Questions for the Discharge Planner

Knowing what to ask before your parent leaves the hospital

Before you start: Original Medicare, or a Medicare Advantage plan? Any Medigap policy?

Status and timing

1. Is my parent an inpatient or under observation? Has that changed during this stay?
2. When is discharge planned?
3. Has my parent received the Important Message from Medicare and, if applicable, the observation notice? May I have copies?

What comes next

4. What care do you think my parent will need after leaving?
5. What did physical and occupational therapy recommend?
6. What are you recommending: home, home with home health, skilled nursing rehab, or inpatient rehab? Why?
7. Does my parent qualify for coverage under Original Medicare or their Medicare Advantage plan? If not, why not? Does a waiver or alternative coverage rule apply?
8. If my parent has a Medicare Advantage plan: Has prior authorization been requested? Which providers are in the plan's network?

Choosing

9. May I have the list of available agencies and facilities?
10. Which of them have openings now, and when could care start?
11. Does the hospital have a disclosable financial interest in any home health agency or skilled nursing facility being recommended?

Our concerns

12. We can provide _____. We cannot provide _____. Given that, what are the options?
13. Can we meet with the discharge-planning team before the transition?

Leaving

14. Which medications are new, changed or stopped? Have prescriptions been sent?
15. What equipment is being ordered, and when will it arrive?
16. When is the first home health visit, and with which agency?
17. What follow-up appointments are needed?
18. What warning signs should we watch for, and whom do we call?
19. If we believe my parent still needs hospital care, what is the deadline and contact information for requesting a fast appeal?

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