

URBAN AGING NEWS

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Info, Insight, & Inspiration for Metro Detroit's Maturing Adults

SUPER AGERS

**Shining a Light on
Those Who Are
Aging With Style**



-INSIDE-

COVID-Expanded Medicaid Enrollment & Pause in Disenrollment Reviews to end. See page 4

Walking Club for the Over-80 Set. See page 10

Telehealth is Here to Stay, Post-Pandemic. See page 6

How Important is it For You to Have a Will?

By Norman “Gene” Richards, J.D.



Do you really need a will? The simple answer to that question is, wait for it: It depends. Most people own assets of some kind when they die. The assets will all transfer to someone after the owner dies. The question, then, is who gets which assets and how do they get them?

The assets might include real estate, like a home, land, or a timeshare. They can be financial accounts, like a bank, investment or retirement account. Other assets include life insurance, savings bonds, autos, boats, and personal effects or “stuff,” to include things like clothes, furniture, jewelry or tools.

Some of these assets may transfer to a surviving joint owner or owners and

some may transfer to named beneficiaries. Those transfers will happen automatically, with the appropriate paperwork. Some assets, however, may not have a surviving joint owner or beneficiary. The assets in this category will not transfer automatically and must go through the probate process to determine who receives them. This is where a will comes into play. This is when having a will can save the day.

What Happens When There is a Will?

A will is a personal instruction manual for the probate process. Its primary function is to direct who gets which assets passing through probate.

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It is important to understand that a will only applies to the assets passing through probate. It does not control any assets passing by joint ownership or by beneficiary designation. For example, if a will directs all life insurance to be given to a charity, but the life insurance form has a cousin named as beneficiary – the cousin gets the insurance proceeds.

A will also appoints a trusted person to be the personal representative. The PR manages the probate process, which includes collecting assets, handling the deceased person's debts and taxes, and distributing the probate assets to the people or charities named in the will.

The will may disinherit individuals who would naturally inherit from the deceased person, such as a child, parent, or sibling. Alternatively, it may include individuals or charities who would not naturally inherit. A will may also protect vulnerable devisees, such as minor or disabled children, by naming guardians and conservators for the children.

What Happens When There is Not a Will?

If there is no will, there is no personal instruction manual. This means that Michigan law, not the deceased person, determines who will receive the probate assets and the person who is eligible to be PR. There will be no distribution to favorite charities, no excluding of undesirable relatives, or including of individuals who are unrelated. The default laws sometimes trigger family feuds because the process and results are not as well defined as with a will.

With That in Mind, Do You Need a Will?

Again, it depends on your circumstances. If all of your assets will go to a surviving joint owner or to a named beneficiary, then none of the assets you leave behind will go through probate. That means a will is not needed.

Also, if you want your probate assets to go to your spouse and children; or if you do not have a spouse or children, then to your parents; or if you do not have a spouse, children or parents, then to a sibling - and you do not care who is in charge - then a will is not necessary.

On the other hand, a will is crucial if:

- You want certain assets to go to certain people;
 - You want to include a charity;
 - You do not want to treat your children equally;
 - You care who is in charge of the probate process;
- or
- You want to protect a vulnerable loved one.



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Aging In Place

By Joel P. Ambrose, President of HandyPro International, LLC, Farmington, Michigan



As homeowners begin preparing for their golden years, it can become more difficult to carry out daily activities due to physical limitations. The world wants people to believe that 60 is the new 40, but sometimes limitations brought on by decreasing mobility say differently. Aging in Place home modifications are an effective way to improve the quality of life and make homes more comfortable and accessible. Here are three key benefits of Aging in Place home modifications:

1. Increased Safety. Safety should be a primary concern for those who want to remain independent and continue living in their own homes. With age, mobility and balance can become an issue, making falls more likely. Falls are a leading cause of injury and hospitalization for older adults. Home modifications prevent

falls by making the home safer and easier to navigate.

Inexpensive modifications like installing grab bars and handrails in the bathroom, near the toilet, and in the shower can help maintain balance and prevent falls. Work with a Certified Aging-in-Place Specialist to ensure that these modifications are Aging In Place compliant. Adding non-slip flooring in the bathroom and kitchen can also reduce the risk of falls. Removing clutter on the floors and installing smooth transitions between rooms can also help. LED lighting can also be installed to increase visibility and reduce the risk of tripping.

2. Improved Accessibility. Mobility limitations can make it

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