

ASSIST THE LOCAL HLC—SUPPORT THOSE WITH MEDICAL NEEDS

1) Call the HLC *only* in behalf of baptized and unbaptized publishers who request HLC involvement for themselves or for their children.

2) When calling the HLC, have the following applicable information available:

- Your congregation and telephone number or the number of another available elder
- Name, age, congregation, and telephone number of patient
- Spiritual standing of patient and family. Are unbelieving family members involved?
- Name of hospital, name of doctor, and room/telephone number
- Is a completed DPA card available? If not, help patient to execute one immediately. (Unbaptized publishers can write out their wishes in line with the December 2004 issue of *Our Kingdom Ministry*, page 7.)
- Specific situations (cooperative doctor needed, confrontation, threat to force blood, etc.)

3) Give special attention and offer assistance to the following ones:

Pregnant sisters: Requesting advance assistance saves time, often safeguarding the health and life of the mother and her child. Take time to inquire whether she and her husband have located a cooperative doctor and medical facility that have experience in treating our sisters. Since complications can arise throughout pregnancy, volunteer to assist the couple with contacting the HLC and obtaining a *Care Plan* from them, review the points contained in the information sheet *How Parents Can Protect Their Children From Misuse of Blood* (S-55), and refer to the article “Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies,” in the November 2009 issue of *Awake!*, pages 26-29.

Children: Some physicians or hospitals, based on their medical or legal understanding, will not give 100-percent assurance that they will not use blood when treating young children, infants, and premature babies. However, when parents consult with the HLC, they are helped to find a physician or surgeon who will go further in agreeing not to give blood. Review with parents the points contained in the S-55 information sheet (see previous point) and share the December 2005 *Our Kingdom Ministry* article “Could Your Child Make a Mature Decision?”

Older ones: Older brothers and sisters may not have Witness family members and could be subjected to intimidation in a hospital. Ensure that they have a DPA card and that their designated health-care agent will uphold their wishes and respect their decisions. Always maintain a copy of their DPA card in the congregation file.

4) Plan to provide practical and spiritual support to hospitalized publishers.

Regarding the provision of the HLC and the Patient Visitation Group (PVG), please remember that this arrangement does not relieve local elders of their responsibility to visit the sick at home and in the hospital. Remind publishers that it is beneficial to state during hospital admission that they would welcome a visit from a minister of Jehovah’s Witnesses. This will ensure that *both* congregation elders and members of the PVG gain access to provide assistance