

# Caregiver Connection

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Welcome to the Caregiver Connection Ezine, your source for 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](http://www.njcaregivers.org).

## NAC: Caregiving Coalitions Webcast

Friday, May 29, 2009  
1:00pm EST/10:00am PST

Carol DeGraw, United Way of Morris County & Sonnie Yudell, Utah Caregiver Support Program

Topic: Supporting Sustainable Caregiving Coalitions

To register [click here](#).

## Quick Links

- Caregivers of New Jersey**
- The Family Support Center of New Jersey**
- The Family Resource Network**

[Join our Mailing List!](#)

## Save these Dates!

### Bergen County's Annual Caregivers Conference

Saturday, October 3, 2009  
9:00am-1:00pm

The Renaissance Meadowlands Hotel, Rutherford, NJ

If you are providing care for a loved one or neighbor come find out about services, support and other helpful information in your area.

### National Caregivers Conference

Thursday, October 29, 2009

Woodbridge Hotel and Conference Center, Iselin, NJ

Spend the day attending workshops and informational exhibits and listening to inspirational speakers.

Call 800-372-6510 or visit [www.nationalcaregiversconference.org](http://www.nationalcaregiversconference.org) for more information.

### The Morris County Caregiver Coalition Event

Monday, November 2, 2009

9:00am-11:30am

Ukrainian Cultural Center of NJ, North Jefferson Road, Whippany, NJ

Guest Speaker: Congressman Rodney Frelinghuysen

More information will be available shortly.

## **National Health Care Lobby Day and Rally in Washington, DC**

Thursday, June 25, 2009

Join 20,000 of your friends and neighbors from across the country to demand that Congress pass real health care reform now.

Bus transportation is free, but space is limited.

Contact Leo Torrey at 856-966-3091 x205 or [leo@njcitizenaction.org](mailto:leo@njcitizenaction.org) for reservations.

## **Caring for Ill, Elderly has Reward - A Longer Life**

By Linda Carroll

Boomers sandwiched between growing children and ailing aging parents often worry that the stress from all that caregiving might shave years off their lives. But it turns out that the opposite may be true - the nurturing they give may be repaid by a longer lifespan, a study shows.

Earlier studies found that people who had cared for sick relatives died at a younger age than people who didn't help. But researchers from the University of Michigan suspected the caregiving wasn't the problem.

"We thought that it wasn't the helping that was harmful, and that the harm seen in those studies came from watching someone die," says study author Stephanie Brown, a social psychologist and an assistant professor in the department of internal medicine at the University of Michigan.

To see if caregiving was truly beneficial to the caregiver, Brown and her colleagues scrutinized data from 1,688 couples who were at least 70 years old. Over a seven year period, the elderly couples were surveyed four times. During each survey, husbands and wives were asked whether they either provided or received help with such daily activities as eating, dressing, bathing, walking across the room, or using the toilet. They were also asked who performed household tasks such as grocery shopping, managing money and meal preparation.

Brown and her colleagues found that if you accounted for the negative impact of stressing over a loved one's illness, that caregiving actually led to longer life. During the course of the study, people who spent at least 14 hours a week caring for a sick spouse were almost 30 percent less likely to die during the study period than those who spent no time helping, according to the research recently published in Psychological Science.

A smaller study in the journal Stroke came to a similar conclusion. Researchers interviewed 75 people who spent an average of almost 37 hours per week caring for a loved one who had suffered a stroke. A full 90 percent of those interviewed reported that their caregiving enabled them to appreciate life more. Many also reported that it helped them develop a more positive attitude toward life.

To view the entire article, related stories and videos, please [click here](#).



## CLASS Act Proposes National Long-Term Care Insurance Program

Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA) and Representative Frank Pallone (D-NJ) reintroduced the Community Living Assistance Services and Supports (CLASS) Act (S. 697 and H.R. 1721) on March 25. The bill would amend the Public Health Service Act to help individuals with functional impairments and their families pay for services and supports they need to maximize their functionality and independence. It would provide a new financing strategy and establish an infrastructure that will help address America's community living assistance services and supports needs and alleviate burdens on family caregivers. Voluntary payroll deductions would finance a national insurance program. Beneficiaries could purchase services that assist them with daily activities, such as bathing and eating, as well as tasks related to communicating, managing money, housekeeping and taking medications.

## Medicare Information for Caregivers Now Available on NIH Senior Health



If you're caring for an older friend or family member, you've probably had questions about Medicare, the federal health insurance program for adults 65 and older and people under age 65 with disabilities. While you may know that Medicare helps pay for medical and prescription drug costs, you may want to become more familiar with the Medicare benefits and resources available to your friend or loved one. An easy-to-read overview, "Medicare Basics for Caregivers," is now available at [NIHSeniorHealth.gov](http://NIHSeniorHealth.gov), the Web site for older adults from the National Institutes of Health. This brief, yet comprehensive introduction to Medicare gives caregivers the basics and helps them find answers to their questions.

The topic was developed with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services based on its booklet, Medicare Basics: A Guide for Families and Friends of People with Medicare. "Knowing how Medicare works can help a person make better financial decisions about care," says Dr. Marie Bernard, deputy director of the National Institute on Aging. "A caregiver who is knowledgeable about Medicare can be an informed advocate for an older loved one who needs to access the benefits the program provides. The new 'Medicare Basics for Caregivers' topic on [NIHSeniorHealth](http://NIHSeniorHealth.gov) is an excellent source of concise, easy-to-understand information that will benefit both caregivers and their loved ones."

Caregivers and others needing a general introduction to Medicare can visit <http://nihseniorhealth.gov/medicare/toc.html> to find out about medical and hospital benefits, enrollment, billing, prescription drug costs, home health care and much more.

Older Americans are increasingly turning to the Internet for health information. In fact, over 70 percent of online seniors look for health and medical information when they go on the Web. [NIHSeniorHealth \(www.nihseniorhealth.gov\)](http://www.nihseniorhealth.gov), which is based on the latest research on cognition and aging, is a joint effort of the National Institute on Aging (NIA) and the National Library of Medicine (NLM). The site features short, easy-to-read segments of information that can be accessed in a number of formats, including various large-print type sizes, open-captioned videos and an audio version. Additional topics coming soon to the site include dry eye, periodontal disease and long-term care.

## New Survey: Economic Conditions Taking Toll on Family Caregivers and Their Ability to Provide Care



A new study finds that during the past 12 months, almost 20 percent of caregivers report a decline in the quality of care their loved ones receive as a direct result of the recession, and 14 percent say the amount of care they have been able to provide for others during this time period has decreased. The survey is published by Evercare by UnitedHealthcare and the National Alliance for Caregiving.

The survey shows 43 percent of working caregivers have experienced workplace pay cuts or a reduction in work hours, and 15 percent have lost their jobs in the past year, adversely impacting their ability to continue caring for their loved one. Additionally, 51 percent of all caregivers surveyed are suffering from escalated stress over caregiving responsibilities as a result of the economic downturn, with half of working caregivers being less comfortable during the current economy asking for time away from work for caregiving duties. The potential impact is that care recipients will experience greater risk in their health and well-being during these challenging economic times. To view the entire study, visit: [www.caregiving.org](http://www.caregiving.org)

## Taking Care of Our Caregivers

From the Washington Post

Kathleen Sebelius

U.S. secretary of health and human services.

The May 10 Magazine article "Marilyn Daniel's Reward" was an inspiring story highlighting the dedication of caregivers -- both the paid workers and unpaid family members -- who help our disabled and elderly citizens. Long-term care, whether provided in homes, assisted-living residences or nursing homes, relies on dedicated people rendering hands-on assistance. Ms. Daniel and others like her are the backbone of our long-term care system.

Their compassion and work is invaluable to individuals, their families and our society.

The Department of Health and Human Services is deeply concerned about the needs of long-term care workers and maintaining an adequate and high-quality workforce. To this end, we are wrapping up the first national survey of home health aides (like Ms. Daniel) and recently completed one on nursing assistants. It is our goal to improve the attractiveness of caregiving jobs and reduce worker turnover. Ultimately, this will result in improvements in the quality of life and care of disabled and older Americans. This is critically important for our nation, given that \$232 billion is spent on long-term care annually and families all over the country are facing the difficult challenge of providing and finding the best care for their loved ones.

## 2009 Annual Respite Conference, Los Angeles CA

On September 24, 2009, The California Respite Association will host the 2009 National Respite Conference at the Pickwick Hotel and the Holiday Inn Media Center in Burbank, CA.

The conference is designed to share information about the Lifespan Respite Care Act and the need for respite services all across the country.

This July, Caregivers of New Jersey will be hosting the New Jersey Lifespan Respite Conference. Please stay tuned for more information!



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](mailto: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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