

Caregiver Connection

Welcome to the Caregiver Connection Ezine. We have updated our look and technology so we can better send you the most current information about caregiving events, conferences, and issues that are important to you.



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

Free Health Screenings for Those Age 60+

On April 15, your taxes aren't the only thing you can cross off your list. The Senior Wellness Fair, hosted by Dennis Mc Nerney, Bergen County Executive, and the Department of Human Services, Division of Senior Services Senior Advisory Council, Health Committee, will be offering free health screenings for people over the age of 60.

From 10:00 am until 1:00 pm at the First Presbyterian Church, 150 East Palisade Avenue, Englewood, NJ, physical therapists, home health aides, hospital staff and many more will be in attendance to offer participants free cholesterol and blood pressure tests, derma scans, osteoporosis, hearing and blood sugar tests. In addition to the free screenings, there will also be workshops offering exercising and dancing tips, yoga from your chair, and more.

For more information, please call (201) 336-7437.

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Upcoming Event

Planning for the Future:
 Supporting the Person with Dementia

Saturday, 3/28
 10:00am-12:00pm
 Maywood Public Library
 459 Maywood Avenue, Maywood, NJ

Legal and Financial considerations followed by an informal gathering of family caregivers and professionals

This program is FREE but seating is limited. For registration and more information call the Alzheimer's Association at (973)586-4300.

National Council on Aging Policy Update:

NCOA has succeeded in convincing Congress to include priorities that both stimulate economic growth and help vulnerable seniors in need. The priorities are below:



1. Jobs for Older Americans: An additional \$120 million was added to the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) to create 24,000 jobs. The unemployment rate among seniors has increased 60% since last year and is at a 31 year high.

2. Senior Nutrition: An additional \$200 million was added for senior nutrition programs (congregate and home-delivery meals). A recent study found that over 80% of states now have waiting lists for senior meal

programs.

3. Medicaid Temporary Increase: An additional \$87 billion was added to increase the federal Medicaid Match Rate to provide much-needed relief to states.

4. Additional SSI Payment: An additional \$4.2 billion for a one time additional Supplemental Security Income payment.

5. Prevention and Wellness Fund: An additional \$3 billion will be used to fight preventable chronic diseases, including \$50 million for injury prevention.

For more information about the priorities and information in this article, please visit the National Council on Aging's website at www.ncoa.org.

Partnership Ensures Veterans and Caregivers Get Needed Resources

The Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center (MEDVAMC) has formed a groundbreaking partnership with the Houston Alzheimer's Association to provide comprehensive services to veterans suffering from dementia or other memory-related illnesses, and possibly more significantly, to their caregivers.

The total veteran population with dementia, those enrolled in VA or not, is estimated at more than half a million, meaning that one out of every two veterans over 85 can expect to suffer from some form of dementia, be it Alzheimer's disease or other dementias.

"Partners in Dementia Care" is a VA initiative examining a new way to coordinate care for veterans with memory problems and the family and friends who help them. Care coordinators from the MEDVAMC and from the Alzheimer's Association play pivotal roles in the implementation of medical and non-medical care plan components for both the veteran and the caregiver.

"The goal of this project is to think outside the box and take full advantage of all available community resources to help veterans and their caregivers improve their quality of life," said Mark E. Kunik, M.D., M.P.H., Houston VA Center for Quality of Care and Utilization Studies associate director.

Care Coordinators make the first contact with the patient and caregiver, focusing on medical issues, and then they ensure the caregiver has all necessary health information and has established communication with the patient's health care providers.

The MEDVAMC and the Houston Alzheimer's Association plan to offer telephone support groups for caregivers of persons with dementia in the near future. These meetings will be open to the entire community.

The Houston Alzheimer's Association can be reached at (800) 272-3900. For more information about "Partners in Dementia Care", please contact Brian Murry at (713) 794-8668 or by email at murry@bcm.tmc.edu.

Recording Project Preserves Stories for People with Memory Loss

By Véronique LaCapra

"Listening is an act of love." That's the motto of StoryCorps, a nationwide oral history project, whose mission is to encourage Americans "to record one another's stories in sound." Over the past year, StoryCorps has made a special effort to include a group of Americans whose stories are at particular risk of being forgotten.

In 2003, award-winning radio producer David Isay founded the StoryCorps project, with the goal of helping ordinary Americans record each other's stories, usually a close friend, or family member. A trained facilitator takes care of the technical aspects of the recording. At the end of the session, the participants get to keep a CD of the interview, while a second copy is archived at the Library of Congress, in Washington, DC.



The project was an immediate success.

Then, in June of 2006, the StoryCorps team saw an opportunity to reach out to one specific group of Americans, whose stories are particularly vulnerable. They launched the "Memory Loss Initiative," to support the stories of people with memory loss, such as Alzheimer's patients.

Dina Zempsky is the senior outreach coordinator for the Memory Loss Initiative. As a geriatric social worker, she spends a lot of time with people whom she describes as "aging in a very isolated and often very sad way." She says that she was very excited to find out about the Memory Loss Initiative, which she feels can "empower people as they age, [...] and give them joy back and a reflective way to look at their lives."

In the first year of the Memory Loss Initiative, Dina says StoryCorps recorded more than 150 interviews of people with early memory loss. As she puts it, "the response has been absolutely overwhelmingly positive, both from our participants, and also from their caregivers and their family members." Dina stresses the joy involved in giving people with memory loss a means to evoke their special long-term memories, and to record and archive them. And, she adds, "it's been a wonderful gift to give their families as well, who are losing so much at this time."

For the relatives of people with memory loss, the desire to preserve family stories is often what draws them to StoryCorps. Maria Greenberg is 60. She interviewed her 89 year-old mother, Ilona Gabor, who is a Holocaust survivor who lived out the Nazi occupation of Hungary in hiding, in Budapest. She thought the project was a great idea: "My mom's got so much to tell, and I really don't want that to be forgotten."

To read about other personal stories, continue reading the article by [clicking here](#). To learn more about StoryCorps, The Memory Loss Initiative, and how you can bring StoryCorps to your community, visit their website at www.storycorps.net.

Pictured: Maria Greenberg (left) and mother, Ilona Gabor

The Star-Ledger Guest Bloggers on Health Care Reform

Posted by By James J. Florio and David Knowlton



It appears that America is finally on the precipice of transformational health care reform. President Barack Obama's recently announced long-range budget plan provides the down payment necessary to fund affordable and accessible health care for all Americans. For many of us, who have dreamed of this day for a long time, we are not only saying "It's about time," but we are also cautioning, "Let's do it right!"

As co-chairs of the New Jersey Partnership to Fight Chronic Disease, we have worked during the past year to educate public policymakers on one critical component to the health care reform effort: the need to recognize the role chronic disease prevention and treatment can play in this endeavor. It appears our message is getting through. The president's budget makes the largest investment in preventive care in our nation's history. He is to be applauded.

We do not use the word "investment" lightly. Of the \$2 trillion spent each year by families, businesses, governments, patients, labor unions and others, three out of every four dollars, or \$1.5 trillion, is spent on chronic diseases, many of which are preventable. We believe this is the root cause of today's health care cost crisis: the alarming escalation of preventable chronic diseases and the astronomical percentage of the health care dollar that is then required to treat them. Investments in chronic disease prevention can actually help lower costs and make health care reform affordable.



Simple lifestyle changes can help prevent many chronic diseases such as heart illness and stroke, Type-2 diabetes and some cancers. Better diet and exercise as well as smoking cessation will not only improve the quality of our lives, but save billions of dollars.

To view the entire online article and to access other blogs by James J. Florio and David Knowlton, please [click here](#).

Pictured: Authors James J. Florio (top left), governor of New Jersey from 1990 to 1994 and David Knowlton (right), president and CEO of the New Jersey Health Care Quality Institute

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

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