



MS and MRSA

Timothy was 32 when he was diagnosed with MS. Over the next two decades, his symptoms included weakness in his legs, blurred vision, slurred speech, fatigue, tremors and unsteady gait. After his wife died in a car accident in 2005, Timothy became very depressed; he began experiencing mood swings and forgetfulness as well.



Seasons was contacted by Timothy's case manager from REAL Services on April 14, 2003; Timothy (then 47) was experiencing bladder and bowel problems and severe muscle spasms in his legs. He needed assistance with Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) and also with basic housekeeping, laundry, food shopping and preparation, and transportation to his doctor appointments.

One of the most important tasks we were able to help Tim with was writing down his symptoms and any changes or stressors in his life so that he could provide that information to his doctors. Our caregivers also accompanied him to the doctor visits and was available to the professional staff in the event they had any questions about Tim's daily life, the care services we provided, and Tim's emotional status.

In July 2007, Timothy was home alone one afternoon, and he decided to go outside and sit in the shade of the big oak tree in his backyard. He experienced his first episode of paralysis in his right leg while he was going down the steps into his backyard. Timothy fell down four steps, and hit his shoulder on a broken piece of sidewalk. He was able to call 911 for assistance since he always carried his cell phone in his pocket. Tim received 10 stitches and antibiotics at the hospital; he was admitted to their rehab unit to help him use his new leg brace and crutch.

When he returned home, our caregivers continued providing assistance with bathing, dressing, grooming and incontinence and the household tasks; we also provided medication reminders. About a week after his hospitalization, Timothy told our caregiver that his shoulder wound was really tender; she looked at it while helping Tim get cleaned up and dressed. Our caregivers never disturb a bandage or dressing. She called the office to say that the area around Tim's dressing was red and swollen. Our Client Services Representative contacted Tim's case manager about the situation who called Tim's physician. Our caregiver took Tim to the doctor's office that afternoon for an examination; tests indicated that Tim had MRSA. He was admitted to the hospital, had a PICC line placed, and was given Vancomycin and Bactrim; he was released from the hospital six days later. Tim's case manager arranged for a skilled nursing service to assist Tim in connecting the antibiotic to his PICC line and to change his dressings. Our caregivers continued to provide personal care (always wearing gloves and using Universal Precautions) and homemaking services as well as transporting Tim to and from his doctor appointments. Six weeks later, Tim's infection was clear, and he no longer needed the skilled nursing services.

Timothy remains one of our clients today. He is now using a wheelchair most of the day, and one of the most important services our caregivers provide is companionship and the ability to remain involved socially in the community. This has helped to relieve Tim's mood swings and depression and to improve his quality of life.

(We did not use Tim's real photo nor his last name in this publication to protect his privacy.)