

July 2024

CAREGIVER CHRONICLES

BULLETIN



Dane County Caregiver Program

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On July 4th we celebrate our nation's independence. We also value our independence as individuals. We want to live our lives as we choose and for the majority of older Americans the choice to be independent means staying in their homes and aging in place. But what if there are safety concerns? What happens if living independently becomes living in isolation? There is likely a period of time when staying at home is still the best option for an older adult, but when they can no longer do it alone it is the point where the need for caregiving emerges.

When we first learn that a family member or friend needs help, it's hard to know where to begin. Sometimes there is a sudden change in their health that prompts involvement. Other times, it is a gradual realization that an older adult is no longer capable of meeting all of their own needs. In either situation, knowing what steps to take can be difficult. The following are some basics to get you started.

Learn about your care partner's illness, disease or condition. Understanding the nature of the disease, its symptoms, and what to expect is helpful in caring for the person in need. Talk to a healthcare provider, do some research online, and read books or pamphlets to help you understand what they are dealing with and ways you can help. Contact organizations specific to the disease in question, such as the Alzheimer's Association or the National Stroke Association. Keep the information you gather in a file for use later on.

Plan for any needed immediate care. Learn about your care partner's wishes for immediate and long-term care. Do a home safety check so you can help adapt their environment to their needs. Arrange for the purchase of items for any special needs such as a walker, commode, wheelchair, ramp, or other assistive equipment, or borrow them from Loan Closets at the area Community or Senior Center. Find a method for tracking important indicators of health such as eating patterns, symptoms, and medications.

Research community resources. Explore options like home-delivered meals, in-home supportive care services, personal emergency response systems, transportation services, and adult day care. Begin with the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC), Dane County Caregiver Program, and Community and Senior Centers.

Determine areas of need. List the specific areas where help is needed such as housecleaning, grocery shopping, meals, bathing, and transportation to medical appointments. Then discuss possible ways to meet these needs with friends, family members, and the older adult's healthcare provider.

Organize important information. Write down pertinent medical information for your care partner including doctors' names and phone numbers, health insurance information, and medication/pharmacy information. Locate and list financial and other important information such as household bills; loans, and bank accounts; home, auto, and life insurance policies; and passwords to online accounts. Include copies of social security, driver's license and insurance cards.

Enlist the help of others. Determine what you can realistically do, and make a list of other people who can help. While engaged in creating the list evaluate the older adult's social ties as well, which is critical for long-term health. Do they have regular contact with friends and neighbors? Are they involved in activities, classes, or volunteer work? Do grandchildren visit who may be able to help with an errand or chore? Are they involved in a church community or service organization? While not everyone is a practical candidate for more involved support, it is good to know that others are in regular touch and can help communicate issues should they arise.



Plan for the future. Get information about your care partner's long-term prognosis in order to make appropriate plans. Assess the financial situation and, if necessary, contact a financial advisor who is familiar with caregiving issues. Consult a lawyer about a durable power of attorney for health care and finances. Remember—include your care partner in the planning as much as they are able to participate. If they are competent, they still have self determination.

Take care of yourself. Find support through friends, a counselor, or support group. Take regular breaks from caregiving and keep doing the things you enjoy. Make sure you eat well, get enough sleep, exercise, and spend time with family or friends in order to keep yourself healthy.

Caregivers in waiting. To quote a very old expression: "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." The best way to ensure older adults live a life of their choosing without overwhelming the capacity of their care partners is to engage in discussions early. If you are nearing retirement, plan for how you want to live *all* the rest of your life. Talk about it and prepare for it. If you anticipate caregiving for a spouse, parent, or any older adult important to you, talk with them about their expectations, wants, needs, and plans. Be honest about how you see yourself in any potential caregiving role.

Monthly MIPPA Moment: Medicaid Eligible?

MIPPA (Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act) has a goal of educating older adults on Medicare's cost-saving benefits & preventive services.

Wisconsin Medicaid is a joint federal and state program that helps more than 1 million eligible low-income Wisconsin residents get health care coverage, long-term care, community and home care support, assistance paying for Medicare costs and prescription drug costs, and other services that promote physical and mental health and well-being. Medicaid is administered by states according to federal requirements. It is not the same as Medicare, which is a separate federal insurance program that is not based on need or income and assets.

For more MIPPA Program information, call MIPPA Program Specialist, Leilani Amundson, at 608-240-7458.

This project was supported by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services with financial assistance, in whole or in part, by grant number 2101WIMIAA, from the U.S. Administration for Community Living, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201.

To find out if you are eligible for Medicaid programs, see <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/medicaid/older-adults.htm> for more information. Please also visit the Wisconsin Department of Health Service's ACCESS website <https://access.wisconsin.gov/access/> to apply. You can also call the local Income Maintenance (or Economic Support) Medicaid agency in Dane County to apply at 888-794-5556 for information and to apply for benefits.



Dementia Care and Crisis

Are you or someone you know caring for a person with dementia at home? If so, have you thought about what would happen if the primary caregiver became ill and was unable to be there for the person with dementia? Often, the needs of the person with dementia become the primary focus and you forget that you may also be in need of care. Do you have a back-up plan?

In Dane County we have a tool that can help you decide what you may need in the event of a crisis. It is called the First Responder Tool (FRT) and it can be extremely helpful for emergency personnel who respond to a call. A fillable form can be found online here: [Dane County First Responder Tool \(FRT\)](#). (See tool illustration at the end of the article).

The FRT is a document used to record information about the person with dementia. That information can include communication tips, calming strategies and whether or not a person can be left alone for a period of time. The document will also list contact names and numbers of friends and family members who may be able to assist in an emergency.



The image shows a printed form titled 'KEEP INFORMATION UP TO DATE!! MEDICAL DATA REVERSED AS OF 10/1/18'. The form is divided into several sections: 'EMERGENCY CONTACTS', 'MEDICAL DATA', 'MEDICAL CONDITIONS', 'ALLERGIES', and 'MEDICAL INSURANCE'. There is also a large red area on the right side of the form labeled 'FILE OF LIFE'. The form includes fields for patient information, medication, and medical history.

Once the FRT is completed, it can be placed on the refrigerator. If you already have a [File of Life](#) you can place them together. A File of Life includes you latest medical information including allergies, medications, and contact persons. First responders will know to look for them on the refrigerator. Ideally, both documents should be updated on a yearly basis. You may want to update them every time you change your smoke alarm batteries.

FIRST RESPONDERS TOOL		Please remember TALK Tactics: Take it slow Ask simple questions Limit reality checks Keep eye contact	
HELPFUL INFORMATION FOR FIRST RESPONDERS WHEN ASSISTING PERSON WITH DEMENTIA			
PERSONAL INFORMATION FOR PERSON WITH DEMENTIA		Date of Birth	
Name		Name preferred	
Language(s) spoken and understood			
My Address			
ARE THERE WEAPONS IN THE HOME? <input type="radio"/> YES <input type="radio"/> NO IF YES, PLEASE LIST WEAPONS BELOW <input type="text"/>			
EMERGENCY CONTACTS			
Name	Address	Phone Number	
SOMEONE TRUSTED WHO PERSON WITH DEMENTIA RELIES ON TO MAKE DECISIONS			
Name		Phone Number	
MEDICAL INFORMATION			
Medical Conditions			
Allergies			
Pain Areas			
Preferred Hospital			
IMPORTANT: Please attach medication list and dosage instructions.			
Regular Routines			
Difficult time of day for me			
Do I wander?			
How long can I be alone?	Choose time period	Other	
SENSORY AIDS NEEDED			
Hearing Aids	<input type="checkbox"/>	Glasses	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Walker	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other sensory aids		Cane	<input type="checkbox"/>

Things that upset me	
How I show distress	
How I am calmed	
Best way to communicate with me to help me understand and participate	
Comfort items to take along with me	
Other important things for other to know about me to best help me during a crisis	
Date Completed	Completed by
Relationship	Phone Number
Dane County 24-Hour CRISIS Line: (608) 280-2600	

If you would like more information about the First Responder Tool, please contact your local Senior Center or the ADRC at 608-240-7400. For additional information about Dementia Care and Crisis Planning, click [here](#) for information on the **Dementia Crisis Program**.



CAREGIVER TELECONNECTION

www.caregiverteleconnection.org



Date Time Topic A LEADING VOICE FOR CAREGIVERS

**All sessions will be available on Zoom and/or the telephone. Your choice!
You may log in or call in to participate**

Tuesday July 2	2:00 pm Eastern 1:00 pm Central 12:00 am Mountain 11:00 am Pacific	Ask Dr. Tam Questions with Tam Cummings, PhD <i>What kind of questions do you have about dementia? As a caregiver, how do you survive the journey? Dr. Tam Cummings will focus on how to manage the stress that may have happened during the holidays. She will also answer any questions you have about dementia. **Sponsored by VITAS Healthcare**</i>
Monday July 8	1:00 pm Eastern 12:00 pm Central 11:00 am Mountain 10:00 am Pacific	Family Caregiving Across the Generations with Kathryn MacDonell <i>Are you struggling to keep up with your own life while caring for a loved one? Are you caught in the middle - responsible for an older adult and children? Join us to connect, express, and focus on how to make time for yourself and introduce joyful moments to your days. **Sponsored by the North Central Texas Caregiver Teleconnection**</i>
Thursday July 11	11:00 am Eastern 10:00 am Central 9:00 am Mountain 8:00 am Pacific	Dear Lucy: Why Does Dementia Sometimes Cause Hallucinations, Delusions, and Paranoia with Lucy Barylak, MSW <i>Join Lucy as she discusses what the symptoms of hallucinations, delusions and paranoia are and what causes the behaviors that can happen during these episodes. She will share tips on what to do when it happens.</i>
Tuesday July 16	11:00 am Eastern 10:00 am Central 9:00 am Mountain 8:00 am Pacific	Understanding Dementia with Dr. Nestor H. Praderio, MD <i>Nestor H. Praderio, MD will present an overview of the key signs and symptoms of this syndrome. He will also detail the various forms and causes of dementia.</i>
Wednesday July 17	1:00 pm Eastern 12:00 pm Central 11:00 am Mountain 10:00 am Pacific	When Decisions Are Left Undecided with Jess Ambiee, LCSW-S, ACHP-SW and Amelia Card, MSSW <i>Advance care planning, also known as end-of-life and healthcare planning, empowers people to make decisions about the care they want to receive when they can no longer speak for themselves. Adults of any age can begin advance care planning although most people do so in later stages of life. Having clear decision-making capacity is required to make these decisions and sign legal documents like a medical or statutory durable power of attorney, living will, or a do not resuscitate (DNR) order. But what happens when someone hasn't completed any advance care plans & no longer has capacity to do so? This situation presents ethical dilemmas for family and friend care partners as they are tasked with trying to decide what their person would have wanted. Join Amelia Card & Jess Ambiee as they discuss what to do when you have to make end-of-life care decisions for your loved ones.</i>
Tuesday July 23	12:00 pm Eastern 11:00 am Central 10:00 am Mountain 9:00 am Pacific	Managing Caregiver Grief During and After Caregiving with Barry J. Jacobs, PsyD <i>Caregivers experience multiple forms of grief, including the slowly losing the person they are caring for, mourning immediately upon their death, and long-term grief that still periodically affects them years later. In this Caregiver Teleconnection with psychologist and author Barry J. Jacobs, PsyD., we'll define grief and its importance in our lives and offer strategies for managing it and growing through it.</i>
Thursday July 25	1:00 pm Eastern 12:00 pm Central 11:00 am Mountain 10:00 am Pacific	Reconocer la experiencia única de duelo de los cuidadores y encontrar la sanación con Monica Escamilla, PsyD <i>Acompañe a Mónica Escamilla, PsyD, mientras analiza el papel que juegan la aflicción, la pérdida y el duelo en la experiencia del estrés y el bienestar de los cuidadores. Aprenderá qué hace que cada experiencia de duelo sea diferente y cómo tomar medidas para explorar el duelo y la pérdida que ayudarán en el proceso de curación para permitir el crecimiento de usted y de los demás.</i>



A program of the WellMed Charitable Foundation
Register online at www.caregiverteleconnection.org or call
866.390.6491 Toll Free

