

# Public Guardianship for Adults Age 65+

## The Roles and Responsibilities of Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs)

Assigning Public Guardianship is a time-consuming and complicated process. It involves extensive searches for family or friends who may be willing to help, and managing care between hospitals and long-term care facilities based on the patient's medical condition, available funding, and bed space. Below is a brief summary of the process through the experience of Alex, a 75-year-old stroke victim who can no longer care for himself.



Alex is a 75-year-old man who suffers from mental health challenges and lives alone.



One day, Alex has a stroke and is sent to the hospital. He is stabilized but has severe cognitive issues.



No family or friends can be located and Alex is unable to make decisions for himself.



Alex is examined by two independent doctors who determine him to have severe cognitive issues.



The hospital files a petition for Public Guardianship to allow the local AAA to care for Alex.



The AAA conducts extensive research to attempt to find less restrictive solutions to public guardianship.



Acknowledging that there are no other alternatives, the court appoints the AAA as his guardian of person.



The court appoints a different entity as Alex's guardian of property. It cannot be the AAA.



The AAA visits Alex in the hospital and communicates with his care team.



The guardian of property looks for financial means to pay for Alex's continued care.



The AAA plans Alex's transition to a care facility factoring in his diagnosis, needs, care cost, and bed space.



The AAA continues to make all medical and legal decisions for Alex, including submitting annual court reports.