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THE B&B ALERT

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THE SPECIAL NEEDS TEAM

By Thomas D. Begley, Jr., Esquire

Parents planning for the future of their disabled child should begin by assembling a team of experts to assist in the process. While this process may seem daunting and expensive, it will ensure that the special needs child receives maximum protection and that the parent's goals for the child are achieved. Team players would include the following:

can assist parents of disabled persons, including in the development of a life care plan, and also in providing needed services, either during the lifetime of the parent or upon the parent's death. These organizations are usually focused on a single disability or a small cluster of related disabilities, and are very knowledgeable with respect to the both potential problems and opportunities. Most disability organizations have support groups that can provide invaluable information to parents during their lifetimes and can assist with the emotional issues involved with parenting a disabled child. The disability organizations are familiar with the service provider network in a given community and are often able to facilitate the proper services at reasonable costs.

- *Special Needs Attorney.* Once a plan has been developed a special needs attorney should determine what public benefits may be available to the person with disabilities. These may include SSI, Medicaid or Section 8 Housing, or they may be SSD and Medicare. Group homes, state disability programs and, possibly, Veterans services may also be available. The attorney must determine the eligibility requirements for the programs and advise as to whether the person with disability qualifies. The attorney then assists the person with disabilities or the family with accessing these benefits. In cases involving litigation, the attorney assists in demonstrating that the case be settled with less money from the defendant and more benefits to the disable plaintiff if public benefits are available. The attorney also assists in drafting the special needs trust in accordance with the desires of the parent and federal and state laws and regulations. If approval is required by government agencies, the attorney obtains that approval.



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The Firm provides services in connection with protecting assets from nursing home costs, Medicaid applications, Estate Planning and Estate Administration, Special Needs Planning and Guardianships. If you have a legal problem in one of these areas of law, contact Begley & Bookbinder at 800-533-7227.

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Our web site contains a library of firm newsletters, articles, on-line forms for Medicaid, Estate Planning and Guardianship, as well as our upcoming speaking engagements, our products, and other relevant information.

If you have any comments, e-mail us at ccaruso@begleylawyer.com

you are interested in having an Elder & Disabilities Law Attorney from Begley & Bookbinder speak at an event, please contact Colleen Caruso at (856) 787-4237.

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