may help:

1. Locate the list of emergency phone numbers before the primary caregiver leaves as well as the list of medications and the schedule for taking them.
2. Locate your loved one’s medical journal that contains all the notes and records of doctor visits, tests, results, and history of medications and reactions. Refresh your memory on your loved one’s current state of health. If there’s something about their condition that you don’t understand, do some research and become familiar.

3. Ask the primary caregiver to show you how to use all medical equipment that is important to your loved one's care even if you think you already know. For instance, if they are on oxygen, locate the extra oxygen tank and get reminded on how to replace and install the new tank.
4. At the upcoming medical appointment, take the medical journal with you. Take notes on what happens at the appointment, including doctor and staff comments, and write down any instructions that are given. If you do not understand what is being said or requested, ASK questions. Do not leave the appointment until you are confident in your understanding. If any lab work or tests are done, request that copies of results be sent to you so that you can add them to the medical file the family keeps for the loved one.
5. Be sure your loved one is comfortable at all times and take pride in that. This means that they are not in pain; that they are comfortably satiated, calm, have their favorite snack or beverage close by, are warm, but not hot; that they are well rested, and are able to see and talk to you for both company and care.

REMINDER: Be kind, you may need someone to do this for you some day.

In the new book, *HIYA: Patient Advocacy was Her Calling and Salvation*, an inspired biography about a woman who redefined caregiving, by Karen Winston ([www.karenwinston.com](http://www.karenwinston.com)), a vice president with the internationally recognized regional business accelerator CONNECT in La Jolla, CA and a certified clinical nutritionist, the critical role of patient advocate is explored through story and best practice tips. This poignant and disturbing biography characterizes the life of a San Diego woman (Hiya) known personally to the author, who fought in the most

personal sense to survive with cancer and other diseases, but without health insurance or medical treatment until she turned age 65. She not only applied tenacity for achieving good outcomes based on thorough research for her own care, but also throughout her life for those she cared for most.

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For more information or to schedule a media interview:

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