

**JULIE OSTERHOUT**  
*EMERITUS SPECIALIST IN ELDER LAW*  
*Of Counsel*

**LANCE McKINNEY**  
*Certified Elder Law Attorney*

**BETH PRATHER**  
*Certified Elder Law Attorney*

**BRITTON G. SWANK**  
*Elder Law Attorney*

If you have clients who need assistance with finding the right place for their ill family member to live and determining how to pay for it,  
***we can assist them with becoming eligible for Medicaid.***

If you have clients who are unable to care for themselves and make their own decisions,  
***we can assist their loved ones with becoming their guardian.***

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## WORDS TO THE WISE

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### Prepare For Sticker Shock

There are two bills, House Bill (HB) 5117 and Senate Bill (SB) 1718, working their way through the legislature that propose to drastically increase the court fees for filing a probate or guardianship case. For example, the current filing fee for a formal probate administration or guardianship is \$285. Senate Bill 1718 proposes a graduated system that would increase the charge to \$2,000 for estates valued between \$250,001 and \$1 million. Proponents of the bills say the fee increases will provide needed funding to our court system. Opponents however, argue that probate and guardianship assets often consist of noncash assets like real estate. Families sometimes find difficulty coming up with the cash to pay the current filing fees. Many elder law attorneys fear such marked increases will be tantamount to a denial of access to the courts for many. For more information on HB 5117 and SB 1718, visit the website shown below. If you have concerns about these bills, please contact your legislators and let them know.

Source: [www.myfloridahouse.gov/SEctions/Bills/bills.as](http://www.myfloridahouse.gov/SEctions/Bills/bills.as)

### Maintain Valid Photo Identification

Many of our clients voluntarily give up driving at some point due to poor eyesight, hearing loss, or other medical conditions. If you or your family members are no longer driving and intend to let your driver's license expire, you need to obtain a current Florida Identification (ID) card. Proof of your identity is often needed whether you are using a credit card to pay for groceries, or at a lawyer's office to have documents executed and notarized. ID cards are valid for eight years if you are 15 years old or older.

Source: [www.dmv.org/fl-florida/id-cards.php](http://www.dmv.org/fl-florida/id-cards.php)

### Conference on Aging

Osterhout, McKinney & Prather, P.A. is sponsoring The Eighth Annual Southwest Florida Conference on Aging on Friday, April 17, 2009, at the Broadway Palm in Fort Myers. Registration begins at 7:45 am. The conference is geared toward professionals in the field of aging as well as the general public. Sessions offer education in health care, mental health case management and current issues. For more information, please call Courtney Quirie at 239-433-8069.