

UK Elder Care

## *IN THE KNOW*

E-Newsletter  
July 2009



### A MESSAGE FROM THE COORDINATOR

July will be a busy month for the Elder Care office as we get ready to move to Seaton Center, Room 155. We will soon be sharing space with the Health and Wellness program. As we make this transition, we will not be having CARE Group in July but do plan to resume in August. Also, if you need Elder Care services, we are available for phone consultations and appointments, so please do call and let one of us know if you need to speak with someone.



### NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

#### **FREE PRESCRIPTION DRUG CARD LAUNCHED IN KENTUCKY**

##### ***Kentucky Rx Card will Provide Prescription Assistance to All Residents***

A new statewide discount drug card program called the Kentucky Rx Card launched to all residents of the Commonwealth. It will provide savings of up to 75% on prescription drugs (savings should average roughly 30%). This program has no restrictions to membership, no income requirements, no age limitations and no applications to fill out. Kentucky Rx Card is accepted at over 50,000 pharmacy locations across the country. Kentuckians can download a "FREE" card by visiting [WWW.KENTUCKYRXCARD.COM](http://WWW.KENTUCKYRXCARD.COM).

Anyone not able to access the website, or otherwise obtain a member card from various distribution sites, can simply visit any CVS/pharmacy or Kmart location in Kentucky and ask the pharmacy to have their prescription processed through the Kentucky Rx Card program. Kentucky Rx Card was launched to help the uninsured and underinsured residents of Kentucky afford their prescription medications. However, the program can also be used by people who have health insurance coverage with no prescription benefits, which is common in many healthsavings accounts (HSA) and high deductible health plans. Additionally, people who have prescription coverage can use this program for non-formulary or non-covered medications. The Kentucky Rx Card is a solution to the confusing maze of discount

prescription programs that have appeared in recent years. Many of these programs only cover certain drugs, charge fees, and some have membership restrictions such as age and income limitations. Kentucky residents can download a free card, search drug pricing, and locate participating pharmacies at [WWW.KENTUCKYRXCARD.COM](http://WWW.KENTUCKYRXCARD.COM).

Source: [www.kentuckyrxcard.com/index.php](http://www.kentuckyrxcard.com/index.php)

HHS and VA to Develop a Nationwide Program to Help Older Americans and Veterans with Disabilities Remain Independent in the Community

### **Grants Will Continue Collaboration with VA to Support America's Veterans**

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Kathleen Sebelius and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Secretary Eric Shinseki announced a landmark collaboration to help the families of older Americans and Veterans with disabilities of all ages care for their loved ones in the community. This partnership builds on the similar missions of HHS and the VA with regard to caring for the populations they serve and has as its ultimate goal a nationwide home and community-based long-term-care support program to serve older Americans and veterans of all ages.

HHS and VA are making \$10 million in funding available to bring this initiative to 20 states. This partnership will implement the Veteran Directed Home & Community Based Service (VDHCBS) program through HHS' aging and human services network, in coordination with the Administration on Aging's (AoA) Community Living Program (CLP) which helps the family caregivers of individuals with ongoing need to keep their loved ones at home. Both programs allow participants to direct their own care, including having control over the types of services they receive and the manner in which they are provided. This includes the option of hiring their neighbors, friends and even some family members, to provide needed services.

HHS' national network of aging and community based organizations will work in close collaboration with the VA Medical Centers across the country to continue to develop and expand VDHCBS for veterans. The CLP, led by AoA, will help states and communities to assist individuals who are at risk of nursing home placement but who are not Medicaid eligible to remain at home.

Source: [www.hhs.gov/news/press/2009pres/06/20090604a.html](http://www.hhs.gov/news/press/2009pres/06/20090604a.html)

### **AoA Announces Availability of \$2.5 Million for Lifespan Respite Care Programs**

*Respite for caregivers can have a positive effect on health and well-being*

Acting Assistant Secretary for Aging Edwin L. Walker is pleased to announce the availability of \$2.5 million to provide family caregivers with more opportunities to receive much-needed short-term, temporary relief from providing care for their loved ones. These projects will enable states to establish, enhance or expand Lifespan Respite Care systems, including new and planned emergency respite services, training and recruitment of respite workers and volunteers and assist caregivers with gaining access to needed services in their communities.

Respite provides the caregiver with a short-term break from the often exhausting daily challenges of caregiving. Respite can help sustain family caregiver health and well-being, avoid or delay nursing home placement, and reduce the likelihood of abuse and neglect.

AoA will award approximately ten to fifteen Lifespan Respite Care grants with federal funding up to \$200,000 each to states for a three-year period. The goal is for states to expand and enhance respite care services to family members; improve the statewide dissemination and coordination of respite care; and provide, supplement, or improve access and quality of respite care services to family caregivers, thereby reducing family caregiver strain.

Additionally, AoA is dedicating \$175,000 of Lifespan Respite Care funds to maintain a national database on lifespan respite care; provide training and technical assistance to state, community, and non-profit respite care programs; and provide information, referral and educational programs to the public on lifespan respite care.

AoA will fund projects that propose to serve all respite recipients, including family members, foster parents, or other adults providing unpaid care to adults needing care to meet basic daily needs or prevent injury and to children who require care beyond that required to meet their basic needs, and to those who might not otherwise have access to other types of respite care services.

Source: Administration on Aging E-Newsletter, June 4, 2009.



## UPCOMING EVENTS ON CAMPUS & IN THE COMMUNITY

### CAMPUS EVENTS:

- **Health & Wellness Events:** *Farmer's Market rides* starts the first Thursday in July (every Thursday through September), *Grocery Store Tour* July 23<sup>rd</sup> 5:30-6:30 p.m. at Kroger on Chinoe Rd., register for *Fall WoW* events on-line. For more information and to RSVP for appointments and programs, please visit [www.uky.edu/HR/wellness](http://www.uky.edu/HR/wellness)
- **Work-Life Events:** **New** Parenting Teens and Tweens Support Group will meet Wednesday, July 8 in 220A Scovell Hall from 12:10-1:00 p.m. Regular meetings will be held the second Wednesday of each month. For more information call Ann Bassoni with Work+Life Connections at 257-9433.

**Caregivers Support Group (CARE Group) is cancelled for July and will resume in August. If you need support during this time, please call the Elder Care office at 323-4600.**

## **COMMUNITY EVENTS:**

- ***Understanding Dementia: What Caregivers Need to Know.*** Learn from an expert about dementia. Dr. Greg Cooper, neurologist from Central Baptist Hospital and the University of Kentucky Sanders-Brown center on Aging will provide an overview of dementia with time to answer your questions. The program will be Wednesday, July 15<sup>th</sup>, from 11:30 -12:30 p.m. at the Lexington Public Library, Beaumont Branch. To register for this FREE program call 1-800-272-3900.



## **CAREGIVER SURVIVAL GUIDE**

### **Aging in Place: A Real Choice**

As people age, they may be faced with making the decision as to whether to move out of their existing home where they have raised family. Too often, these homes are not conducive to the physical challenges that elders may face in their advancing years. A recent study of aging baby boomers shows an overwhelming propensity to remain in their current homes after retirement. As a result, many home builder and housing associations throughout the country are organizing educational activities to highlight programs and support services, such as healthcare, chore services and transportation, which will enable elders to age comfortably in place.

Consumers who plan to age in place should take proactive steps to modify their homes while they are still financially and physically able. The National Association of Home Builders recommends the following modifications:

There should be at least one bedroom and one bathroom on the first floor. First floor living is a high priority for older adults. Having a full bath and a master bedroom on the main floor makes it easier for those who have trouble climbing stairs.

There should be conveniently located and easy to use controls and handles. Raised electrical outlets, electrical switches positioned slightly lower, and thermostats with large, easy to read numbers are perfect for older people. Installing lever handles makes it easier for people with arthritis to open doors.

There should be no-step entrances. Having at least one entry without steps creates easier access for everyone, regardless of ability. It may be appropriate to install a wheelchair ramp in at least one entrance as well.

There should be extra maneuvering space throughout the home. Wider doors and hallways can make a home more accessible.

There should be drawers instead of shelves in the lower kitchen cabinets, which would accommodate a person in a wheelchair. In addition, shelves under the

kitchen sink and stovetop can be converted from storage space to knee space for those who prefer to clean and cook while seated. Changing knobs on the kitchen cabinets to D-shaped pulls that are a contrasting color to the cabinet doors make it much easier for the older person to grasp. Changes to the sink area can include changing the faucet to the single-handle lever type and installing an extra-long hose for the faucet sprayer. This would allow the older person to fill large pots that are sitting on the stove.

Bathrooms should be equipped with safety features. One of the most important rooms in the house to design correctly in order to allow homeowners to age in place is the bathroom. Grab bars, a bath chair and a raised toilet seat can provide stability for the older person and prevent falls. Falls in the bathroom or on the stairs are the second leading cause of accidents for elders, just behind automobile accidents. It would be prudent to invest in enlarging at least one bathroom in the home. A larger bathroom makes maneuvering easier for people with walkers, crutches and wheelchairs.

For those who have to handle daily climbing of stairs, it is very important to have proper lighting on stairways. Eyesight changes as people age. Most of the older homes don't have adequate lighting on stairways. Therefore, installing lights with adjustable controls, or dimmers, can help prevent glare and ensure proper lighting. Task lighting is also preferred for cooking, reading and shaving, while softer light is appropriate for night trips to the bathroom.

There are some elders who will choose to move to a new home when they retire, many of which will have a number of the above features in place. Many others, however, will not have the ability to make such a move, for a number of reasons. By planning ahead, and making some home modification changes now, elders can choose to remain in their home, comfortable in their surroundings, aging in place, maintaining their independence and dignity.

Source: Helen Hunter, ACSW; [www.caregiver.com](http://www.caregiver.com) E-newsletter #436



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