

# case vignette

## An 80-Year-Old Woman with Multiple Medical Problems

The case of Mrs. X illustrates the complexities of caring for the frail elderly and the massive coordination that's required among various types of healthcare providers. It also illustrates the multiple layers of services patients need to remain in their homes longer, which is what most of them wish to do.

Mrs. X is getting progressively overwhelmed as she goes to more and more specialists for all of her problems. She's taking so many pills now that she is not sure if they are helping or hurting her at this point. She is beginning to lose weight, feels depressed, has a hard time sleeping, and is always tired.

Mrs. X has married children who are involved and concerned, but do not live nearby. Most recently, she fell in her apartment. A neighbor called an ambulance and Mrs. X was taken to the ER at Maimonides. She was admitted to the ACE Unit with a pelvic fracture. (Her primary care doctor does not admit patients to Maimonides.)

She was treated with pain medication for some relief, and began a course of physical therapy. The ACE team, including the pharmacist, reviewed her entire medication regimen and made some adjustments. Mrs. X noted less fatigue and improved appetite with these adjustments. She expressed a desire to go home rather than being transferred to an inpatient rehab center. The ACE team set her up to go home with the following services:

- A phone call to update her primary care doctor and an offer to have a geriatric nurse practitioner visit her at home to make sure outlined plan is initiated to provide her with care until she is well enough to visit her primary medical doctor's office
- Referral for physical therapy at home
- Referral for a nurse assessment in the home for diabetes management and education, and nutritional assessment to prevent further weight loss
- Referral to a local volunteer program that provides friendly visitors to the elderly in their homes
- Referral for a Personal Emergency Response System (PERS), with a button to wear in her house if she falls. Pressing the button will immediately alert emergency services to come help her
- Personalized education with the pharmacist about her medications, including a prepared list and a 7-day pill box.

Office Hours:  
By Appointment Only:

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ AGE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

**Mrs. X is an 80-year-old woman with multiple medical problems including**

- Diabetes
- Hypertension
- Osteoporosis
- Degenerative joint disease
- Multiple falls

# Rx