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**Online Planning System Brings Peace of Mind to Families with Special Needs  
*Protected Tomorrows Launches Online Future Care Planning System***

LINCOLNSHIRE, IL (Aug. 18, 2011) – Protected Tomorrows, Inc., a leader in enhancing the lives of families with special needs around the world, has launched an online tool to help parents, adult siblings and guardians to properly plan for their loved one who has a disability.

The [Protected Tomorrows Online Future Care Planning System](#) is a step-by-step Web-based guide that enables caregivers to assess the current situation, identify goals and document important information to prepare for life as it should be for the person with special needs—whether that “special need” be autism, Down syndrome, bipolar disorder or Alzheimer’s disease. All of these developmental, mental and cognitive disabilities are on the rise, and in some cases, are expected to continue to grow in number, especially as medical advances allow people to live longer. An estimated 20 percent of Americans have some sort of disability.

“We wanted to provide family members with an easy-to-use tool and convenient way to organize information and guide them through the important steps that are critical to their loved one’s future and the person who will be caring for them when they’re no longer able,” said Mary Anne Ehlert, president and founder of Protected Tomorrows, who has specialized in special needs planning for more than 20 years. She knows firsthand the importance of proper future care planning, as she helped her parents with her sister, who had developmental disabilities, and then assisted her parents as they aged.

Ehlert used her knowledge and experience in planning for people with special needs to design the secure online system. A pilot project already has given dozens of families a sense of peace in knowing if something happens to them, a future caregiver will have all the necessary documentation in one place that can be accessed anywhere in the world at any time.

Penny Schwent of Schaumburg, Ill., already has found comfort inputting information into the Online Future Care Planning System about her soon to be 19-year-old daughter who has Angelman syndrome, a neuro-genetic condition requiring lifelong care.

“I like the fact that I can sit down and work on her life planning whenever I want,” said Schwent, who is compiling all the information on her daughter Emily with the help of her husband Dale. “We were lost and we didn’t know where to go next. It (Online Future Care Planning System) lets us know where we need to be.”

The eight steps involved with the online tool helps families and caregivers develop their vision; prepare for meetings with a special needs attorney, financial advisor and teacher; organize paperwork for the government benefits application process; set goals; and search for services and resources that will help their loved one live, learn, work and play in the future.

The interactive system is designed to be updated regularly by a caregiver, so that the individual’s planning is on track and modified as life changes.

Integrated into the Online Future Care Planning System is the My Special Life™ workbook, which had been available for years in hard copy form through Protected Tomorrows. Families can store information—past and present—that is critical to the future caregiving of a family member with special needs including:



- Family history
- Daily Routine
- Community Involvement
- Likes and Dislikes
- Friends
- Intervention Programs & Schools
- Employment & Life Skills
- Medical History & Support
- Emotional Well-being & Behaviors

Each section can be separately printed; even important pictures can be stored to tell the story.

“Many families see it as an easy and enjoyable way to write a ‘letter of intent,’ a non-binding legal document which is written by a guardian as part of a future care plan to provide guidance,” Ehlert added.

No searching for a specialist’s phone number, figuring out a medical schedule or questioning a certain behavior. It makes a family’s loss less traumatic with a continuum of care in place.

With little communication skills, Emily Schwent looks to her parents to be her biggest advocates. “We’re looking at what we want for her and considering what life would be like without us,” Penny Schwent noted. “It’s hard to go there emotionally, but we have to think about her life from 22 to 62.”

She’s grateful she can go through the transitioning into adulthood and funding the future portions of the Web-based tool at her own pace, while getting gentle nudges from Protected Tomorrows advocates to complete the task at hand. It takes most families about a year to initially get through all eight steps on the online system. This initial planning creates a strong foundation for a family to continue to work with, build on, and modify as their vision for the future changes over time.

The Schwents also sought out Protected Tomorrows’ experienced team of professionals and one-on-one consultation services as part of their planning process.

Protected Tomorrows hopes to impact even more families now by launching to the public the Future Care Planning System and its management of an abundance of information in one place online.

The initial online subscription setup is \$129.95 with an annual subscription renewal of \$29.95 per year.

To learn more about the Online Future Care Planning System or Protected Tomorrows, call (847) 522-8086 or visit [www.protectedtomorrows.com](http://www.protectedtomorrows.com).



**About Protected Tomorrows**

*Protected Tomorrows, Inc., headquartered in the Chicago suburb of Lincolnshire, is the leader in enhancing the lives of families with members who have special needs. By guiding families through its comprehensive, proprietary planning process, Protected Tomorrows helps families plan a safe and fulfilling life for a loved one by creating a Future Care Plan™. Through their work with clients and the family’s advisors, and alongside of other advocates and legislators, Protected Tomorrows addresses many concerns of families with special needs such as: future care funding, government benefits, legal considerations, residential options, employment opportunities, recreational choices, education options and family communication. For questions, contact us at [info@protectedtomorrows.com](mailto:info@protectedtomorrows.com) or visit [www.protectedtomorrows.com](http://www.protectedtomorrows.com).*