

AT-HOME CARE BRINGS A MOTHER AND DAUGHTER TOGETHER AGAIN by Chao Deng

The idea for this piece began with a press event on Capitol Hill. The senators who helped draft the Independence at Home Act were receiving awards for their work during the summer of 2010. At the time, I didn't know whether I could turn the situation into a real story. But, by meeting doctors as well as the public relations manager at the Washington Hospital Center, I was able to find ideal characters who could illustrate the impact that home care could make.

The story was a pleasure to report. I visited the mother and daughter twice, the first time with their social worker and the second time with their doctor. During production, the recordings from the first visit took a back seat to sound bites from the doctor. Because the doctor could lend the most perspective on the costs side, it made sense to use his visit as the opening scene. My editor and I debated over whether Dr. Eric De Jonge's first introduction should start with the knocking on the door, which we thought might sound cliché. But, in the end we kept it as is because the knocking gave listeners a clear indication that we were introducing a character with an important role.

One of the most challenging parts was getting audio from the mother and daughter that would have been comprehensible to listeners. Both of the patients had trouble articulating their words. There was no way around this except for a lot of patience - I kept the recorder rolling in case they would say something I could use. The same idea applied for the photography - I just had to wait for the right moment to happen.

This story originally aired on August 11, 2010 on NPR's website as part of "Intern Edition."