

CAREGIVER STATISTICS:

- In New Jersey alone, nearly 1.1 million unpaid caregivers support a family member often from birth through adulthood.
- 30,000 NJ children are primary caregivers for parents, grandparents or siblings.
- Caregivers tend to die 12-15 years before non-caregivers.
- The value of the services family caregivers provide for "free" is estimated to be almost \$300 billion a year.

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Safety of Seniors Act of 2007 Signed by President Bush

On Wednesday, April 23, 2008, President Bush signed into law the Safety of Seniors Act of 2007. This Act is an amendment of the Public Health Service Act which, through the Secretary of Health and Human Services, will work on creating and supporting a national education campaign to reduce falls among older adults and preventing repeat falls. This Act also will award grants, contracts or cooperative agreements to design and carry out local education campaigns.

There is also a research initiative which will work to improve the identification of older adults who have a high

risk of falling, improve data collection and analysis to identify fall risk and protective factors, and design, implementation, and evaluate the most effective fall prevention interventions. In addition, the Secretary of Health and Human Services will tailor effective strategies to reduce falls to specific populations of older adults, improve the diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation of elderly fall victims and older adults at high risk for falls and assess the risks of falls occurring in various settings.

For detailed information about the Safety for Seniors Act of 2007, please visit www.govtracks.us and search "safety for seniors" on the left search bar.

For organizations creating fall prevention programs, the *Center for Healthy Aging* has developed guidelines aimed at helping prevent falls of the elderly. Program developers can access these tips on their website. Please visit www.healthyagingprograms.org.

Below are examples from the online program checklist:

1. Are there materials and training manuals available to support implementation?
2. Does the program offer effective strategies for linking participants and the program itself with health care providers?
3. Is the program suitable for diverse participants (e.g., age, gender, functional status)?
4. Does the program address motivation for exercise and other types of behavior change?
5. Does the program include methods for maintaining key elements of the program and for monitoring program quality?

Social Security Administration Embarks on New Campaign for Mother's Day

The Social Security Administration is embarking upon a campaign during Mother's Day 2008 to promote Extra Help to caregivers, family members and friends of people who have Medicare. Extra Help is a the program through which the SSA can help people with Medicare, who have limited income and resources or assets, save approximately \$3,600 in premiums, co-payments and out-of-pocket expenses associated with their Medicare Prescription Drug Plan.

To figure out if your mother is eligible, Social Security needs to know her income and the

value of her savings, investments and real estate. To qualify for Extra Help, she must be receiving Medicare and also have an income limited to \$15,600 if she lives alone or \$21,000 if married, and resources limited to \$11,990 if an individual and \$23,970 if married. Resources include bank accounts, stocks and bonds.

Social Security has an easy-to-use online application that you can help complete for your mom. You can find it at www.socialsecurity.gov. To apply by phone or have an application mailed to you, call Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778) and ask

for the Application for Help with Medicare Prescription Drug Plan Costs (SSA-1020). You can also stop into your local Social Security office.

This mother's day, help your mom save up to \$3,600 a year on her prescription drugs. Long after the candy and flowers are gone, the Extra Help through Social Security will keep on giving.



What's Going on in Washington:

Congress Considers Unique Trusts for People with Disabilities

The Financial Security Accounts for Individuals with Disabilities Act of 2007 sponsored by Florida Rep. Crenshaw would amend the federal tax code to allow families to establish a trust exclusively for the purpose of paying certain expenses of an individual with a disability, such as educational, medical, dental, community-based support, employment training and support and assistive technology, as well as housing and transportation.

Introduced in May of 2007, the bill has been endorsed by 67 member of the House, including New Jersey Representatives Mike Ferguson, (R-10), Donald Payne (D-10) and Chris Smith (R-5).

Senator Dodd Announces Disability Savings Act of 2008

On March 11, Senator Chris Dodd of CT announced a new piece of legislation, the Disability Savings Act, which would modify the federal tax code to allow tax advantaged savings accounts for disability expenses. The accounts would not affect eligibility for federal benefits, and would allow families of people with disabilities to set aside up to \$250,000 for disability related expenses.

For more information, visit dodd.senate.gov.

UPDATE!

Family Leave Insurance to be signed by Governor Corzine!

After a long, and often difficult road, Paid Family Leave Insurance Bill (A873) has passed through the Senate and Assembly and on Friday, May 2 at 12pm Governor Corzine is planning on signing the Act in Committee Room 4 of the State House.

Medicare Tool for Caregivers

The Medicare Rights Center has worked with the National Alliance for Caregiving under a grant from the Langeloth Foundation to bring crucial Medicare information to the caregiver community. This tool provides hundreds of consumer-friendly answers on Medicare and includes a special section dedicated to caregivers. The caregiver section includes guidance on getting help caring for a loved one at home, caregiver rights and resources, respite care services and how to advocate on behalf of a loved one.

The tool can be accessed on the home page of the Alliance website or www.medicareinteractive.org/help.



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Spotlight On...

Agingcare.com

Agingcare.com will focus on the needs of caregivers to the elderly while providing an active forum for connecting caregivers with expert information, resources, product sourcing and each other.

The caregiver market represents of the fastest growing populations in the US today. As advances in healthcare continue to expand, the population over 65 years old is projected to grow exponentially. It is estimated that by the year 2050 individuals over 65 will rise from 12.8% to 20.3% of

the population. This longevity will produce a natural need for greater focus on care for the elderly and increase the requirements for ways to cater to their needs.

Caregivers who typically are represented by men and women in middle age with families of their own and jobs to tend to, will be increasingly torn by their responsibilities. New products and services are emerging daily to assist caregivers in the easing the strain of this task. But the emotional is-

ues will continue to be pressing.

Agingcare.com will focus on the development of an empathetic community in which to exchange advice, ideas and emotional support. The site editors will bring together the most relevant information on the critical issues associated with caregiving while providing easy and direct access to answers. The content is designed to help ease the burden of caregiving from a physical and emotional standpoint.