



In Support of Caregivers

A Publication of the Caregivers' Resource Center and Alzheimer's Support Unit at the Tompkins County Office for the Aging

Fall 2009

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New Power of Attorney Law Comes into Effect

On September 1, 2009 major changes to New York's power of attorney (POA) law will become effective. A POA is a document in which you state that you give someone else (usually a relative or friend) the authority to make certain decisions and act on your behalf. The goal of most of the changes in the POA law is to reduce abuse by the designated agent of the authority they are given—especially when conducting financial affairs for someone who has become incapacitated.

Gift-giving is limited by the new POA. Major gifts (over \$500) cannot be made unless that particular power is initialed by the principal and a separate gift-giving rider (addendum) is signed to allow major gifting of assets. This is to assure that the principal truly understands the extent of the power being granted to his or her agent.



The new power of attorney document includes specific instructions designed to educate both the principal (the person issuing the POA) and the agent (the person assigned to handle the financial affairs). After Sept. 1, any new POA must be signed, dated and witnessed, not only by the principal, but also by the agent. The principal will also have the option of appointing a monitor to watch over the agent.

For those who already have a power of attorney, there is no need to execute a new one. As long as it was valid according to the law at the time it was signed, it remains valid. Some may choose to execute a new POA if they decide that it will more clearly express their intentions or meet their estate planning needs. Agents will be required to keep certain records of receipts and expenditures and make them available to the monitor appointed by the principal upon request or to certain governmental entities or other persons authorized by law. This provision of the new law applies to all powers of attorney including those executed before the effective date of the

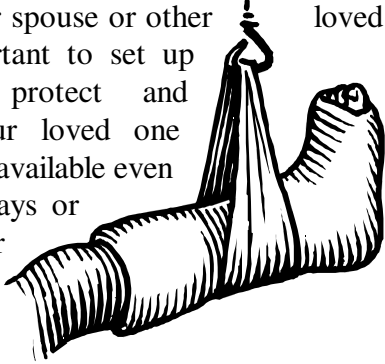
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When It's the Caregiver Who Falls Ill

When you are striving to make sure your loved one gets quality care, you must also include in your planning the possibility that you, the caregiver may become ill. Of course, anyone could also die before his/her spouse or other loved one. It's important to set up structures to protect and provide for your loved one should you be unavailable even just for a few days or weeks, for example after surgery.



1. A critical issue: "Who will be in charge?"

Make sure someone has the authority to manage your loved one's finances and make medical decisions. Even if they are making some of those decisions for themselves now, that may change. It is important to have power of attorney and health care proxy designations that name successors should you or whoever they have designated become incapacitated. If you are a spousal caregiver, while you are reviewing these legal documents, you may want to review your own will and beneficiary designations on your insurance and other assets. You may not want your assets passing directly to your frail spouse should you die.

2. **Document what a surrogate caregiver should know.** The Office for the Aging can provide you an "Information and Key Document List" that can serve as a checklist to make sure all necessary personal and financial information is in one master binder or file. The Office for the Aging or Bangs Ambulance Service also provides a "Medic Alert" packet with refrigerator magnet. Emergency medical information can be written down and then be immediately available to surrogate caregivers, first responders, or be something you can grab from the refrigerator when you are making an emergency trip to the hospital.

3. **Involve others in the care of your loved one.** When others are familiar with a person's routines, especially if they have dementia, it will be easier to step in and provide or arrange care if necessary.

4. **Don't count on the person with dementia or other incapacitated loved one to summon assistance** should you become incapacitated. If you are an older caregiver (or a younger caregiver with balance problems), consider getting a personal emergency response system so you can call for help if you cannot get to the phone.

Appealing Denial of Therapy

Q: Nursing Home administrators told us my mom's physical therapy couldn't continue because she wasn't making progress. Is this a Medicare rule?

A: "It's not a Medicare rule, first off," says Paul Precht of the Medicare Rights Center in Washington, D.C. "Therapy that is a part of a care plan to prevent deterioration is covered and it should be paid for. And with therapy, it makes a difference if you stop and start. If you wait, it's more difficult to improve later."

"Talk to the doctor responsible for the plan of care. Then talk to the billing department...see if they change their minds." If there's still pushback, "you can sign an advance beneficiary notice, which allows them to continue therapy and bill Medicare—but if the claim is rejected, you are on the hook for it, but you can appeal."



Precht suggests "asking a quality improvement organization to intervene—organizations that provide oversight." The link to state-by-state offices is www.medicareinteractive.org Once there, pick your state in the top right corner.

(Reprinted with permission from Caring Today, Spring 2009.)

Fall Workshops for Caregivers

1. The popular “**Powerful Tools for Caregivers**” workshop series continues with the fall sessions starting on September 28 and 29. See page 4 for details and registration information.
2. **Workshops offered by the Caregivers’ Resource Center:** The following workshops are offered free of charge at the Cooperative Extension Education Center (615 Willow Avenue, Ithaca). Call the Office for the Aging to register or for details (274-5492). **Pre-registration is encouraged**, but not required.

Difficult Caregiving Conversations

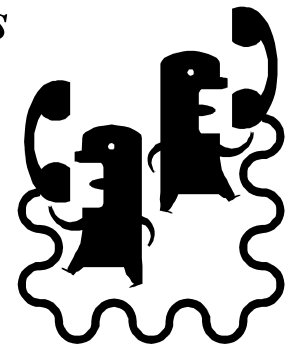
Thursday, October 29

Noon-1:30 PM

“Mom doesn’t want to talk about it.” “Dad is refusing help.” “How do I approach my siblings about sharing the care?” Family caregivers sometimes have a tough time communicating with their care partners (care receivers, other family members) about these issues and other topics including finances, advance medical directives, driving, a move to a residential care setting, etc.

In this workshop, Jessica Gosa, MSW, the new Caregiver Counselor at Family and Children’s Service will discuss several caregiving scenarios, why family communication is sometimes difficult, and make suggestions on how to proceed. Community resources that can help with these discussions will also be discussed.

Free. Bring your brown bag lunch if you wish. Beverages provided.



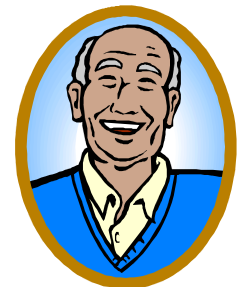
Alzheimer’s 101

Friday, November 20

Noon-1:30 PM

Michael Massurin, Director of Programs and Services for the CNY Chapter of the Alzheimer’s Association, will cover essential topics including, a general overview of Alzheimer’s and dementia, symptoms and stages of the disease, communicating with someone who has Alzheimer’s, and behaviors related to Alzheimer’s. It will conclude with a discussion of available programs and a question and answer session.

Free. Bring your brown bag lunch if you wish. Beverages provided.



3. See page 5 for information on upcoming IC Gerontology Institute workshops of interest to caregivers.
4. See page 9 for information on an opportunity to view and discuss an HBO documentary series on Alzheimer’s disease.

Feeling Stretched?

Let's Face It...

Caring for someone with a chronic illness such as dementia, heart disease, Parkinson's Disease or stroke can be stressful physically, emotionally and financially.



Balance Your Life

Powerful Tools for Caregivers

A Legacy Health System
Program

Fall 2009

Powerful Tools for Caregivers Classes

Powerful Tools for Caregivers is a six-week educational program designed to provide you with the tools you need to take care of *yourself*.

You will learn to:

- Reduce stress
- Improve self-confidence
- Better communicate your feelings
- Balance your life
- Increase your ability to make tough decisions
- Locate helpful resources

The program consists of six, 2 ½ hour class sessions held weekly and is offered free of charge to caregivers.

Pre-registration is required.

September 28 - November 9, Mondays 6:00 - 8:30 PM
Lifelong, 119 W Court St. Ithaca

September 29 - November 3, Tuesdays 6:00 - 8:30 PM
Cayuga Medical Center, 101 Dates Drive, Ithaca

September 30 - November 4, Wednesdays 1:30 - 4:00 PM
Hospicare & Palliative Care, 172 E King Rd, Ithaca

For Cornell Staff, Faculty & Retirees:

September 29 - November 3, Tuesdays 4:30 - 7:00 PM
East Hill Office Building, Pine Tree Rd, Ithaca

Call the Office for the Aging at 274-5488 to register

Powerful Tools for Caregivers is offered by the Caregivers Resource Center of the Tompkins County Office for the Aging, with support from the Community Health Foundation of Western and Central New York, Kendal at Ithaca, Lifelong, Cayuga Medical Center, Hospicare & Palliative Care Services and Tompkins County Long Term Care Services.

News and Notes

“Friends and Family” Cancer Group

The Cancer Resource Center holds a meeting for friends and family of someone with cancer on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, 7:00-8:30 pm. It provides an opportunity for adult caregivers to “let their hair down and connect with others in similar situations.” For information on the group and other educational programs for people with cancer and/or their friends and family, call 277-0960.



The National Caregivers Library...

...is one of the most extensive online libraries for caregivers that exists today. It contains hundreds of articles, forms, checklists and links to topic-specific resources. They are organized into logical categories to help you find the topic about which you are concerned. Visit the library at www.caregiverslibrary.org.



The Healing Power of Forgiveness

Some caregivers have difficulty relating to one or more family members because they harbor resentment over past offenses and unhealed emotional wounds from past dealings with family members. Just as scientists have shown that harboring negative emotions like blame, anger, and hostility (the ones we feel when we're nursing a grudge) can damage our cardiovascular, nervous, and immune systems, studies are uncovering evidence that practicing forgiveness (essentially, releasing those toxic feelings) can improve physical health in significant ways too. For an article on the “Healing Power of Forgiveness” in Redbook magazine, visit your local library or read it online: www.redbookmag.com/health-wellness/advice/emotional-healing-forgiveness.



Parkinson’s Exercise Class

An exercise class for people with Parkinson’s Disease or related movement disorders is held on most Tuesdays from 10:30-11:25 am at Kendal. Fee of \$35.00 for ten sessions. New people should call Debbie Bosanko (229-5960), the certified instructor for the class, prior to attending.



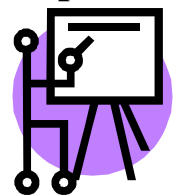
Next Step in Care

Next Step in Care is a United Hospital Fund initiative to help foster communication between family caregivers and professionals, especially at times of discharge and transitions between hospital, home, assisted living, nursing home or other care settings. Two new resources on their website: “Hospital Admissions: How to Plan and What to Expect during the Stay” is written for family caregivers. “How to Get the Most from the Next Step in Care Website” helps family caregivers and health care professionals find what they need. Check out the website, www.nextstepincare.org and familiarize yourself with the resources there for the time when you need them.



Gerontology Institute Workshops

The following workshops dealing with family caregiving are being offered the Ithaca College Gerontology Institute. Workshops are held from 2:00-4:30 PM at Longview. Call 274-1967 for information/cost.



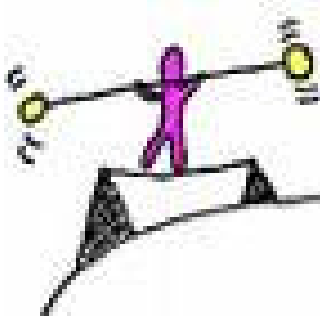
October 7: *“Share the Care” for the LGBT Community: A Model for Providing Non-Medical Support*, Nancy K. Bereano, 2008-09
Cornell University Public Service Center Fellow

November 4: *Eden at Home: Creating Collaborative Care Partner Teams at the Grassroots Level*, Laura Beck, Program Director, Eden at Home, The Eden Alternative

Setting Limits

“No matter how much I do for her, it’s not enough.”

We all have ways of getting what we want from other people, particularly those close to us. It’s not surprising that caregivers sometimes feel manipulated. “Older people are just as capable of playing games as younger people; in fact they may become even more skillful over the years,” explain Barbara Silverstone and Helen Hyman, authors of *You and Your Aging Parent*. In their book, *Taking Care*, Nancy Hooyman and Wendy Lustbader write that these manipulative games may gradually and subtly develop into abuse of caregivers.



A caregiver may recognize manipulation in the older person’s behavior without seeing how their own behavior contributes to the problem. Caregivers who defer to all requests, no matter how unreasonable, impose increasing burdens on themselves. Then, as their tasks multiply, they begin to feel resentful and hopeless. To avoid feeling manipulated, caregivers must set and firmly stick to realistic limits. This does not mean that these limits won’t change according to changing circumstances, but “sticking to limits” does mean that you don’t give in just because you feel pressured by the caregiver to do what they want.

Why is it so hard to set limits? Experts suggest people may give in to unreasonable demands because of feeling:

- guilty at being healthy when that person is not;
- totally responsible for keeping that person happy;
- confused as to what are actual or unrealistic expectations for a caregiver;
- intimidated by the sick person’s tears or expressions of anger;
- fearful of losing the other person’s love;

- unwilling to put their own needs ahead of a person they love;
- required to make up to the person for past injustices; or
- afraid family and friends will see them as neglectful.

Professionals, family and friends can help by realizing that (occasionally) there will be the elderly parent who is publicly charming, but difficult and manipulative in private. (In any case, family caregivers need to be reminded of the importance of taking care of themselves as being a top priority.)

(Reprinted with permission from the archives of Parent Care, July/August 1987.)

My Children Are Coming Today

My children are coming today. They mean well, but they worry.

They think I should have a railing in the hall, a telephone in the kitchen. They want someone to come in when I take a bath.

They really don’t like my living alone.

Help me to be grateful for their concern. And help them to understand that I have to do what I can for as long as I can.

They’re right when they say there are risks. I might fall; I might leave the stove on. But there is no challenge, no possibility of triumph, no real aliveness without risks.

When they were young, and climbed trees, and rode bicycles and went away to camp, I was terrified, but I let them go, because to have held them back would have hurt them.

Now our roles are reversed. Help them to see. Keep me from being grim or stubborn about it. But don’t let them smother me.

-Nellie Renoux

Tompkins County Supports for Family Caregivers

The Caregivers' Resource Center and Alzheimer's Support Unit at Office for the Aging (320, N. Tioga St., Ithaca- in the county courthouse) -- offers family caregivers information and consultation services, support groups, workshops, this newsletter, *Powerful Tools for Caregivers* classes and a lending library of books and videos on caregiving topics. Volunteers from *Project CARE* give caregivers a needed break and help out in other ways as needed. Project CARE may also be able to arrange for paid home care services or short-term respite for stressed caregivers who are having difficulty paying for those services. Staff: David Stoyell, Katrina Schickel, and Marilyn Roberts Chase. Stop by or call 274-5482 for an appointment.



Caregiver Counseling and Respite Program of Family and Children's Service (204 N. Cayuga St.).



A caregiver counselor will meet family caregivers in their home or other location and help them work through complex caregiving issues or for emotional support. This program also offers grant-funded home health aide respite service to give caregivers a needed break. We want to say *“thank-you and “good-bye” to Lisa Kendall* who recently left Family and Children's Service after many years of wonderful support to area family caregivers. *We welcome Jessica Gosa, MSW*, the new Caregiver Counselor for the program. Call 273-7495.

Adult Day Community at Longview (1 Bella Vista Drive, Ithaca).

Longview's Adult Day Program on Ithaca's South Hill is currently accepting new participants age 60 or older. The program operates 3 days/week, Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday, from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. and participants can come 1, 2 or all 3 days! The day includes coffee & discussion, exercise, crafts, lunch in their beautiful dining room overlooking Cayuga Lake and much more. Cost is \$38/day but scholarship money is available through the Tompkins County Office for the Aging. For more information, please contact Marilyn Strassberg at 375-6320.



Fall Support Groups.

The Caregivers' Resource Center facilitates the following caregiver support groups. Call 274-5492 for details.

Caring for Aging Parents

Open to those caring for parents or other elderly relatives or friends. Meets on the 3rd Wednesday of each month: (Sept. 16, Oct. 21, Nov. 18) from 5:00 - 6:30 PM at Lifelong, 119 W. Court St., Ithaca

Alzheimer's & Other Dementia Caregiver Support Group

Open to those caring for loved ones with Alzheimer's or other cognitive impairments. Meets on the 4th Tuesday of the month (Sept. 22, Oct. 27, Nov. 24) from 1:00-2:30pm at the Office for the Aging, 320 N. Tioga St., Ithaca

Parkinson's Support Group

Open to Parkinsonians and their Caregivers. Meets quarterly: Next meeting is: Wednesday, October 21 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM at Cooperative Extension, 615 Willow Ave., Ithaca

Another Alzheimer's Group: In addition to the daytime group, people caring for loved ones with Alzheimer's or other dementia can attend a group at 5:30 PM on the 1st Wednesday of every month. It meets at Lifelong, 119 W. Court St. Sponsored by the Alzheimer's Association of CNY. For info., call 330-1647.

Cancer Caregivers' Group: see page 5.

Hospice and the Family Caregiver

Caring for a loved one at the end of life is one of the most physically and emotionally demanding situations a family member may ever face.

There is a sense of loss and sadness that begins when a family learns of a serious or life-limiting diagnosis. And the levels of stress can continue to grow throughout an illness. There can be a financial toll that caring for a dying loved one brings. Even when the role of caregiver ends, there are new issues that arise as the person incorporates the loss in their life and faces living without their loved one.

For family members thrust into the role of caregiver without warning or little preparation, the experience can be frightening. Hospice is a care option that addresses many of these concerns. Hospice care provides high-quality care and services to the patient while offering invaluable support to the family caregivers. Through bereavement care and services, ongoing assistance for family caregivers continues even after the death of a loved one.

In addition to expert medical care and pain management, hospice focuses on the quality of life for patients and families. They help the people they serve live life to its fullest. The wishes of the patient and family are always a priority and hospice brings hope, dignity and peace to all they care for.

Support, caregiving training and assistance are made available by hospice professionals and trained volunteers. The entire hospice team brings compassion and empathy when they are needed most.

Many families concerned with the costs of care are often surprised to find out that hospice is fully covered by Medicare, Medicaid, and most private insurance plans also provide for hospice care. Yet hospices care for all in need,



regardless of ability to pay.

Many people do not understand the support and comfort that hospice provides to patients and families at the end of life's journey. Time and again partnerships are created between family caregivers and hospice staff that are noted for their deep compassion and caring.

Community hospices are ready to help family caregivers learn more about care options and available services. Helping patients and families during one of life's most challenging journeys is what hospice does every day. For more information, contact Hospicare and Palliative Care Services of Tompkins County at 607-272-0212, or visit www.hospicare.org.

(Power of Attorney, continued from page 1)

new law. Acceptance of the new POA form is mandated. A third party cannot refuse to honor the new POA or any POA properly executed under the laws in effect at the time it was executed without reasonable cause. The new law provides that it is NOT reasonable for a third party to require their own form or to object because of how long it has been since the POA was signed. Although the law does not require the principal to consult an attorney to help with the execution of a POA, the new form required after September 1 will be more complex than the old form and for many it will be advisable to do so.

Alzheimer's Notes

Oral Health and Alzheimer's

Inflammation is increasingly implicated as a major factor contributing to several age-related diseases, including Alzheimer's. Two recent studies have found a link between gum disease and early cognitive decline in otherwise health individuals.



Dr. Don Deems, DDS, writes in the April Issue of Aging Arkansas that "I have never had a patient with any stage of AD who had a healthy mouth."

The Alzheimer's Association reminds us that "proper dental care can help prevent eating difficulties, digestive problems and extensive dental procedures down the road. However, brushing is sometimes difficult because a person with dementia may forget how or why it's important to take care of his or her teeth."

So, be alert to signs of neglect of proper oral hygiene even with a loved one in early stages of the disease. If brushing seems to be missing plaque or a dental visit reveals signs of poor oral hygiene, some of these suggestions from the Alzheimer's Association may be helpful:



- Provide short, simple instructions. Break down each step by saying: "Hold your toothbrush." "Put paste on the brush." Then, "Brush your teeth."
- Use a "watch me" technique. Hold a toothbrush, and show the person how to brush his or her teeth. Or, put your hand over the person's hand, gently guiding the brush.
- Monitor daily oral care. Brush teeth or dentures after each meal, and make sure teeth are flossed daily. Remove and clean dentures every night.

Keep up with regular dental visits for as long as possible. Seeing a dentist regularly is essential for healthy teeth. Ask the dentist for other suggestions or items that may help make dental care easier.

Alzheimer's Project: HBO series

Earlier this year, HBO showed a documentary series about Alzheimer's disease. These four documentaries will be re-shown over three weeks as part of the fall "Lifelong Learning" schedule at Lifelong, 119 W. Court St., Ithaca

Wednesdays, 9/23-10/7, 2pm- 4pm, (3 sessions)

The showing of each of the four documentaries will be followed by an informational discussion, led by Mike Massurin, Director of Programs and Services for the Alzheimer's Association at the Central New York Chapter. The four documentaries are titled:

"The Memory Loss Tapes," "Caregivers", "Momentum in Science" and "Grandpa, Do You Know Who I Am?" with Maria Shriver.

Call Lifelong at 273-1511 for information about registration and cost for the series.

Antipsychotic Drugs Up Diabetics' Risk for Hyperglycemia

Some folks with dementia are treated with antipsychotic drugs. A recent University of Toronto study "indicates that the initiation of antipsychotic therapy represents a critical period during which seniors with diabetes are particularly vulnerable to metabolic decompensation (the failure of the metabolic system to function adequately)...the new use of atypical (newer) and typical antipsychotic drugs was associated with a significant increase in hospitalizations for hyperglycemia."

Until experts do more studies, the authors conclude that "other options to manage behavioral symptoms should be considered among older persons with diabetes. Patients and their families should be alerted to observe for signs of glycemic decompensation when treatment with an antipsychotic agent is initiated...and enhanced glucose monitoring is recommended..."



The Caregivers' Resource Center and Alzheimer's Support Unit

Please call or visit us at the Tompkins County Office for the Aging in the County Courthouse basement, 320 North Tioga St., Ithaca. Open weekdays, 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM.

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Websites of Interest to Family Caregivers:

Tompkins County Office for the Aging: www.tompkins-co.org/cofa

(Click on "Gateway to Senior Seniors" at the top of the home page to access our resource guides and back issues of "In Support of Caregivers.")

Family Caregiver Coalition: www.caregiver.org

H.E.L.P (legal and financial issues, California-based): <http://www.help4srs.org>

National Alzheimer's Association: www.alz.org

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