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Elder Law Attorneys Specialize in Helping the Elderly

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professional advisor to help them understand and clarify the issues concerning their parents' care.

Making legal decisions about property, finances, power of attorney, and final wishes are important tasks to complete for the final years of life. Having legal documentation for a will, for medical treatment, and for the person designated to be responsible for parents' welfare can avoid family disputes and financial abuse and help conserve assets needed for care.

Elder law attorneys specialize in legal issues affecting the elderly. They are knowledgeable about Medicare and Medicaid programs. They work with the elderly in assisting them and their families with all aspects of estate planning and implementing necessary legal documents for the final years of life. In addition, they help individuals apply

for and possibly accelerate coverage from Medicaid and help with disputes with Medicaid. Below is a partial list of what an elder law attorney might do:

- Preserve or transfer of assets to avoid spousal impoverishment when a spouse enters a nursing home
- Assist with Medicaid qualification and application as well as Medicaid planning strategies
- File Medicare claims and appeals
- Explain use of durable powers of attorney, living trusts, and living wills
- Administer and manage trusts and estates
- Handle long-term care placements in nursing homes and assisted living
- Manage elder abuse and fraud recovery cases

A Certified Elder Law Attorney (CELA) is an elder law attorney

who is highly proficient in meeting the legal needs of elders and in understanding and applying the rules of Medicaid. This experience will make an attorney with this designation more competent with elder planning issues than other attorneys lacking this designation.

According to The National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys (<http://www.naela.org/>):

"Ask lots of questions before selecting an elder law attorney. You don't want to end up in the office of an attorney who can't help you. Start with the initial phone call. It is not unusual to speak only to a secretary or office manager during an initial call before actually meeting with the attorney. If so, ask this person your questions.

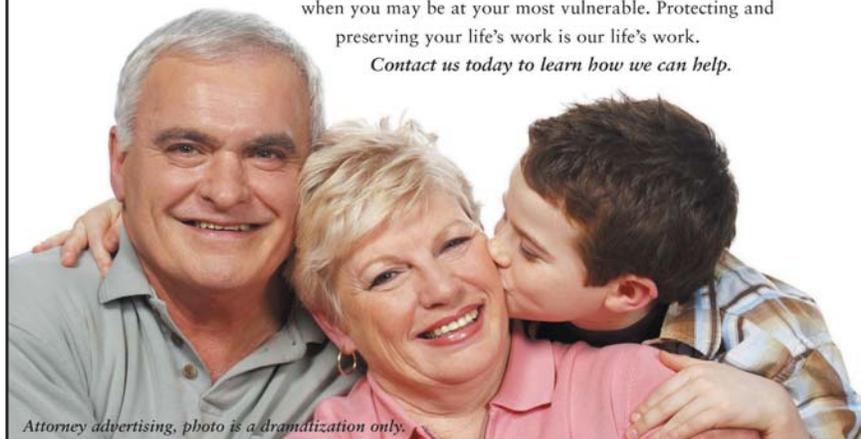
• How long has the attorney been in practice?

- Does his/her practice emphasize a particular area of law?
- How long has he/she been in this field?
- What percentage of his/her practice is devoted to elder law?
- Is there a fee for the first consultation and, if so, how much is it?
- What information should you bring with you to the initial consultation?"

A good way to choose an attorney is by referral from friends, family, clergy, or other associations. Before you meet for your initial consultation, prepare the items you want discussed. Bring pertinent documents and questions. Be sure you get clear answers and that you understand what your attorney is proposing.

Two-way communication is the best way your attorney can understand your needs and concerns. Does the attorney listen to what you say, appear to really care about your concerns or return your phone calls? If not, find another attorney. Most Elder Law Attorneys sincerely want to help make you or your parents' elder years a well-planned-for, peaceful experience for all involved.

There are many ways attorneys charge for their services: a flat hourly rate; hourly charges for some services and additional fees for out-of-pocket costs such as paperwork, stamps, phone calls, etc.; or a single fee for a mutually agreed-upon course of action or plan. Some attorneys who specialize in appeals for veterans benefits or Social Security may work on a contingency basis. It is important to understand how you will be billed, so there will be no surprises in the end.



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AN ELDER LAW FIRM

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The attorneys of Shober & Rock have years of experience helping individuals and families with the complex issues of elder law. We are here to help you prepare for and confront what may be the most complex legal hurdles of your life at a time when you may be at your most vulnerable. Protecting and preserving your life's work is our life's work.

Contact us today to learn how we can help.