

DSAC Chair's Report
May 2015

Hospitalization

I try at all cost to stay out of the hospital for obvious reasons. Every now and then my situation dictates that hospitalization is necessary. In the past 10-15 years all my hospital stays except for one have been less than 3 nights, since being in the hospital it is very difficult for me. The change of location makes my long morning routine even longer. I became very ill quite quickly in March of this year and I was admitted to the hospital with bacterial pneumonia. I was very fortunate that the home health nurse that works with me was able to get me admitted into the hospital very quickly. They started me on IV antibiotics in the emergency room after chest x-rays confirmed I had pneumonia. My rapid admittance to the hospital and quick administration of IV antibiotics prevented me from becoming much more ill, since the pneumonia was rapidly filling my lungs with fluid.

The normal hospital rules do not allow homecare workers to be paid while the consumer/employer is in the hospital, since the homecare workers are paid through Medicaid and the hospital stay is paid through Medicare. However, the degree of my disability requires my need for a great deal of assistance throughout the day and night. The hospital aids do not have the time or expertise to give me the assistance that I need. An exception was made for me, on an individual basis, to allow the homecare workers who provide my assistance in my home to be allowed to be paid while I was in the hospital. I attribute my quick recovery in part to the assistance that the homecare workers provided me. I also needed the specialty care that I received in the hospital, which was provided by the nurses, doctors, and hospital aids. A combination of my routine assistance and the intense services that the hospital provides gave my body what it needed to recover fairly quickly from the pneumonia. I was able to leave the hospital after six days and return home, where I continued my recovery for over a month.

In addition to all the assistance that I received, my knowledge and interest in my situation was a crucial part of my recovery. I understood that the congestion that I experienced would make it very difficult for me to be at home and would only improve when the pneumonia was under control. During my fourth day in the hospital I felt much better and notified the doctors that I felt comfortable leaving the next day, that night was a rough one and my congestion returned. I realized that I needed to stay in the hospital one more day and that it was necessary to convince the doctors of that need. I spoke to one of the doctors early in the morning of the fifth day and convinced him that due to my congestion I might be at risk of returning to the hospital, if I returned home that day. He agreed and allowed me to stay an extra day. I felt much better on the sixth day and I was eager to leave the hospital. It also was quite apparent to the hospital staff I felt confident about returning home. I feel that my self advocacy, the understanding of the hospital staff, and the assistance that I received from the homecare workers that work with me combined to give me the best possible chance for a full recovery.