

Current ShareCare Notes February, "Health & Safety"

Institute for Disability Studies
ShareCare Notes
February 3, 2005

In this Edition:

- 1) Home Safety and Modification Resources
- 2) Becoming a Caregiver
- 3) Update on Diagnosing Alzheimer's
- 4) To Drive or Not to Drive
- 5) Upcoming Events

- 1) Home Safety and Modification Resources

Home safety and home modification are valid concerns for caregivers whose loved one lives with them, as well as older adults who want to remain in their own homes as they age. Here are some links to some helpful resources:

***Home safety**

<http://articles.health.msn.com/id/100063101>

***Home modification**

http://www.aarp.org/life/homedesign/Articles/a2004-03-23-what_is_univdesign.html

<http://www.aarp.org/life/homedesign/ratehome/>

<http://www.homemods.org/>

- 2) Becoming a Caregiver

Though few of us can sufficiently prepare to become caregivers,

http://www.caregiver.com/articles/caregiver/caregiving_for_a_parent.htm provides some advice for caregivers and future caregivers that may ease the transition.

- 3) Update on Diagnosing Alzheimer's

Researchers reported promising results regarding a new test for Alzheimer's that may provide a confirmatory diagnosis of the disease while the patient is still living. See <http://articles.health.msn.com/id/100100350/> for more details.

- 4) To Drive or Not to Drive

Many caregivers find themselves struggling to dissuade their aging loved one from driving, when it becomes dangerous. Older adults may feel a loss of independence when expected to stop driving. AARP provides tips to discuss this topic before it is necessary. See <http://www.aarp.org/life/drive/safetyissues/Articles/a2004-06-21-whentostop.html> for more information.

5) Upcoming Events

February 7, 2005, 3 p.m., Caregiver Networking Group, St. Stephens Episcopal Church, Columbia, MS

February 8, 2005, 6:30 p.m., Caregiver Networking Group, Communicating with Healthcare Professionals, Parkway Heights Methodist Church, Hattiesburg, MS

February 9, 2005, 11:45 a.m. - 1 p.m. Caregiver Brown Bag Lunch, Roundtable Discussion: Who is a Candidate for an Alzheimer's unit? Student Union, Southern Miss

February 10, 2005, 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Health Fair, Student Union, Southern Miss

February 10, 2005, 6:30 p.m., Caregiver Support Group, Elm Room, Forrest General Hospital, Hattiesburg, MS

February 23, 2005, 11:45 a.m. - 1 p.m. Caregiver Brown Bag Lunch, Roundtable Discussion, Student Union, Southern Miss

Institute for Disability Studies

ShareCare Notes

February 10, 2005

Inside this edition:

- 1) Alzheimer's in the News
- 2) Family Caregiver Security Act of 2005
- 3) Caregiver Tax Break
- 4) Aging Drivers
- 5) Caring for the Caregiver
- 6) Upcoming Events

- 1) Alzheimer's in the News

The Kaiser Permanente Division of Research in Oakland, California recently released a report indicating that individuals with health risks related to heart disease are also at greater risk of developing dementia. Researchers found that within their sample of 9,000 California residents, participants who had high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes

and were midlife smokers were more than two times as likely to develop dementia in later life. For the complete report, please see <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/6863211/> .

2) Family Caregiver Security Act of 2005

Congresswoman Millender-McDonald (D-CA) is supporting the Family Caregiver Security Act of 2005 (H.R. 175) in the U.S. House of Representatives. The Act would allow family caregivers to be paid as service providers under the Medicare program. For more details, please visit <http://thomas.loc.gov/> and put H.R. 175 in to search by bill number.

3) Caregiver Tax Break

Senators Christopher Bond (R-MO) and Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) are planning to resubmit the Ronald Reagan Alzheimer's Breakthrough Act, which calls for a \$3,000 tax credit for caregivers. The act would also increase funding for Alzheimer's research and increase funding for the National Family Caregiver Support Program from \$153 million to \$250 million. For more information, see <http://www.stjoenews-press.com/main.asp?SectionID=81&SubSectionID=272&ArticleID=61554&TM=75705.65>

4) Aging Drivers

The GrandDriver program, sponsored by the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators provides education and information to families, caregivers, and older adults about aging and driving. The program focuses on helping older drivers continue driving safely for as long as possible. For further information please visit <http://www.granddriver.info/> .

5) Caring for the Caregiver

Providing care for a loved one can be extremely stressful, and that stress is cumulative so over time it can become problematic for the caregiver. Stress can impact physical and mental health, behavior and relationships. One way to relieve stress is through self-expression. See <http://www.agingcarefl.org/caregiver/fourStages/stageTwo/section06> for ideas. One potential risk of caregiver stress is abuse of the care recipient. For more information, see http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2005-02/uopm-epc020805.php , and <http://www.fullcirclecare.org/needhelp/careneeds.htm> for information on assessing and managing stress.

6) Upcoming Events

February 23, 2005, 11:45 a.m. - 1 p.m. Caregiver Brown Bag Lunch, Roundtable Discussion, Student Union – Room H, University of Southern Mississippi

Institute for Disability Studies
ShareCare Notes
February 17, 2005

Inside this edition:

- 1.) Planning for eldercare
- 2.) Safety in the home
- 3.) The aging driver
- 4.) Caring for the caregiver
- 5.) Upcoming Events

1.) Planning for eldercare

Few of us plan effectively for the care of our loved ones prior to a crisis. In an effort to provide guidance in future planning, The National Institute of Health hosted a webcast last November entitled, "Whether you are in it or Planning for it: What You Need to Know about Eldercare," which provides valuable insight and resources for effective planning of long-term care for aging loved ones. You can view the webcast by visiting <http://videocast.nih.gov/pastevents.asp?c=14> and clicking on the title above. For a complete guide to eldercare, go to <http://www.longtermcarelink.net/eldercare.htm> .

Using organizational tools to aid in the planning process may prove helpful. You can find a planning checklist at <http://www.alzonline.net/en/reading/CHECKLIST.pdf> . While planning for the care of your loved one, you may find it helpful to visit an attorney who specializes in eldercare. For more information, please see <http://www.elderlifeplanning.com/idi/attorney.htm> .

2.) Safety in the home

Accidents and falls account the largest portion of injuries to adults over 65. Whether your aging parent or loved one remains in their own home, or come to reside with you, home safety should be considered. For information on preventing falls in the home, please visit <http://www.nsc.org/issues/ifalls/falproof.htm> . For an overall safety checklist, see <http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/fcs/housing/pubs/FCS-461.pdf> . Older adults with Alzheimer's or dementia may encounter increased safety risks, especially if left at home alone. For further information, go to http://www.aging-parents-and-eldercare.com/Pages/Checklists/Home_Alone.html .

3.) The aging driver

Decisions about when older drivers should give up their keys are often difficult to make. When safety becomes an issue, however, serious consideration is necessary. A few

things to think about from the National Highway Safety Administration (2001): Mississippi has the highest driver mortality rate among older adults, at 32.4 per 100,000. People 75 and over have the highest pedestrian death rate. Among licensed drivers, fatal crash rates rise sharply at age 70. Impairments that commonly interfere with safe driving are vision and hearing problems, physical disabilities, and medication induced dizziness or confusion. Drivers with Alzheimer's or other cognitive impairments are of particular concern, as it is common in the early stages for individuals to have minor accidents, get lost, or drive the wrong way down a one-way street. For more information on aging and driving and on talking to older adults about driving, visit <http://www.aarp.org/life/drive/safetyissues/Articles/a2004-06-21-whentostop.html> , and <http://www.granddriver.info/> .

4.) Caring for the caregiver

Very often caregivers get so focused on the needs of their loved one that they neglect their own. Over time, this may lead to increased stress and depression. For more information on caring for the caregiver, see http://www.pbs.org/thoushalthonor/caregivers/caring_for.html . The emotional strain of caring for an aging loved one can be overwhelming. If you are finding yourself struggling to deal with your emotions, you may find the information and tips at <http://www.ec-online.net/Knowledge/Articles/emotions.html> , and <http://www.ec-online.net/Knowledge/Articles/emotion2.html> very helpful.

5.) Upcoming Events

February 23, 2005, 11:45 a.m. - 1 p.m. Caregiver Brown Bag Lunch, Roundtable Discussion, Student Union – Room H, University of Southern Mississippi

In March, our focus will be caregiver stress. Our Brown Bag Lunches will be on March 9, and March 23. Look for more information in our next ShareCare notes.

Institute for Disability Studies
ShareCare Notes
February 24, 2005

In this Edition:

- 1) Financing Long-Term Care
- 2) Depression: A Serious Concern for Both Caregivers and Care Recipients
- 3) Medication: The Caregiver's Role
- 4) Caring for the Caregiver

1) Financing Long-Term Care

Planning ahead for long-term care can ease the financial burden that often adds additional stress and anxiety to caring for an aging loved one. For advice and tips on planning for long-term care, and specifically financing it, see

<http://www.financinglongtermcare.umn.edu/> and <http://www.longtermcarelink.net/> . For advice on protecting yourself and your loved ones from fraud when seeking long-term care insurance, please go to <http://consumerlawpage.com/article/insure.shtml> .

2) Depression: A Serious Concern for Both Caregivers and Care Recipients

More than 50% of caregivers experience depression while providing care for their loved one. Depression is also common among aging individuals, especially those diagnosed with Alzheimer's or other dementias. For signs of depression in the elderly, visit <http://www.thirdage.com/health/depression/caregivers.html> . Please see <http://www.alz-nca.org/caretips/depress.asp> and <http://healthlink.mcw.edu/article/1031002313.html> for related articles on depression among caregivers and recipients.

3) Medication: The Caregiver's Role

Most aging adults are utilizing medication as part of their care. Many problems can arise from drug interactions, over or under medicating, or confusion about when or how to take medications correctly. Please see

http://www.caregiver.com/articles/general/prescription_medication.htm for strategies on managing medications. For information on the signs and prevention of problems surrounding medications, see

http://www.caregiver.org/caregiver/jsp/content_node.jsp?nodeid=1104 and <http://www.familycaregiversonline.com/newsletter-v-3-04.html> .

4) Caring for the Caregiver

For caregivers of loved ones with Alzheimer's and other illnesses feeling overwhelmed and discouraged is both common and normal. For first hand information on the realistic experience of caregiving and finding more joy in it, visit

<http://www.eonline.net/Knowledge/Articles/joymurphy.html> . For caregiver tips, see http://my.webmd.com/hw/health_guide_atoz/hw147564.asp . Ideas for nurturing yourself spiritually go to <http://www.caregivershome.com/Spiritual/spiritual.cfm> .