

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.

INSIDE
THIS ISSUE:

- Ambiguous Loss and Caregiving
- NJ Public Advocate Urges Filing of Stimulus Check
- Upcoming Events
- New Resources
- New Consumer Alzheimer's Disease Survey

Caregiver Connection

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Caring for someone with Ambiguous Memory Loss

To manage the stress that comes with caring for someone we must first know what the problem is. Surprisingly, many caregivers of individuals with memory disorders or dementia report that the main problem is not the illness itself, but the ambiguity and uncertainty it causes.

5 Quick Tips:

1. Name your problem

Call it "ambiguous loss." It is neither your fault nor the patient's. It is caused by an illness.

2. Practice "both/and"

Both/and thinking is less stressful than continuing to search for an absolutely perfect solution.

"I am both a caregiver—and a person with my own needs."

3. Anger and guilt are normal

While mixed emotions are an understandable outcome of

memory loss, the negative feelings can come out as anger or, worse yet, abuse—and that is not acceptable. Talk with someone about your negative feelings to prevent acting out your anger.

4. Find something to hope for

To stay healthy, everyone needs hope. Given the stress from caregiving and the ambiguity of memory loss, what can you plan for the future that is clear and certain? Such as dinner with a friend, a hobby, a TV program. New hopes and dreams will emerge when you can balance the ambiguity with some activities that have clear outcomes, no matter how small.

5. Check on your own health

When you are a caregiver for someone with memory loss, the stress of ambiguity adds to the usual pressures of caregiving. You have a duty and a right to take care of yourself.

Seek professional help if you:

- Feel depressed, physically sick or hopeless.
- Feel like hurting yourself or hurting or yelling at the person you care for.
- Fight with your spouse, children, or other family members and friends.
- No longer take care of yourself.

Keep moving forward, despite the stress of not knowing what lies ahead. But at the same time, reach out for support and human connections to stay resilient and strong.

This article was taken from the Family Caregiver Alliance website. To view the complete fact sheet, please visit www.caregiver.org and click on the tab for "Fact Sheets and Publications"

NJ Public Advocate Urges Seniors to Apply for Economic Stimulus Checks

In the wake of news that about 156,000 mostly elderly residents have not applied for their \$300-\$600 federal economic stimulus check, the Department of the Public Advocate has been reaching out directly to nursing homes and assisted living facilities with instructions to help residents claim the funds.

Elder Ombudsman Debra Branch says a letter offering guidance on how to assist elderly and disabled residents with tax preparation has been sent to 1,253 nursing facilities, assisted living and residential health care facilities in the state.

Those who do apply for the stimulus check in advance of the October 15 dead-

line should be wary of tax preparers who charge exorbitant fees and should be aware that some nursing facilities may try to take a portion of the funds to cover unpaid expenses.

New Jersey has an estimated 156,768 residents eligible for the funds who have not yet filed and 69% of those are age 65 and older, according to the IRS.

Information on how to apply is available on the NJ Department of the Public Advocate website, www.njpublicadvocate.gov. The website also provides specific information about how to ensure that the \$300-\$600 stimulus rebate does not adversely affect an individual's Medicaid eligibility.

UPCOMING EVENTS

National Caregivers Conference Wednesday, 10/29

Woodbridge Hotel and Conference Center, Iselin, NJ
Join professionals and family caregivers for a day of workshops, presentations, exhibit fair, keynote speakers, etc. Stay afterwards for a *Meet and Mingle* with representatives from Obama and McCain's campaign on issues concerning the disability and caregiver communities.

Call 800-372-6510 or visit
www.nationalcaregiversconference.org to register

Free National Telephone Class and Webinar

From the National Family Caregivers Association
Communicating Effectively with Healthcare Professionals
Thursday, 11/6 & 11/13, 2pm-3pm

Learn how the healthcare system works, your role within the system and how to be prepared for a doctor visit or emergency room visit

Alzheimer's Awareness Conference

Opt2Care Senior Services
Thursday, 11/6, 7:30am-1pm
Wilshire Grand Hotel
350 Pleasant Valley Way, West Orange, NJ
Information on treatment, home care & behavior management
Call 888-678-2243 to register

Meet and Greet Lobby Day

Caregivers of New Jersey
Thurs, 11/13, 9am-11:30am
State House, Trenton, Room 109
Meet CNJ Staff and members of the Senate and Assembly
Call 732-262-8020 to RVSP

NEW RESOURCES

"Ask Medicare"

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services launched "Ask Medicare," a new initiative to help family caregivers. More than 44 million Americans, more than one in five adults, provide care to a loved one, friend or neighbor, valued in economic terms at \$350 billion annually.

The Ask Medicare Web site will provide links to key partner organizations that help caregivers and beneficiaries, and present personal stories from caregivers in the community: www.medicare.gov/caregivers

Contact Cape-Atlantic

CONTACT was started to keep in touch with senior citizens living alone and to let them know someone cares about them. Every day trained volunteers call people who are lonely, living alone or feeling isolated from the community.

They are trained to detect social emergencies, medical problems or if there is a need for food or fuel.

Call 609-823-1850 if you or someone you know could benefit from this service.



To learn more about CNJ
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Consumer Survey on Alzheimer's Disease

The Alzheimer's Disease Screening Discussion Group (ADSDG) recently conducted a new survey showing that U.S. adults do not know as much about Alzheimer's disease (AD) as they think they do. The survey found not only a lack of knowledge surrounding the progressive brain disease, but also revealed conflicting attitudes and behaviors toward taking action to detect and diagnose AD in its early stages. Specifically:

The majority believe friends and family members are most likely to notice the signs of AD in a potential patient and prompt action, as opposed to a doctor or the patient

Though nearly all claim they would encourage a loved one to seek early diagnosis upon suspecting signs of AD, far fewer actually took action when faced with the situation in their own lives.

Very few were able to identify the difference between signs of early disease, late disease, and those unrelated to AD, despite the fact that they considered themselves to be aware of this knowledge

The ADSDG, a consortium of multi-disciplinary experts in AD and senior health, believes this survey underscores the need for adults to learn more about AD so they are better prepared to seek medical help as soon as symptoms appear. Alzheimer's disease is now ranked as the sixth leading cause of death in the U.S. with more than five million Americans suffering from the disease. It is estimated that 16 million will have AD by the year 2050.

To learn more about the survey, visit www.seethesigns.com/main/pressrelease.html.

November is... National Family Caregivers Month!

As the entire nation prepares to recognize and celebrate the hard work and dedication family caregivers give towards helping a loved one with a disability or chronic health condition, CNJ has decided to focus on the 1.06 million family caregivers right here in New Jersey.

We urge you to take some time this month to focus on you, and acknowledge that while the caregiving life is not always easy, glamorous or exciting, you have taken on the most valuable and appreciated role as a family caregiver.

Please visit www.njcaregivers.org and click on the Month of Caring link on our home page to view conferences, workshops, teleconferences and webinars related to caring for a loved one.