

LEGISLATIVE

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The CARE Act

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The problem:

In the United States health system, family caregivers are expected to perform increasingly complex medical/nursing tasks, yet they can feel ill prepared to take on this important role. This has become increasingly true with the spread of COVID-19. The CARE Act provides increased independence for the elderly and their families, bridging the gap between the quality of care offered in hospital settings and at home. The CARE Act requires facilities to better inform families and caregivers of the care they need to provide to their elderly loved ones and reduces the chance of hospital readmission. Between 2017 and 2019, AARP studied the results in several states that had passed the CARE Act and found greater satisfaction and confidence with care transitions, reduced unnecessary re-hospitalizations, and improved quality outcomes.

What other states are doing:

The CARE Act (with slight variations from state to state) has been passed in 40 different states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the US Virgin Islands.

What this legislation would do:

The CARE Act provides specific guidance for ensuring that family caregivers are seen and included in the care team by hospital staff by requiring the following:

- Advise individuals of their opportunity to identify a family caregiver;
- Record the caregiver's name and contact information in the health record;
- Enable family caregivers by providing as much notice as possible about discharge timing, consulting with them about the discharge plan, discussing their role in carrying out that plan, and instructing them about the medical/nursing tasks they will handle at home

Any opposition:

The CARE Act was introduced in Georgia several years ago and there was opposition from the Georgia Hospital Association. This was before the pandemic and before data showed that the CARE Act is beneficial to hospital readmission rates.

Helpful Resources:

<https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/ppi/2019/03/the-care-act-implementation-progress-and-promise.pdf>

AARP of Georgia
Alzheimer's Association
Mercer University – Rural Innovation Center