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## ELDER LAW MINUTE

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As I have written about previously, challenging economic times sometimes present favorable opportunities.

Last week, I met with the Executive Director of a first class personal care home (assisted living facility) about reducing the monthly costs of over \$6,000 that one of my clients was struggling to make. We were able to cut about \$1,400 a month without sacrificing her quality of life by moving the client to a semi-private room, and reducing the amount that she spends on private sitters. We also hope to qualify her for V.A. benefits which should produce \$1,056 of additional income per month. Between the cost cuts, and the supplemental income we will increase the time that she can afford to be in assisted living by many years.

During periods of booming business, I doubt that this facility would have taken the time to help my client reduce her costs. But at the current time when fewer and fewer seniors can afford the high cost of assisted living, the opportunity to cut cost was available.

Also last week, I was retained by a 64 year old man who retired early from a blue collar position and had no health insurance of any kind. About a month ago, he suffered a heart attack and two strokes and has been in the intensive care unit of a hospital ever since. The hospital bill is over \$260,000 and the family feared that they would lose their home and savings. My client is not retroactively eligible for Medicaid because the couple had more than \$111,560 in the bank as of August 1, and September 1.

Nevertheless, I was able to negotiate a lump sum settlement of the hospital bill for less than 20 cents on the dollar. In better economic times, the hospital might not have been so willing to write off \$210,000, but at the current time it was thrilled to receive the \$50,000 check.

I would love to hear your experiences. Please reply to this e-mail if you have been successful in negotiating the cost of long-term care.

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