

UK Elder Care

## *IN THE KNOW*

E-Newsletter  
March 2008



### A MESSAGE FROM THE COORDINATOR

Janice Austin, Elder Care Specialist is quoted in a Cnn.com story "When Dad Should Stop Driving." If you would like to read this story, visit the Elder Care web site at [www.uky.edu/HR/eldercare](http://www.uky.edu/HR/eldercare). We have two Elder Care seminars scheduled in March. Space is limited, so please RSVP by calling Elder Care at 323-4600. *Community Resources for Elder Care: In-Home Care Options to Housing Options* is scheduled March 12<sup>th</sup> from 10 – 11:00 a.m. and *Elder Care & Work: Finding the Balance* is March 19<sup>th</sup> from 10-11:00 a.m. Hope you can join us for these informative sessions!



### NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

#### **IRS Requires Those with Limited Means to File Taxes This Year**

**Seniors with limited means** who normally don't **need to file a federal tax return** must do so this year in order **to receive their payment** under the recently enacted economic stimulus package, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) announced.

This includes 20 million seniors who rely primarily on Social Security who are eligible to receive \$300 per individual or \$600 per couple under the plan that NCOA supported.

The IRS says it will work with the Department of Veterans Affairs, Social Security Administration, and beneficiary groups to inform these individuals that they must file a tax return to receive their payment.

Source: <http://www.ncoa.org/>

#### **Home Air Filters May Improve Elders' Heart Health**

When high-efficiency particle air (HEPA) filters were used for just 48 hours to clean the air in the apartments of 21 older couples, their blood vessel function improved by about 8 percent, Danish researchers have shown.

While the couples were all non-smokers, the improvement seen in the study was "in the same ballpark" as would be seen after a person quits smoking, Dr. Steffen Loft of the Institute of Public Health in Copenhagen, the study's lead author, told Reuters Health.

There is a wealth of data on how breathing minute particles carried in the air, known as particulate matter, can worsen heart and lung disease and even increase mortality rates, Loft and his team note in the American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine.

Indoor air pollution typically comes from heating sources, candles, cooking, nearby traffic and even a neighbor's cigarette smoke, for some apartment dwellers, Loft said. The key finding of the current study, according to the researcher, is that "the level of particles in a regular, normal home actually affects the vascular function in elderly people."

"Air pollution, both indoor and out, is certainly affecting people's hearts," he added.

Loft and his colleagues now plan to investigate how particulate matter from wood stoves used to heat homes in Scandinavia and parts of the United States can affect health.

Source: [http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/news/fullstory\\_61198.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/news/fullstory_61198.html)

### **Families Need Help Coping With Mild Cognitive Impairment**

The age related memory condition known as mild cognitive impairment (MCI) is more disruptive of day-to-day life and relationships than once believed, gerontology researchers at Virginia Tech have discovered.

Funded by the Alzheimer's Association, Karen Roberto, director of the Center for Gerontology at Virginia Tech, and Rosemary Blieszner, associate director, set out to determine the issues and needs of families responding to MCI. After interviews with 99 families, the researchers reported, "Primary family members reported that their relatives were experiencing memory-related changes that interfere with their daily activities and responsibilities, decision-making processes, and relationships."

The finding is significant because problems early in care giving have long-term implications for the individual providing care and their feelings of burden and depression if MCI progresses to Alzheimer's disease, the researchers advised the association. "Professionals need to provide information, assistance, coping strategies, and support to family members at this stage in the care process rather than waiting until Alzheimer's disease is diagnosed."

There is a difference between forgetfulness and memory loss, Roberto said. "Forgetfulness is often situational or a result of not giving attention to the information presented such as a person's name or directions. It can also be caused by information overload, such as sorting through too many e-mails. Memory loss starts presenting itself more consistently and often includes episodes of confusion or lack of awareness.

For more information about this study, visit

<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/97886.php>



## UPCOMING EVENTS ON CAMPUS & IN THE COMMUNITY

### CAMPUS

- **CARE Group meetings** are in three locations. The next meeting dates are: March 13<sup>th</sup> in 220 Scovell Hall, Suite 1; March 20<sup>th</sup> C110 UK Hospital; and March 20<sup>th</sup> in Peterson Service Building, Room 379. Meetings are from 12 – 1:00 p.m. If you are not presently attending please contact Elder Care for details and more information. Newcomers are welcome at anytime.
- **Community Resources for Elder Care: In-Home to Housing Options** is scheduled March 12<sup>th</sup> from 10-11:00 a.m. in 220 Scovell Hall, Ste 1. RSVP by calling Elder Care at 323-4600.
- **Elder Care and Work: Finding the Balance** is scheduled March 19<sup>th</sup> from 10-11:00 a.m. in 220 Scovell Hall, Ste 1. RSVP by calling Elder Care at 323-4600.
- **Health & Wellness Events**: Wellness on Wheels is March 6<sup>th</sup> 8 a.m. to 12 in Room 102 Mining and Minerals Bldg. Lunch n Learn: Focus on Stress Relief: The Importance of Good Humor and Good Sleep is March 19<sup>th</sup> from 12:10-12: 50 p.m in 127 CTW Bldg. Visit [www.uky.edu/HR/Wellness](http://www.uky.edu/HR/Wellness) to learn about other services and scheduled events and to RSVP for these events.

## COMMUNITY

- **Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Conference** is March 20<sup>th</sup> from 8 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. at Holiday Inn North. Cost is \$5.00. For more information and to register, call the Fayette County Extension office at 257-5582.



## CAREGIVER SURVIVAL GUIDE

### **Family Meetings**

Support networks, including parents, siblings, extended relatives, friends, and neighbors have varying points of view and experiences with the same elderly persons. Individuals in the group may see the same situation in variety of different ways. So, before the meeting—have a talk with yourself and make some of the following decisions: What do you perceive the problem to be? Why has your family been unable to solve it? Who do you hope the meeting will resolve? What would success look like? What am I willing and what I am not willing to do to make meeting successful? You may then be more prepared to assist in the planning and implementing of the family meeting.

### 🌀 **How to Plan for Meeting**

#### ➤ Who to involve?

- ✗ Siblings and spouses
- ✗ Adult grandchildren or family members involved in care
- ✗ Close friends
- ✗ Neighbors who are close to parents
- ✗ The elderly person!

#### ➤ How to call meeting

- ✗ Alert everyone involved ahead of time
- ✗ Make the purpose of the meeting clear
- ✗ The person who calls the meeting might be criticized—“There is no problem, mom and dad are fine!” “Well, you are the expert, you come up with solution!” “You are the one who started this...” *Stand your ground if you believe there is a problem and your parents are in need of help!*
- ✗ Do not exclude any members of family or support circle due to geography, personality, financial status

#### ➤ Location of meeting

- ✗ Crucial that the person involved feels comfortable with location

- ✗ Situation is threatening already—so location should feel safe and secure
- ✗ Should also be a place where other family members feel comfortable to talk and share without feeling threatened

➤ Set Communication guidelines

- ✗ Speak only for yourself
- ✗ Avoid interrupting speaker. Agree to hear all that he or she has to say
- ✗ Use I-messages instead of judging, blaming, giving advice
- ✗ If someone is dominating the meeting—set a time limit for speaking
- ✗ Avoid private agreements, alliances—unless there are extenuating circumstances, try to share information with all family members

➤ Keeping meeting focused

- ✗ What is the issue of the meeting? Keep conversation focused around main issue.
- ✗ Person's independence should remain foremost
- ✗ Ask yourself—do I want mom to change for me or for her?
- ✗ Keep in mind that your parents are the same people that they have always been and maintain the same likes, dislikes, interests, behaviors.

➤ Choose facilitator

- ✗ Facilitator should keep group on task
- ✗ Choose someone who can stay neutral and objective
- ✗ Choose someone who can help without becoming overly emotional
- ✗ Can be family member, friend, or professional such as a social worker

Ⓢ **Five Steps for Decision Making during Family Meetings**

➤ Gather information

- ✗ Prior to meeting, find more about services that are available in community.
- ✗ Determine the functioning level of mom and dad in terms of activities of daily living.

➤ Write down options for problems

- ✗ Any suggestion made in the group should be taken seriously. No criticism or discussion should be allowed when a suggestion is made.
- ✗ Write down each solution in order to fair for every participant
- ✗ The solution that sounds the craziest or the one that most group members might oppose could turn out to work in the end!

- Evaluate options
  - ✘ Establish a criteria according to mom and dad's preferences, financial situation, availability, convenience for family
  - ✘ Discuss each option according to set of criteria
  - ✘ Be honest—if adult children want to cook for a week at a time and you cannot handle that, express that feeling. Acknowledge your limitations if you can't commit to something.
  - ✘ Communicate caring attitude
  - ✘ Utilize visual aids if family needs that to stay organized—flip chart or poster board
  
- Decide on course of action
  - ✘ Combine the options that have been deemed acceptable
  - ✘ Use flexible thinking and compromise
  - ✘ Make sure mom and dad are comfortable with plan—if they agree, there is more likelihood that they will commit and participate
  
- Act on plan
  - ✘ Make arrangements for service or solution
  - ✘ Set trial period for 2 weeks at first
  - ✘ If it doesn't work out, try another meeting or even have plan B

Source: UK Elder Care



**321 Charles T. Wethington Jr. Building ~ Lexington, KY 40536-0200**  
**[www.uky.edu/HR/eldercare](http://www.uky.edu/HR/eldercare) ~ (859) 323-4600**