



Partners in Care

News from the WPCOG Area Agency on Aging
Ombudsman and Family Care giver Programs

**Serving
Alexander,
Burke,
Caldwell,
And
Catawba
Counties**

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What Does Family Caregiving Mean?

Family caregiving is the bedrock upon which this country's health care system depends. The services provided by family caregivers represents 80% of all home care services and are conservatively valued at \$257 billion a year, more than twice the amount spent on paid home care and nursing home services combined. Family caregivers provide a vast array of emotional, financial, nursing, social, homemaking, and other services on a daily or intermittent basis.

The National Family Caregivers Association has developed this "Caregiving Is" list to give you an idea of just how varied and complex family caregiving can be.

1. Caregiving itself is a multidimensional puzzle. For some it means providing 24-hour care for someone who can't dress, feed, go to the bathroom, or think for himself or herself. For others caregiving is an emotional roller coaster because a diagnosed condition has not exhibited debilitating symptoms - yet.
2. Caregiving can go on for a few years or for a lifetime. It means re-evaluating finances, re-evaluating job opportunities, and making compromises.
3. Caregiving is learning how to work with doctors and other health care professionals so they treat you as an important member of your loved one's health care team.
4. Caregiving is worrying about what's wrong with Dad. Why is he not remembering things anymore? Why is he acting so strangely? And then when you hear the diagnosis, your immediate reaction is you wish you had never asked.
5. Caregiving includes learning about wheelchairs, lifts, and little gadgets that help you button a shirt.
6. Caregiving is wondering why no one ever asks how you are.
7. Caregiving is dreaming about being alone in your own house.
8. Caregiving involves learning about Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, and other public programs.

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What Does Family Caregiving Mean?

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9. Caregiving is learning what it means to die with dignity and making sure that your loved one's wishes will be honored.
10. Caregiving is the joy you feel when your child with mental retardation or a developmental disability learns a new skill.
11. Caregiving is the joy you feel when your spouse says he/she felt good today.
12. Caregiving is hard work. Caregiving is pain. Caregiving is loving and giving and sharing. Caregiving is accepting and learning new things and going on, and on, and on. Caregiving is lots of questions and very few answers. Caregiving is being out of the mainstream.

Caregiving is all these things and a whole lot more.

(Published by the National Family Caregivers Association (NFCA))

Reader's Corner Caregiving Books of Interest

Caring For Your Parents: The Complete Family Guide - Practical Advice You Can Trust From the Experts at AARP.

Hugh Delehanty & Elinor Ginzler, foreword by Mary Phipper

Helping Yourself Help Others

Roselynn Carter and Susan K. Golant

Caregiving without Regrets: Three Steps to Avoid Burnout and Manage Disappointment, Guilt, and Anger

Dr. Vicker Rackner

Chicken Soup for the Caregiver's Soul

Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, and LeAnn Thieman, L.P.N.

The Ultimate Cooking Companion for At-Home Caregivers

Mary Ellen Capron, MS, RD and Elana Zucker, RN, MSN

Prescription for Caregivers

Being a caregiver for someone you love is one of the greatest gifts you can give, but it can also be very stressful. As you care for your loved one, there are resources that can help and things you can do to ease the strain on your own health and well being.

Here are some ways to care for yourself while caring for your loved one:

Talk to your doctor if you feel depressed or anxious. Signs that you may need help include crying more, sleeping more or less than usual, changes in appetite, and lack of interest in your regular activities.

Find out about sources of support and help in your community. Reach out to family members, friends, neighbors, your place of worship, your Area Agency on Aging or your workplace for help with caregiver tasks.

Realize that your health matters - it benefits everyone if you stay healthy and less stressed.

Be aware of the toll stress takes on your health. Try to find time for exercise, eating well and sleeping enough.

Learned about the condition your loved one is facing and how it may affect his/her physical and emotional state.

*(Richard H. Carmona, M.D., M.P.H.
Surgeon General of the United States
From: www.strengthforcaring.com)*

Extra Help With Medicare

You or someone you know may qualify for financial assistance to help pay for your Medicare Prescription drug plans and even your Medicare Part B month premium. Medicare recipients with limited income and assets may qualify for these money-saving programs. Individuals have to apply in order to receive **Extra Help**. For more information, contact the Western Piedmont Council of Governments, Area Agency on Aging at 828-485-4215 or 828-485-4256.

“The simplest act of human kindness for a fellow human being is more important than any refinement of the mind.”

William Sloane Coffin, Credo, 2004

Local Nursing Homes Win Enhancement Grants

Eighteen NC nursing homes were awarded grants in November 2009, with a common goal to improve their facilities to the benefit of their residents. Improvements range from outdoor gardens that are wheelchair accessible to bistros and ice cream parlors. The two-year grants are financed by fines paid to the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services by homes that have been cited for deficiencies in the provision of services under the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (OBRA). The goal is to help de-institutionalize the care setting while providing enhancements that residents can enjoy. There were a total of fifty-two applicants but only eighteen awarded, three of which are located here in the Unifour:

Autumn Care of Drexel	\$24,000 - Outdoor Garden Area
Lutheran Home Hickory	\$24,000 - Bistro
Lutheran Home Hickory West	\$23,307 - Outdoor Recreation Area

Grant winners are required to develop a method for monitoring the effects of the improvements on the facility's residents and staff, and for sustaining the projects after grant funds are spent. The grant selection process is run jointly by the Division of Health Service Regulation's Nursing Home Licensure and Certification Section and the NC Coalition for Long Term Care Enhancement.

(NCDHHS: Public Information Office. 11/19/09)

Google This

In the Ombudsman office we are always excited to assist callers with their questions regarding long term care placement, and most often we refer them to websites that can assist them in narrowing their search for the most appropriate setting for their loved one. In 2009, we witnessed the continuation of the star rating system for North Carolina adult care homes. But in 2010, the star rating system is expected to become more useful to people during their search as the highest rating for these centers will move from three to four stars and will require consistently high performance over two years. In addition, ratings will factor in recent penalties for violations such as medication errors and failure to stop residents' wandering. It has been suggested that with the four star rating system, a truer reflection of the care being provided will be seen. To research facilities in your area, visit the Division of Health Service Regulation website: www.ncdhhs.gov/dhsr/acls/star/results.asp. The facilities are listed alphabetically by county. Simply click on the facility name you are interested in, then click "view worksheet".

(resource: Thomas Goldsmith, McClatchy Newspapers. The Sun News)

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Google This

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Another website has been launched by the National Institute on Aging to serve as a new resource for long term care researchers and policy analysts. What is attractive about this new site is its creative interactive maps and tables, and the ability to download all data related to your search. www.LTCfocUS.org provides users with graphically sophisticated maps, tables, and other visualizations of data related to nursing home care in the US. Data is gathered from existing federal sources including Medicare reimbursement claims, Online Survey Certification and Reporting (OSCAR) data, Minimum Data Set (MDS) data, as well as the survey of state Medicaid policies.

(resource: *Brown University Center for Gerontology and Healthcare Research*)

Consumer Fraud, Identity Theft & Financial Exploitation



Identity theft occurs when someone uses your personal information, such as your name and Social Security number or credit card number, without your permission, to commit fraud or other crimes. The Federal Trade Commission estimates as many as 10 million Americans have their identities stolen each year. In fact, you or someone you know may have already experienced some form of identity theft. There are steps you can take to reduce the risk of thieves getting hold of your personal information, quickly detect a problem, and restore your good name if you have been victimized. Unlike strangers, relatives and caregivers often have a position of trust and an ongoing relationship with the elderly. Financial exploitation occurs when the offender steals, withholds, or otherwise misuses their elderly victims' money, property, or valuables for personal advantage or profit, to the disadvantage of the elder.

The Western Piedmont Area Agency on Aging has recently received a grant that will support community education on the topics of consumer fraud and identity theft. We will be hosting a SCAM-JAM in Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, and Catawba counties throughout 2010. Older adults are the fastest growing population to be victimized by identity theft, fraud, and scams. There are a number of reasons why older adults are targeted by scam artists, however the best prevention is through educational programs such as SCAM-JAM. Guest speakers include representatives from the NC Attorney General's office, NC Secretary of State, Better Business Bureau, NC Dept. of Insurance and Social Security Administration. In addition, an on-site shred-a-thon will be available to help protect yourself from identity theft by destroying all those old pre-approved credit card offers, bills, and other documents you no longer need that include personal information.

Advertisements will follow in the near future so be sure to save a seat at one of our upcoming events.



Western Piedmont Council of Governments Area Agency on Aging is partnering with the U.S. Census Bureau and the North Carolina Complete Count Committee to help spread the word about the 2010 Census and achieve a complete and accurate count of the North Carolina population.

The Census defines who we are as a nation. Every year, the federal government distributes more than \$400 billion to state, local and tribal governments based on census data. Accurate census data helps determine congressional representation, grant funding and guides local decision-makers on where to build new roads, hospitals, housing, schools and more. For each person who is not counted, North Carolina will lose approximately \$10,000 over the next 10 years.

Western Piedmont Council of Governments Area Agency on Aging strives to improve the lives and welfare of people in North Carolina, many of whom are experiencing hardships related to economic status, language fluency, disabilities or other issues. We are committed to supporting the 2010 Census as another way to improve the quality of life in North Carolina, and to ensure that even the hardest to count can be accurately represented.

Why should everyone participate in the 2010 Census? Census data shape the future of your community and define your voice in Congress.

- Census information helps determine locations for schools, roads, hospitals, child-care and senior citizen center, and more.
- Businesses use census data to locate supermarkets, shopping centers, new housing and other facilities.
- The census determines how many seats each state will have in the U.S. House of Representatives as well as the boundaries of legislative districts.

This Census is easy, important, and secure.

- It is **easy** because the form is only 10 questions.
- It is **important** because the data gathered is used for funding allocations, congressional representation and redistricting.
- It is **secure** because the Census Bureau cannot share individual, personally identifiable responses with anyone.

If you would like to get involved with Census outreach and promotion, you can get in touch with the Partnership Specialist responsible for your county. The Specialists will put you in touch with your local Complete Count Committee so that you can participate in their outreach efforts.



Partnership Specialists	Contact Number	Counties Covered
Crawford, Lisa	704-308-6344	Cabarrus, Catawba, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Rowan
Coley, Jan	910-658-7626	Cumberland, Harnett, Hoke, Lee, Moore, Richmond, Scotland
Ensley, Akilah	919-333-2186	Beaufort, Camden, Carteret, Craven, Dare, Greene, Hyde, Jones, Lenoir, Martin, Pamlico, Pitt, Tyrrell, Washington
Hyman, Constance	910-583-1021	Bladen, Brunswick, Columbus, Duplin, New Hanover, Onslow, Pender
Mackey, Christine	919-327-7319	Durham, Franklin, Granville, Orange, Person, Vance, Wake, Warren
Smith, Tosheka	252-259-1845	Bertie, Chowan, Currituck, Edgecombe, Gates, Halifax, Hertford, Nash, North Hampton, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Sampson, Wayne, Wilson
Suarez-Webster, Susan	704-308-0250	Anson, Montgomery, Stanly, Union
Tolan, Dayling	919-696-9277	Chatham, Johnson
Robel, Andrea	828-423-4633	Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford,
Villamarin, Teresa	704-293-4830	Alexander, Cleveland, Gaston, Mecklenburg, Randolph
TBD		Alamance, Caswell, Davie, Davidson, Forsyth, Guilford, Rockingham, Stokes, Surry, Yadkin
TBD		Robeson

Here are some important dates to remember as we approach Census Day:

- **March 15-17, 2010:** Census forms are mailed or delivered to households
- **March - April 2010:** Census forms are available at Be Counted sites and Questionnaire Assistance Centers for those individuals who need help filling out their forms, or who did not receive a form by mail
- **April 1, 2010:** Census Day
- **May - July 2010:** Census workers will visit households that do not return forms to take a count in person

Visit www.2010census.nc.gov or www.2010census.gov to learn more.

Roxanne Powell,
Regional Long
Term Care
Ombudsman
828-485-4213
roxanne.powell@
wpcog.org

Mary Mitchell,
Family Caregiver
Support Specialist
828-485-4256
mary.mitchell@
wpcog.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

Meet the Family Caregiver Support Specialist

Caldwell Senior Center - February 11th - 10:30 am & March 11th at 10:30 am

Alexander Senior Center - February 23rd - 9:00 am

Morganton-Burke Senior Center - March 23rd - 10:00 am

Call to schedule a time to talk with Mary Mitchell, Family Caregiver Support Specialist for resources and information on assisting you as you care for your loved one. Call (828) 485-4256.

Reverse Mortgage Seminars

Catawba Council on Aging - 328-2269 - March 25th - 11:00am

Morganton-Burke Senior Center - 430-4147 - April 22nd - 11:00 am

Caldwell Senior Center - 758-2883 - July 16th - 11:00 am

Alexander Senior Center - 632-1717 - July 28th - 11:00 am

No cost. Registration required.

Unifour Caregivers Lunch and Learn: Long Term Care Options

First Baptist Church of Morganton - April 29th - 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

No cost. Registration required. Meal will be provided.

May 2010 - Older Americans Month - "Age Strong! Live Long!"

Visit www.aoa.gov for additional information and promotional materials.

Western Piedmont Council of Governments
Area Agency on Aging
PO Box 9026
Hickory, NC 28603
Telephone: 828-322-9191
Web Address: www.wpcogaaa.org