

TTN Caring Collaborative

**GUIDE TO THE TRANSITION NETWORK'S
CARING COLLABORATIVE NETWORK**

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I. What We Offer Each Other

As members of the Caring Collaborative we offer a network of assistance to help each other when short-term medical problems arise. Some of us offer practical help, such as grocery shopping, bringing food, pet care, and picking up prescriptions. Other examples of what our members may do for each other include: picking you up after a medical procedure, such as a colonoscopy or outpatient surgery; taking notes at a doctor’s appointment; bringing you home after a hospital stay; and, offering companionship during an illness.

In addition, some of our members who have encountered specific medical conditions—either themselves or as caretakers—stand ready to discuss, on a confidential basis, their experiences in dealing with these conditions, with a member who has received a similar diagnosis. Members share the names of health care providers who have been helpful to them—from oncologists to urologists, acupuncturists and home health aides.

II. Getting Help

For assistance or if you want to discuss a medical problem with a member, contact Laura Traynor, Caring Collaborative Project Manager.

Phone: 646-823-6231 **Email:** info@ttncaringcollaborative.org

The Project Manager, together with you, will estimate the time required for the task, and try to find an appropriate member who can respond to your needs. The selected volunteer will be given your name, email address and telephone number. Then the volunteer will call or email you (whichever you prefer) to discuss how she can help you—and when.

If you are requesting services, you should be as specific as possible about the number of hours that you will need. Similarly, if you are volunteering services, you must be clear about your boundaries and availability. If a Caring Collaborative assignment appears to demand more time than a volunteer has available, she should contact the Time Bank Manager so a team of volunteers can be assembled to share the task.

III. Neighborhood ZIP Groups

Since it is much easier to shop for someone, pick up a prescription, walk her dog, or just visit, if she lives nearby, we have formed small groups of Caring Collaborative members based on where people live, their ZIP codes—called ZIP Groups for short.

- Belonging to a ZIP group is optional.
- ZIP Groups are open to all Caring Collaborative members.
- ZIP Group members will generally get together periodically—maybe every few months or so— and get to know each other over time. This will make it easier--and more comfortable--to ask for and give help when someone needs it.

IV. Keeping Track through the Time Bank

TTN members are characterized by their determined independence; typically they do not like to ask people for help. But through the give and take of a Time Bank, members know that they will be both providers of service and helped in time of need. Through the Time Bank, members track hours they have both given and received.

Members are expected to e-mail the Project Manager once the exchange of information or services has taken place. Each hour of service provided and received will be recorded in the Time Bank. This feedback is critical for the success of the Caring Collaborative.

V. Confidentiality - The Keystone of All Transactions

Confidentiality is critical. Participants must not discuss the medical or personal situations of members they assist. While we expect no one to deliberately disclose confidential or private information, our concern is with disclosures that happen by accident. “Julie can’t come to the meeting; she has a doctor’s appointment,” or “You should see Julie’s collection of ceramic cows.”

VI. A Few “Don’ts” When Offering Help

When talking about a medical condition you have experienced, the mantra is, “I’m only an expert on my own situation.” Your role is to relate the details of your own experience; do not attempt to educate or guide a member with knowledge you have acquired along the way. Even a casual suggestion to take an aspirin can be dangerous; it could result in internal bleeding. Further, we caution against relating horror stories that will only add to the member’s vulnerability. So, don’t offer medical advice and, alternatively, don’t ask for medical advice.

Don’t help with medications. You certainly can remind the member to take her medications, but becoming involved with dosage and timing is potentially harmful. If this kind of help seems to be needed, check the Caring Collaborative online [Health/Wellness Resource Directory](#).

Don’t provide “hands on” personal care such as bathing, bathroom assistance, wound care or massage. If need be, you can suggest care agencies that provide these services. Again, Check the Caring Collaborative online [Health/Wellness Resource Directory](#).

VII. We Are Not An Emergency Service

We are not a 24-hour service. Requests for help from members should be made during regular business hours. If you are concerned about crisis situations in the middle of the night you might want to put together a buddy system with several of your friends or members of your peer group who live nearby, or people who live in your building, etc. In a medical crisis the first move, of course, should be to call 911.

VIII. The Caring Collaborative's Services and Medical Information Exchange

The following describes services and medical information offered by members of the Caring Collaborative. Please note that our membership is still growing and assistance may not yet be available for all conditions or services.

Caring Collaborative Services

Help in the Home or Neighborhood:

Shopping

Pet care

Food delivery

Bill sorting and paying

Companionship

Package and letter mailing

Library book returns

Neighborhood Errands

Plant care

Reading

Medical Appointments:

Note taking

Appointment escorts

Hospital visits

Hospital pick-up

Medical Information Exchange

Information About Illnesses:

The Caring Collaborative maintains a list of members willing to discuss, confidentially, their own experiences with specific conditions within the following categories. Please note that we are developing the database and information may not be available at this time for all conditions.

Cancer

Bladder	Brain Tumor	Leukemia
Pancreatic	Breast	Lung
Skin	Colon	Lymphoma
Stomach	Head/neck/throat	Ovarian

Cardiovascular Diseases

Arrhythmia (irregular heart beat)	Heart Attack
Coronary Artery Disease	Heart Failure
High Cholesterol (lipid disorders)	Hypertension

Dental

Cosmetic dentistry	Gum disease
Dental Implants	Tooth Loss

Endocrine Diseases

Diabetes	Metabolic diseases
Hyperthyroidism	Obesity
Hypothyroidism	

Ear, Nose, Throat

Balance	Tinnitus
Deafness	Voice disorders
Hearing Loss	

Gastrointestinal

Chrohn's disease
Gastric/duodenal ulcer

GERD (reflux)
Ileitis/colitis

Immunology

Allergies
Fibromyalgia

Lyme disease
Lupus

Mental Health

Addiction (alcohol, drugs, gambling)
Anxiety disorders
Bereavement

Depression
Phobias

Neurological Diseases

ALS (Lou Gherig's disease)
Alzheimer's disease
Dementia

Multiple Sclerosis
Parkinson's disease
Peripheral neuropathy
(numbness)

Ophthalmology

Blindness
Cataracts
Glaucoma

Macular degeneration
Vision Impairment

Orthopedics

Arthritis
Back injury/spine
Joint replacement (hip/knee)

Osteoporosis
Podiatry (foot problems)

Sexual/GYN Health

Fibroids
GYN problems
HIV Disease

Hysterectomy
Menopause

Sleep Disorders

Insomnia

Restless leg syndrome

Sleep apnea

Urological

Bladder disease

Irritable bladder

Incontinence

Kidney stones

Infections

Miscellaneous

Chronic kidney disease

Pancreatic disease

Gallbladder disease

Medical Specialists:

Volunteers will provide the names of outstanding doctors with whom they have had experience. These include:

Anesthesiologist

Lipid disorders specialist

Audiologist

Neurologist

Cardiologist

Oncologist

Chiropractor

Ophthalmologist

Dentist

Orthopedist

Dermatologist

Otolaryngologist

Endocrinologist

Pain specialist

Thyroid specialist

Plastic surgeon

Gastroenterologist

Psychiatrist

Geriatrician

Pulmonologist

Gynecologist

Radiologist

Hematologist

Rehabilitative medicine

Hypertension specialist

Nephrologist

Immunologist

Rheumatologist

Internist

Surgeon

Urologist

Ancillary specialists

Acupuncturist

Fitness specialist

Geriatric care manager

Home health aide

Hospice

Massage therapist

Nurse, home care

Nutritionist

Physical therapist

Psychologist

Skilled nursing facility

Sources for Medical Devices and Supplies:

Bath/shower aids

Bedroom/comfort aids

Eating/drinking aids

Emergency response devices

Foot/shoe products Health Aids

Low vision devices

Memory enhancers

Walkers/canes

Writing aids

IX. Caring Collaborative Online Health/Wellness Resource Directory

The Caring Collaborative website features an online Health Resource Directory to help you learn more about your medical problem and tap into services you need to assist in your recovery. We list sources for medical devices and supplies, provide links to organizations which are concerned with individual medical conditions (and may themselves have hotlines and support groups). There is advice for choosing a rehabilitation service. There are links to doctor-rating websites, transportation services, the Visiting Nurse Service and other agencies that can help you. All are organized in one place for your convenience

[Health/Wellness Resource Directory](#).