

Caregiver Connection

Welcome to the new version of the Caregiver Connection Ezine. We are hoping that by updating our look and technology we can better send you up-to-date information about caregiving events, conferences, and issues that are important to you.

Please consult our website for further information: www.njcaregivers.org.



5 Star Rating System for Nursing Homes Arrives

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has unveiled a one- to five-star rating system for nursing homes to help consumers evaluate a nursing home's quality when selecting a facility. The ratings appear on the agency's Nursing Home Compare web site.

A five-star designation means the facility ranks "much above average," four-star indicates "above average," three means "about average," two is a "below average" ranking, with a one indicating that a facility ranks "much below average." The rankings, which will be updated monthly, are based on a nursing home's performance in three areas: quality measures, nurse staffing levels and health inspection reports.

In this first round of quality ratings about 12 percent of the nation's nursing homes received a full five-star rating while 22 percent scored at the low end with one star. The remaining 66 percent of facilities were distributed fairly evenly among the two-, three- and four-star rankings. The ratings indicate that nonprofit nursing homes deliver a higher quality of care than for-profit facilities, according to an analysis by USA Today.

For more information regarding the rating system, please [click here](#).

In This Issue

5 Star Rating System in Place for Nursing Homes

AARP Teams up with Gail Sheehy

2009 Tax Credit Outreach Campaign Kit Available Now

Family Leave Act Takes Effect

NFL Meets to Discuss Football Tackles and Dementia

Join CNJ Today!

Quick Links

[Caregivers of New Jersey](#)

[The Family Resource Network](#)

[The Family Support Center of NJ](#)

[Join our Mailing List!](#)

[Help Support CNJ by Purchasing Tickets to a Devils Hockey Game!](#)

AARP and Best Selling Author Gail Sheehy Join Together to Launch the World's Largest Online Community and Resource Center for Caregivers



AARP, the leading organization for people 50+, announced the debut of exclusive new online resources and content to help the more than 44 million caregivers across the country in their unique daily challenges. AARP's Ambassador of Caregiving, Gail Sheehy, will serve as a major contributor to the online caregiving portal on www.aarp.org.

The renowned author of *Passages* will communicate with AARP's 40 million members and others through interactive Web casts featuring exclusive videos of caregiving families, personal blogs and online chats. Her mission is to guide members through the emotional and practical sides of the caregiver role and to build a community of ideas and practical solutions.

Sheehy traveled around the country to film the personal stories of families in different phases of the caregiving journey. She also interviewed experts who hold the key to the best resources. The Web casts will roll out throughout 2009. The first installments are available now on www.aarp.org/gailsheehy.

"Gail's expertise and emotional compassion on the issue of caregiving makes her the ideal voice to speak to our members and we're thrilled to be able to provide these new tools and resources," said Emilio Pardo Executive Vice President and Chief Brand Officer, AARP. "Not only will we be able to connect her "in real time" with our members, we'll also continuously be updating the site with relevant news and information that our members can use to empower themselves on a daily basis."

"None of us is prepared for the role of caregiving," said Sheehy. "Many of us find ourselves thrust into this universal passage with nowhere to turn and a sense of helplessness and fear that only add to the stress. Through the power of the AARP community, I can share my own personal passage as a caregiver and that of the thousands of people I have met along the way with the many millions who feel alone and without direction. To be able to do this in real time on the Web offers me a unique opportunity, and I am grateful to AARP for their vision and dedication to this issue touching so many Americans."

2009 Tax Credit Outreach Campaign Kit Now Available

The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities is pleased to announce the availability of the 2009 Tax Credit Outreach Campaign Kit. This resource is intended to provide community groups, housing and social service agencies and employers with the materials and information needed to conduct community outreach efforts promoting the Earned Income Credit (EIC) and the Child Tax Credit (CTC). (EITC payments do not affect rent obligations in the federally-assisted housing programs.)

Today the US is confronting the most serious economic downturn in many decades. As we head into 2009, an increasing number of low- and moderate-income working families and individuals are struggling financially and more than ever before, are likely to need help from two federal tax benefits, the Earned Income Credit (EIC) and the Child Tax Credit (CTC). This year, eligible families can get as much as \$4,824 from the EIC and more if they also qualify for the CTC. Many will need to rely on these credits to help them keep up with household bills and even to help stave off more dire situations, such as mortgage foreclosure.

In 2007, 23.1 million eligible families and individuals claimed EICs worth \$44.6 billion. Yet, despite this impressive showing, millions more eligible individuals did not file for the credits and ended up forgoing millions of dollars for which they qualified. Now, when the stakes are so high for struggling families, your involvement in outreach can help ensure that these vital benefits do not go unclaimed.

In addition to exploring 6 key elements of an effective Outreach Campaign, the Kit contains full-color posters, flyers, fact sheets, a full stock of outreach strategies and examples of where they are being used successfully, and a guide to finding even more information on the Tax Credit Outreach Campaign website, www.cbpp.org/eic2009.

A free copy of the kit can be ordered by email at eickit@cbpp.org or by calling the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities at (202) 408-1080. The Center is eager to work with organizations to enable kits to be distributed to their own networks and is ready to help facilitate that process. The Center can provide technical assistance and training to help you start or bolster an Outreach Campaign. Please contact the Center's Tax Credit Outreach Team if you have any questions or would like to order additional materials.

Family Leave Law Takes Effect in New Jersey

Rudy Larini
Star-Ledger Staff

Employee paychecks will be almost a dollar thinner with the start of the new year, but some workers may well applaud the increase in six months if they need time off to care for a loved one. Under the paid family leave law enacted by New Jersey last year, employee payroll deductions to fund the measure began with the new year but employees will not be entitled to take any leaves until July 1st.

New Jersey became the third state to offer paid leave, overcoming the objections from opponents in the business community who argued it would be an unfair burden for employers. Under the measure, employees are entitled to take up to six weeks off to care for a newborn or newly adopted child, or a sick parent, spouse or child. They would be able to collect up to two-thirds of



their pay to a maximum of \$524 per week.

The benefit will be funded by worker contributions estimated at about \$33 a year through the mandatory payroll tax employers had to begin collecting January 1st.

The paid employee leave bill was amended several times before final passage, with one significant change, enhancing the fine from \$250 to \$1,000 for employees who try to abuse the benefit.

The NFL Meets to Discuss the Connection of Football Tackles and Dementia in Former Players

By Carol Levine

A Team Meeting without the Quarterback

It's a classic scene: A team meeting about the patient with the person who knows the patient best - the family caregiver - excluded. The only difference is that this team was not made up of doctors, nurses, and social workers; its members were retired football players and the National Football League Commissioner Roger Goodell. As described by George Vescey in the New York Times, the meeting was called to discuss the under-the-radar topic of dementia linked to brain damage suffered in those spectacular tackles that roaring fans applaud.

Two wives - Eleanor Perfetto and Sylvia Mackey - have been vigorous advocates for their husbands with dementia. They have in essence been the quarterbacks of their husbands' health care teams. Perfetto's husband, Ralph Wenzel, is now in a nursing home, and Mackey's husband, John, has been in an assisted living facility since September. They came to the meeting because as Perfetto, a senior director in health policy issues for Pfizer, put it, "My whole purpose is to speak for the players who cannot speak for themselves. There will be a biased point of view if only the healthy ones show up."

But they, along with everyone but the players and Goodell, were not allowed into the meeting, even though Goodell and Harry Carson, a former Giants player and leader of the retired players, agree that their voices should be heard. The explanation is again classic medical-ese, heard in ICUs and EDs and other high-stress situations: "We can't speak freely if family members are present."

The excuse is vintage 1950s: The wives were excluded to protect them from rough language and from discussions of incontinence and impotence - man talk, in other words. While it is certainly appropriate to have private discussions about sensitive topics, this was not a therapy session. When the NFL asks for advice about these problems, the wives know more than anyone who has not lived with a person with dementia. And as for rough language, if they've been around football this long, they've heard it all.

The NFL is studying brain damage and taking steps to keep players who have been knocked unconscious on the sidelines (for at least that game). But that doesn't help the players who were sent back in as quickly as possible, suffered more knocks, and are now at risk for dementia. The NFL is now supporting 97 former players in nursing homes under the "88 Plan," which pays \$88,000 a year for nursing home care. (The figure is inspired by Mackey's uniform number). Thousands more may be eligible in the future. The NFL should recognize that dementia is a family problem, and make the family caregivers part of the team.

Carol Levine directs the Families and Health Care Project at the United Hospital Fund in New York City.

Join Caregivers of New Jersey Today!



Caregivers of New Jersey introduced a membership campaign this past fall, and has received feedback from many interested organizations, family caregivers and state workers. As a member, you will be kept up-to-date on all events, a chance for your organization to be featured in our newsletter and so much more. Please visit our website, www.njcaregivers.org to become a member of Caregivers of New Jersey today!

Thank you for reading Caregiver Connection! If you have any information you would like included in our e-zine, or know of anyone that would like to be added to our listserv, please email me at dgoldberg@njcaregivers.org or click the "Join Our Mailing List" button on the top right side of the newsletter.

Additionally, CNJ is dedicated to spreading awareness and knowledge of caregiving, so we invite you to utilize the "Forward Email" button at the bottom of this email.

Sincerely,

Dana Goldberg, Administrator
Caregivers of New Jersey

[Forward email](#)

SafeUnsubscribe®

This email was sent to contact@refinedwebdesign.com by dgoldberg@njcaregivers.org.
[Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).

Email Marketing by



Caregivers of New Jersey | Please visit us online! | www.njcaregivers.org | Brick | NJ | 08723