

The Family and Friends Newsletter

221 W Seminary Street
Richland Center, WI 53581

Volume II, Number VI
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Richland County Health and Human Services Adult Family Home Program

Richland County Health and Human Services currently has 16 certified adult family home sponsors providing support, supervision, and a home for one or two adults. Some adult family homes provide full-time services to their residents, while others are part-time caregivers who provide weekend respite services.

The people, who are involved as adult family home sponsors, are as varied as the people placed in their homes. A sponsor may be single or married, work outside the home or in the home, live in a single family house or an apartment, have other family members living at home or live alone. Experience isn't necessary, but caregiver, CNA, or nursing experience is helpful.

Those in need of adult family care may vary from someone who needs merely room and board to someone with physical disabilities, or Alzheimer's disease who needs a high degree of assistance. Families do receive stipends for providing adult family care, and the amount of the reimbursement reflects the level of assistance they provide to their resident.

Above all, the backbone of the program is the melding of families. People living in an adult family home become involved in that family's birthday parties, cookouts and family outings. But they still maintain ties with their natural families and friends as much as possible, visiting on holidays or weekends, going out to lunch together and attending family gatherings.

These households continue to provide a home to one or two individuals who otherwise might be placed in more restrictive or more costly facilities. By living with a carefully screened, certified and supervised family, they truly maintain a sense of being at "home".

We are always looking for those special families within our community who can offer that home-based care on either a full-time or part-time basis. If you want to know more about the Adult Family Home Program, call Dennis Behl @ (608) 647-6384.

Feeling Good About Yourself

Morning exercise is the best way to increase your energy for the day. Try to go for a brisk walk every morning for twenty minutes. You can listen to books on tape, self-help cassettes, or music while walking to help re-charge mentally, too.

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Reminder: Flu Season is Here!

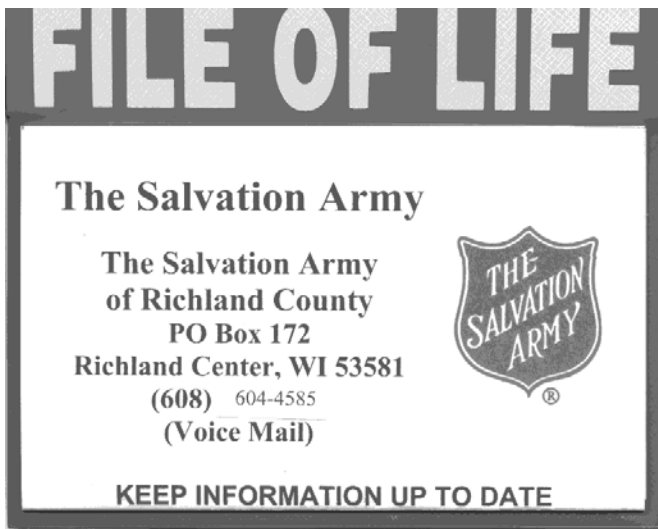
Be Sure to stop in at one of these flu clinics and get Immunized!

Tuesday, November 4th Boaz Community Center
1:30—3:30 p.m.

Wednesday, November 5th Richland Center Community Center
9:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m. and
1:00 p.m.—3:00 p.m.

For more details, see Page 8 of this newsletter!

File of Life Campaign



The local Salvation Army sponsors a File of Life Campaign, which started in 2001 with a generous donation from a local family. The idea of the file is to make it easier for us to keep track of our updated health care and emergency contact information.

The magnetic File of Life refrigerator holders can help you do just that. The holders contain a folded card with all of your updated information for each household member. The information includes:

- Name, Address, Social Security Number, Date of Birth
- Emergency Contact names and phone numbers
- Medical Data such as Doctor name, phone number, medical problems, medications and their dosage, allergies
- Insurance Information.

The wonderful thing about the File of Life is when there is a need to leave your home for medical appointments, emergencies, etc. your file can be easily retrieved by family, friends or medical personnel - and is an accurate file of health information.

The refrigerator magnets and file inserts are available through the Elderly Services unit of Richland County Health & Human Services. The Elderly Services office is located in the basement of the Richland County Courthouse at 181 W Seminary Street. If you currently have a refrigerator magnet and your file insert is outdated you may pick up a new insert or call 647-6226 to have one mailed.

2003 Resource Center Calendar Drawing Winner!!!

Congratulations to Ms. June Baker of Viola. She won the calendar drawing and has received a \$10.00 gift certificate to Country Kitchen.

Starting last Fall at the County Fair, The Richland County Health, Aging & Disability Resource Center began distributing approximately 500 calendars. Each month of the 2003 calendar provided information on a specific health topic, and listed a number of resources to get more information. The calendars also contained an entry form with a short survey attached. The purpose of the survey was to help us learn if the calendar and health information it provided had been helpful. The survey promised that those responding would be eligible for a drawing to receive a gift certificate to an area restaurant. We received many surveys with very informative comments. We wish to thank everyone who sent their survey/entry form in, and we will use these comments when we plan our future community activities.

USERS of MEDICAL SUPPLIES SHOULD WATCH for FRAUDULENT ADVERTISING and BILLING PRACTICES

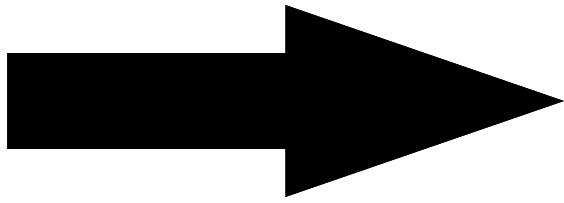
Beneficiaries who utilize medical supplies, such as blood glucose strips, should be aware of certain advertising and billing practices that are fraudulent.

Advertising incentives that indicate or imply a routine waiver of co-insurance or deductibles are considered to be illegal by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS), the federal agency that administers Medicare and Medicaid. Any supplier who routinely waives co-payments or deductibles can be criminally prosecuted and excluded from participating in Medicare and Medicaid.

Suppliers that dispense supplies and bill Medicare or Medicaid without the beneficiary ordering a refill are also engaging in illegal practices. Suppliers should not send supplies or bill for them unless a beneficiary specifically requests a refill.

If you see advertising that waives co-insurance or deductibles, or if Medicare/Medicaid is being billed on your behalf for supplies you did not order, please contact Elizabeth Conrad at the Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups, 1-800-488-2596, Ext 317.

Flu Vaccine: Facts & Myths



“People can die from the flu.” **TRUE**

Influenza (flu) is a highly infectious disease of the lungs, and it can lead to pneumonia. Each year about 114,000 people in the U.S. are hospitalized and about 36,000 people die because of the flu. Most who die are 65 years and older. But small children less than 2 years old are as likely as those over 65 to have to go to the hospital because of the flu.

An Old Lady's Poem

"See Me":

What do you see, nurses, what do you see?
What are you thinking when you're looking at me?

A crabby old woman, not very wise,
Uncertain of habit, with faraway eyes?
Who dribbles her food and makes no reply
When you say in a loud voice, "I do wish you'd try!"
Who seems not to notice the things that you do,
And forever is losing a stocking or shoe.....
Who, resisting or not, lets you do as you will,
With bathing and feeding, the long day to fill....
Is that what you're thinking? Is that what you see?
Then open your eyes, nurse, you're not looking at me.
I'll tell you who I am as I sit here so still,
As I do at your bidding, as I eat at your will.
I'm a small child of tenwith a father and mother,
Brothers and sisters, who love one another.
A young girl of sixteen, with wings on her feet,
Dreaming that soon now a lover she'll meet.
A bride soon at twenty -- my heart gives a leap,
Remembering the vows that I promised to keep.
Am twenty-five now, I have young of my own,
Who need me to guide and a secure happy home.
A woman of thirty, my young now grown fast,
Bound to each other with ties that should last.
At forty, my young sons have grown and are gone,
But my man's beside me to see I don't mourn.
At fifty once more, babies play round my knee,
Again we know children, my loved one and me.
Dark days are upon me, my husband is dead;
I look at the future, I shudder with dread.
For my young are all rearing young of their own,
And I think of the years and the love that I've known.
I'm now an old woman ...and nature is cruel;
'Tis jest to make old age look like a fool.
The body, it crumbles, grace and vigor depart,
There is now a stone where I once had a heart.
But inside this old carcass a young girl still dwells,
And now and again my battered heart swells.
I remember the joys, I remember the pain,
And I'm loving and living life over again.
I think of the yearsall too few, gone too fast,
And accept the stark fact that nothing can last.

So open your eyes, nurses, open and see,
Not a crabby old woman.... look closer....see ME!!

Remember this poem when you next meet an old
person who you might brush aside without looking
at the young soul within.....We will one day
be there, too!

“Even if I get flu vaccine, I can still get
a mild case of the flu.” **TRUE**

The vaccine usually protects most people from the flu. Sometimes a person who receives flu vaccine can get the flu but will be far less sick than without the vaccine. Flu vaccine will not protect you from other viruses that sometimes feel like the flu.

“The side effects are worse than the
flu.” **FALSE**

The worst side effect you're likely to get with injectable vaccine is a sore arm. The nasal mist flu vaccine might cause nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat and cough. The risk of a rare allergic reaction is far less than the risk of severe complications from influenza.

“Not everyone can take flu vaccine.”
TRUE

You might not be able to get this protection if you are allergic to eggs (used in making the vaccine), are very ill with a high fever, or have had a severe reaction to the flu vaccine in the past.

“Only older people need flu vaccine.”
FALSE

Adults and children with conditions like asthma, diabetes, heart disease, and kidney disease need to get flu vaccine. People who are active and healthy can benefit from the protection the flu vaccine offers.

“You must get a flu vaccine before December.” **FALSE**

Flu vaccine can be given before or during the flu season. While the best time to get a flu vaccine is October or November, getting immunized in December or later can still protect you against the flu.

**Richland County Energy Assistance
Application Information
2003-2004 Heating Season**

Winter will soon arrive in Southwest Wisconsin and for many households, home-heating costs will create an additional hardship for an already stretched household budget. Assistance is available for low-moderate income households Richland County, through the State funded Energy Assistance Program. In Richland County this program is operated by Southwest CAP.

The Energy Assistance program can help by providing a fuel credit to eligible households, which is applied to their overall fuel costs.

Eligibility for an Energy Assistance payment is primarily based on the previous three months total household income and the heating costs for the preceding year. The number of household members and number of rooms in the home are also taken into consideration to determine how much of a payment the household is eligible to receive.

Applications for Energy Assistance are taken by appointment only at the Southwest CAP office in Richland Center. The office is located in the Richland County Community Services Building, 221 West Seminary Street. Southwest CAP's telephone number is (608) 647-8821 extension 301. Families and individuals interested in applying for an Energy Assistance payment are encouraged to call Southwest CAP or stop by their office anytime during regular business hours to schedule an appointment.

For individuals who are confined to their homes, staff is able to complete an application over the phone or schedule an appointment to do a home visit to complete an application.

All applicants are required to verify all household income for the prior three months and home heating costs for the prior 12 months. Applicants will also need to present Social Security cards for all household members.

Households who make payments directly to their fuel supplier and heat with LP gas, natural gas, fuel oil, electricity, wood or other less traditional heat sources may receive a payment. Households where heat is included in their rent may receive a payment. Also, persons who live in subsidized housing and pay their own heat costs may receive a payment.

Maximum income limits for program eligibility are as follows:

Household Size	Gross Income Limit-3 months
1	\$ 3,367.50
2	4,545.00
3	5,722.50
4	6,900.00
5	8,077.50
6	9,255.00

For each additional person add: \$1,177.50

Households faced with the eminent loss of home heating, due to the refusal of a fuel vendor to deliver fuel or because of an inoperable furnace or heat source and who have sick, elderly or children in the household, can also contact Southwest CAP at (608) 647-8821 extension 301 for possible emergency assistance. Outside of normal business hours contact the Richland County Sheriff Department at 647-2106 (crisis assistance only).

**MEDICARE OPEN
ENROLLMENT...
MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICE**

Medicare beneficiaries are given a choice in their Medicare coverage. Under current rules those participating in traditional Medicare may enroll in a Medicare + Choice Plan at any time. Medicare+Choice plans provide an alternative to the traditional Medicare Part B coverage including HMO based plans and private fee for service plans. Medicare participants may receive information from Medicare or Medicare + Choice plans offering them the Medicare + Choice Option. Keep in mind that the choice to change is voluntary.

In order to make an informed decision about this choice; beneficiaries should carefully examine the Medicare+Choice plan's limitations, benefits and costs. This article discusses some issues to look for when considering an HMO based Medicare + Choice plan.

Limitations: First, when a beneficiary enrolls in a Medicare+Choice plan, he/she agrees to receive all of his/her Medicare services through a private managed care organization. This means that beneficiaries must obtain all services from providers in a pre-approved network of caregivers. As a result, he/she is limited in his/her choice of physicians, nursing homes, laboratories, ambulance providers and so on. If a referral is needed, the beneficiary's chosen primary care provider will refer the beneficiary to a specialist within the provider network.

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There are two exceptions to this limitation. First, in an emergency situation, a beneficiary can receive out of network emergency medical treatment. Second, a network provider can refer a beneficiary to an out-of-network provider. If neither of these two exceptions is met, the beneficiary will have to pay for all out of network services. This is because traditional Medicare will not pay (because you are not enrolled in this program) and your Medicare+Choice plan will not pay (because you failed to meet one of their exceptions).

Finally, the limitation on providers may pose a problem for beneficiaries who travel. To address this problem, some Medicare+Choice plans offer a travel rider that, for an additional monthly premium amount, allows beneficiaries to obtain out of network medical care that is paid for by the Medicare+ Choice plan.

Benefits: One of the biggest advantages to Medicare+Choice plan enrollment is that generally these plans cover many of the Part B co-insurance and co-payments. Under traditional Medicare, the beneficiary pays these costs directly or through a Medicare Supplemental Plan that has been purchased by the beneficiary. Therefore, in most cases, a Medicare+Choice enrollee does not need to purchase a Medicare Supplemental insurance policy.

Medicare+Choice policies also can elect to cover certain items that Medicare does not. For example, a Medicare+Choice plan may include coverage for preventative examinations, and eye and dental care. Keep in mind, however, that the Medicare+Choice plan can change its coverage policies on a yearly basis. Therefore, the benefits that are enticing upon enrollment may not be sustained through the course of your lifetime.

Costs: Medicare+Choice enrollees must continue to pay Medicare Part B premiums each month. In addition to these premiums, Medicare+Choice plans also charge a monthly premium to be enrolled in their plan. Carefully examine the Medicare+Choice policy for any co-payments, deductibles or frequency limitations. It is important for each beneficiary to determine what his/her out of pocket expenses will be as a Medicare+Choice enrollee. The costs will include the Part B premium, the Medicare+Choice premium and then the individual variable costs estimated by how often you seek medical care, the type of medical care you receive including inpatient, skilled nursing facility, outpatient, home health care, hospice and so on.

Generally, a Medicare beneficiary is entitled to enroll in a Medicare+Choice plan regardless of pre-existing medical conditions; in other words, unlike private insurance, there is no medical underwriting for these plans. However, those with End Stage Renal Disease are not eligible to enroll in Medicare +Choice plans.

Importantly, this decision about the “right” Medicare coverage is an individual one and the option to enroll in a Medicare+Choice plan is strictly voluntary. For more information about Medicare benefits or for assistance in weighing limitations, benefits and costs of Medicare+Choice plans in relation to your health care needs, please contact your Benefit Specialist, Joanne Welsh at 647-6226.

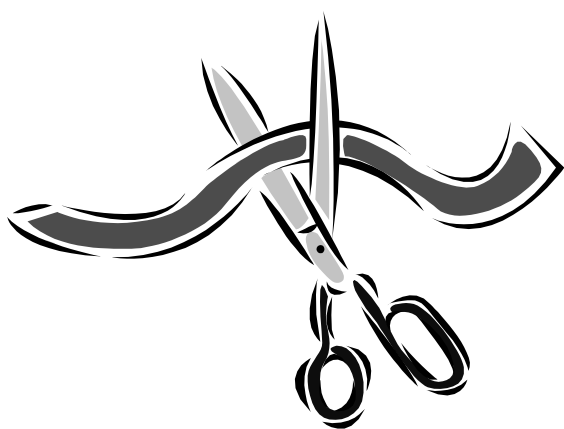


FREE Blood Pressure Clinics

Blood pressure clinics will also be held throughout the County at the nutrition sites at 11:30 a.m. on the following dates:

Gotham	November 11	December 9
Richland Hills	November 14	December 12
Viola	November 18	December 16
Boaz – Karen’s Supper Club	November 19	December 17

For more information on the nutrition site blood pressure clinics, contact Beth Lange at 608-647-4616.



“Red Tape Cutter” Pages

Each issue of your newsletter will dedicate a few pages with ways to get the most out of your benefits.

Presented by your local Elderly Benefit Specialist—
Joanne Welsh with the Richland County Health & Human
Services—Elderly Services Unit.

Help With Medicare Questions

By: Bruce W. Schultz
Social Security Public Affairs Specialist



The more than 750,000 people receiving Medicare in Wisconsin can get answers to their questions quickly by calling the Medicare Helpline.

Medicare’s goal is to get the information their customers need quickly and easily. The helpline can make a difference in how well people are able to use their Medicare coverage.

Representatives on the Medicare Helpline are available from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. The toll-free number is: 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227), or TTY/TDD 1-877-486-2048 for people who have a hearing impairment.

According to Medicare, you may call the Medicare Helpline for questions about:

- Services that are covered under Medicare Part A (Hospital Insurance) and Medicare Part B (Medical Insurance).
- Medicare health plan choices in your area including cost, benefits, quality, and other information.
- Medicare patients’ rights and appeals procedures.
- Nursing homes in your area.
- Medicare bills and service.
- Fraud and abuse.
- Medigap policies.
- Medicare events and activities in your area
- Long term insurance.
- Programs for low-income beneficiaries that help pay Medicare costs.
- Ordering Medicare booklets (available in English, Spanish, audio tape, large print and Braille).

For questions about Social Security matters, you can use Social Security’s Inter-

net website at www.socialsecurity.gov, or call Social Security Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. to speak to a representative. The toll-free number is 1-800-772-1213, or TTY 1-800-325-0778 for the hearing impaired.

Another excellent source of help with Medicare problems is your County Benefit Specialist Joanne Welsh who constantly receives up-to-date training on Medicare procedures and forms and can be reached at 647-6226.

Some Tips on Resolving Utility Complaints

When a problem arises with your utility bill, it can be a frustrating or even frightening experience. The following information is designed to help you resolve the problem in your favor.

The first step with any utility complaint is to assemble the bills in question, along with any related correspondence. The likelihood of an expeditious resolution of your problem will be measurably increased with the proper documentation in hand. Once the necessary documents have been assembled, spend some time thinking about what you would find to be an acceptable resolution to the problem. For example, do you agree with the charges but would like more time to pay or do you believe you should be responsible for only a portion of the charges? At this stage, it is important to recognize that you continue to be responsible for charges that are not in dispute and should not attempt to “get even” by not paying legitimate charges.

Your first call should be to the utility’s customer service department. Explain your problem to the customer service representative in a calm and business like manner and suggest what you believe to be the appropriate solution. The customer service representative may be able to solve your problem on the spot or may

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need some time to investigate. If the utility does not solve the problem in a prompt or satisfactory manner, you may file a complaint with the appropriate agency listed below. For example, when you file a complaint with the Public Service Commission (PSC), a consumer affairs specialist will investigate the complaint and try to reach a solution acceptable to both parties. While the complaint is under investigation by the PSC, the utility may not disconnect your service but you remain responsible for on-time payment of all charges not in dispute.

The Public Service Commission (PSC) regulates Wisconsin's electric, natural gas, telephone and water utilities. The PSC is headquartered in Madison and can be reached at 1-800-225-7729 or on the web at www.psc.state.wi.us.

For consumer assistance with an electric cooperative, contact the Wisconsin Electric Cooperative Association in Madison at 608-258-4400.

When problems arise with cable TV, the service complaint should be directed to the municipal cable TV board.

Complaints about propane and fuel oil providers should be directed to the Department of Justice Office of Consumer protection at 608-266-1852.

If you would like assistance with a utility related problem, contact your local benefit specialist, Joanne Welsh at Richland County Health & Human Services – Elderly Services at 647-6226.

Wisconsin Legal Assistance Benefit Specialist Program Fact Sheet

The need for benefits counseling and legal advisors for Wisconsin's older population is growing.

As the number of older people in Wisconsin continues to grow, the need for competent, professional and accessible benefits advice becomes increasingly important. In addition to population growth, new programs such as Senior Care and Medicare managed care have dramatically increased the demand for benefit specialist services.

The monetary benefits that the Benefit Specialist/Legal Assistance Program obtains for clients far surpass the cost of the program.

For every dollar spent on the Benefit Specialist/Legal Assistance Program, approximately six dollars are returned in additional benefits, insurance payments and other reimbursements to Wisconsin residents. For every one million dollars invested, six million dollars are returned. In 2001 the monetary benefit for clients in Wisconsin was approximately \$20,000,000. Most of this monetary benefit is in the form of federal benefits under Social Security, Medicare and Veterans Affairs. This is significant in a state that traditionally ranks at the bottom on receiving federal funds.

Wisconsin has a very successful and nationally renowned elderly benefits and legal assistance program.

Since the Wisconsin Benefit Specialist/Legal Assistance Program began in 1987, more than 400,000 older Wisconsin residents have been served. Several other states have indicated an interest in replicating the Wisconsin model. Recently, the Journal of the National Council on the Aging showcased the Wisconsin Benefit Specialist/Legal Assistance Program as a model of a highly successful legal assistance program for older adults.

The Wisconsin Benefit Specialist/Legal Assistance Program is unique in its approach to providing legal assistance to older people.

The combination of local benefit counselors who solve problems at the local level by working with others who are familiar with the community and its resources, and strong legal advocacy, training and technical support by a team of specialized elder law attorneys highly experienced in public benefits, creates a comprehensive legal assistance program.

The Wisconsin Benefit Specialist/Legal Assistance Program serves many low-income, minority and older, frail individuals who would otherwise not have the resources or access to benefits assistance.

Of 32,000 clients served in 2000, 74% were individuals over the age of 70, 34% were individuals over the age of 80, and 51% were at or below 125% of the federal poverty level (\$10,738 single, \$14,513 couple).

No Wonder Feet Hurt! - The average person, doing non-strenuous activity, walks approximately 8000 steps every day, or about 115,000 miles in a lifetime.

To maintain healthy feet for the person in your care:

- Provide properly fitting low-heeled shoes with Velcro® or elastic closures and non-slip soles.
- Avoid shoes with heavy soles, running shoes with rubber tips over the toes, and shoes with thick cushioning which can make an older person fall.
- Provide cotton or wool socks that "breathe" rather than acrylic which gathers moisture.
- Avoid tight stockings that leave indentations when you take them off.
- Trim the person's nails after a bath when they have softened.
- Use a disposable sponge-tipped tooth brush to clean or dry between the toes.

From The American Podiatric Medical Association

Influenza and Pneumonia Immunizations

Influenza and pneumonia vaccines will be available in Richland County through the Richland County Health & Human Services Public Health at the following locations at the specified dates and times:

Tuesday, November 4th	Boaz Community Center	1:30—3:30 p.m.
Wednesday, November 5th	Richland Center Community Center	9:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m. 1:00 p.m.—3:00 p.m.

An annual flu shot is recommended for:

- Everyone 50 years of age or older—even if you're in great health!
- Residents of long-term care facilities housing persons with chronic medical conditions.
- Anyone with a long-term health problem such as heart, lung or kidney disease, asthma, metabolic disease such as diabetes, or anemia and other blood disorders.
- Anyone with a weakened immune system (HIV/AIDS or on Cancer drugs).
- Anyone aged 6 months to 18 years on long term aspirin therapy.
- Pregnant women who will be past the 3rd month of pregnancy during flu season (usually—November—March).
- Healthcare workers or anyone in close contact with people at risk of serious illness.

Talk with your healthcare provider before getting a flu shot if you:

- Ever had a serious allergic reaction to eggs or to a previous dose of influenza vaccine.
- Have a history of Guillain-Barre Syndrome.

Influenza vaccine is \$15.00.

Pneumonia vaccine is \$22.00.

Influenza and pneumonia vaccines are reimbursable by Medicare Part B. People with Medicare Part B will be required to present their Medicare card at the clinic and will not have to pay for the vaccines.

Please call Richland County Health and Human Services Public Health at 647-8821 with any questions.

Do you have a friend who cannot read this newsletter because of poor eyesight?

This newsletter is available on cassette tape and may be borrowed from the Elderly Services Unit.

**For more information, call
608-647-6226**

This newsletter is prepared and submitted six times yearly to the residents of Richland County by Health and Human Services in an effort to provide up-to-date and useful information on the programs and services available through our units.

Editor is Patrick Metz.

NOTICE: Health and Human Services does not support or endorse all the advertisers listed in the Classified Section.

All questions regarding this newsletter should be addressed to:
Patrick Metz, Elderly Services Supervisor
181 W Seminary Street
Richland Center, WI 53581
(608) 647-6226
metzp@co.richland.wi.us

Taking Care of Yourself

Do Something Just for You.

Bath time can be the most relaxing time of day.

A warm (not hot) bath for yourself before bed can help you to fall asleep more easily.

Consider a treat of a warm bath with bubbles or bath salts and a

magazine at the end of a long day.



SELF ADVOCACY FOR FAMILY CAREGIVERS

By Suzanne Geffen Mintz
President/Co-founder, National Family Caregivers Association

What does it mean to be a happy person when you are a family caregiver? How do you stand up for yourself, take care of yourself and find a balance between your own needs and those of your loved ones? These are heady questions, and ones that we have discussed often at the National Family Caregivers Association (NFCA) because they are at the core of our search for meaning and our need to have a code to live by as caregivers.

We've now given form to the many ideas we have discussed, and I want to share them with you. We call them NFCA's Principles of Caregiver Self-Advocacy. They are the fundamental tenets by which we now try to live, and we hope you too will use them as guideposts, as you seek to come to terms with your life as a family caregiver.

We caregivers often feel like victims, as if all choice has been taken away from us. We often ask: Why did my spouse\parent\child get sick, have an accident? Why did this happen to our family? Why did it happen to me? We so often feel out of control.

Having a sense of control, or choice, is a relative thing and depends as much on our attitude as it does on our circumstances. As long as you are alive and mentally competent, you have the freedom to choose. You may not be able to control the course of a disease or the effects of an injury, but you can control how you live with it. You can let it take over your life, or you can let your life progress and incorporate your loved one's disability into it. You may not have all of the choices you once did, or you may have to

make choices now that you don't like, but if you recognize that you do have the power to choose, and you consciously act on those choices, you won't feel quite as much like a victim any more. **CHOOSE TO TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR LIFE** is the first of NFCA's principals of caregiver self-advocacy.

The second principal is **HONOR, VALUE AND LOVE YOURSELF**. If you are like most caregivers, you are probably worn out and are questioning yourself all the time, but don't for a minute doubt how good a job you're doing. You're doing a great job! And you owe it to yourself to take very good care of yourself, to love yourself.

Are you familiar with the safety message that airline stewardesses give during take off? "If the cabin loses pressure, an oxygen mask will drop down from the bulkhead. If you are traveling with a small child, or someone else that needs assistance, put your own mask on first."

They are right. You can't help someone else if you are gasping for air, but that's what caregivers are always trying to do. You can't give and give without renewing your energy. We fill our cars up with gas when they are on empty. Can't we be at least as good to ourselves? After all, we're worth it!

Are you aware that over 76% of the family caregivers that responded to an NFCA survey last year don't get consistent help from other family members? Perhaps part of the reason is because we don't ask for it, or don't accept it when it is offered. There is nothing wrong in asking for, or accepting, help. There is no reason to martyr yourself.

SEEK/ACCEPT AND AT TIMES DEMAND ASSISTANCE from others to lighten your load. That's NFCA's third principle of caregiver self advocacy. You have a right to ask for help, and you have a right to be angry when you

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don't get any. Don't be afraid to stand up for yourself. It might actually make you feel good.

Often friends want to help, but they don't know how. We've all heard people say: "Call me if you need me," and it doesn't sound like they mean it, but what do you have to lose by finding out? The worst thing anybody can do is say no. In fact those people who do want to help sometimes need a concrete suggestion on how they can benefit you the most. The next time someone says: "Call me if you need me", try responding "I need you right now. Would you be willing to stay with Jack while I go get a haircut on Saturday morning?"

The last, and perhaps most valuable part of NFCA's Principles of Caregiver Self Advocacy is the strength that comes from knowing you are not alone, and the belief that there is power in numbers. Caregivers represent more than 10% of the adult population of this country. Nobody knows exactly how many family caregivers there actually are, but estimates suggest that there are more than 25 million. We are everywhere, but we are invisible.

At NFCA, we believe there needs to be a caregivers' movement in this country, a movement to gain recognition for caregivers, to broaden services, to educate caregivers and to provide us with more support. There is a wonderful feeling of empowerment that comes from standing up for yourself. There is a wonderful feeling of empowerment that comes from recognizing your own worth, from knowing you are not alone, and that millions of others share your same concerns and feelings.

Family caregivers can be a powerful force for change in their own lives, and in the lives of their loved ones, if they are willing to be their own advocates. **STAND UP AND BE COUNTED**, that is NFCA's fourth principle of caregiver self advocacy.

We hope you will use these principles to take control of your life, to honor, value and love yourself, and to find the help you need. Together we can gain recognition and benefits for ourselves and for all caregivers across this great land. Stand up and be counted. It will make you feel great.



The National Family Caregivers Association is a not-for-profit membership organization reaching out to all family caregivers regardless of relationship or their loved one's medical condition. For information on the National Family Caregivers Association call, 800/ 896-3650 or visit our website at www.nfcacares.org

Bathing and Foot Care

Attention to the Basics Matters

Baths and showers clean, stimulate and increase circulation in the skin. They can also dry skin, and in some instances, cause chapping.

How often a bath or shower is needed depends on the situation of the person in your care. If urinary incontinence, bowel problems, and heavy perspiration are present, a daily bath may be in order. If none of these are present, then bathing 2-3 times a week might be enough.

If baths are given often and the skin is dry, use soap and water one time, and lotion and water the next. Bed baths are needed for people who are bedridden.

Preparation for Bathing

1. Make sure the room is warm.
2. Gather supplies: latex gloves, mild soap, washcloth, wash basin (for bed bath), lotion, comb, electric razor, shampoo, towels, and clean clothes.
3. Use good body mechanics—keep your feet separated, stand firmly, bend your knees, and keep your back in neutral.
4. Turn on the water and make sure it is the correct temperature.

Bathing Tips

- To avoid spreading germs, always wash your own hands before and after giving a bath.
- Be aware that people with Alzheimer's are often afraid of water.
- Tell the person that you will be bathing him, and ask for as much help as possible. At each step, tell the person what you are about to do.
- Use special equipment such as a bath lift, a bath board, or a bath seat if needed.
- Always wash from the cleanest to the dirtiest area.

Tip

Use bath time to examine the whole body for bedsores, edema, rash, moles, and other unusual conditions.

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Foot Care and Diabetes

Special care of the feet is especially important for a person with diabetes because nerve damage (neuropathy) can lead to foot infections. Without nerves to warn the brain of trauma to the foot, the tissue breaks down and can lead to severe infections. Be sure it is mentioned to the doctor if a sore develops on the foot which can lead to serious complications that could even result in the amputation of a toe or foot.



Note:

If the person in your care has diabetes, Medicare may pay for some of the cost of therapeutic shoes. Check with your doctor to see if you qualify for the form that certifies you have diabetes and need special shoes.

Take Charge of Your Health

Some of the causes of nerve damage in diabetes can be influenced by:

- Smoking.
- Drinking too much alcohol.
- High blood pressure and high cholesterol.

Basic Foot Care

Set up a routine at the same time each day to remember to care for the person's feet. Look for any changes in nails, cuts, red spots, itching or rash, blisters, corns, calluses, swelling, or any change in the color or shape of the feet and nails.

At the Doctor's Office

Have feet checked at least once per year. Make a habit of taking shoes off at the doctor's so you remember to have the feet checked. Tell the doctor about any changes in the feet.

Foot Care Tips:

- Throw away old shoes, which may have germs and fungus.
- Shop for shoes at the end of the day when feet are most swollen.
- Use cream on the feet (but never between the toes) to keep skin from drying out and cracking.
- See a podiatrist for care of corns and calluses.

Preventing Falls

Foot pain can cause a person to lean back on his or her heels and increase the chance of a fall, so keep toenails trimmed and feet healthy. Toenails should be trimmed straight across.

Consumers and Medicare Beneficiaries Beware! A New Scam

The scenario with the **Wisconsin** supplier: a Medicare beneficiary receives a telephone call from a salesperson representing a durable medical equipment supplier. The salesperson asks the Medicare beneficiary if he or she "needs a wheelchair or do you know anyone who does?" After saying "maybe" or "yes," the Medicare beneficiary is put in contact with a salesperson who comes to the beneficiary's home, gets his or her Medicare number and then sends the information to the beneficiary's physician obtaining permission to authorize the purchase of a durable medical equipment item.

The Medicare beneficiary is reassured that Medicare will cover most of the cost of the equipment and, in some cases, the beneficiary is told he or she won't have to pay any out-of-pocket costs. The salesperson may also tell the Medicare beneficiary if Medicare doesn't approve the entire amount, the durable medical equipment supplier may be willing to write off the remaining balance, essentially reassuring the beneficiary that the item is free!

A similar scenario with a **Texas** Supplier: a Medicare beneficiary is contacted by a salesperson and is asked if he or she needs any medical equipment. The salesperson tells the beneficiary that he or she is calling Medicare beneficiaries between the ages of 60 and 80 years of age and obtained their names and Medicare numbers off the Internet! The rest of the story is similar to the one described above. **Buyer Beware!**

What Should You Do If Someone Approaches You With A Similar Scenario?

- Alert your local Police and Sheriff's Departments
- Alert your County Benefit Specialist
- Fill out a Consumer Complaint form

Please **continue** to fill out a **Consumer Complaint** form, attach any relevant documents and mail everything to The Bureau of Consumer Protection at the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. You can download the form by accessing the web site <http://datcp.state.wi.us>.

November 2003

Occasionally, it is necessary to make changes in the menus. All meals are served with bread and milk. Please call the meal site for reservations at least one day in advance.

3 Baked Fish, Potato Wedges, Corn, Whole Wheat Bread, Mixed Fruit	4 Baked Ham, Sweet Potatoes, Cabbage Salad, Whole Grain Bread, Pineapple Upside Down Cake with Topping	5 Baked Chicken, Mashed Potatoes/Gravy, Peas, Whole Grain Bread, Pumpkin Bar	6 Pork Chop, Au gratin Potatoes, Carrots, Whole Grain Bread, Applesauce Gelatin	7 <u>COOK'S CHOICE</u>
10 Kielbasa, Macaroni & Cheese, Italian Mix Vegetables, Whole Grain Bread, Peaches	11 Cider Beef Stew with Vegetables, Baking Powder Biscuit, 7-Layer Salad, Cook's Choice Dessert	12 Harvest Pork Roast with Potatoes, Squash & Carrots, Coleslaw, Whole Grain Bread, Frosted Spice Cake	13 Beef Stroganoff, Buttered Noodles, California Blend Vegetables, Dinner Roll, Lime Jell-O with Pears and Topping	14 Autumn Chicken, Hash Brown Casserole, Green Beans, Whole Grain Bread, Graham Cracker Pudding Torte
17 Salmon Loaf, Potatoes, Creamed Peas, Whole Grain Bread, Apricots	18 Chili, Corn Bread/Honey, Cottage Cheese/Pineapple, Butterscotch Apple Treat	19 Roast Turkey, Mashed Potatoes, Gravy, Stuffing, Squash, Cranberry Relish, Dinner Roll, Pumpkin Pie/Torte	20 Hamburger/Bun/ Cheese/Onion/ Pickle, Calico Beans, Potato Wedges, Brownie	21 Bar-B-Q Ribs, Baked Potato/Sour Cream, Carrot Raisin Salad, Whole Grain Bread, Fresh Fruit
24 <u>COOK'S CHOICE</u>	25 Chicken Italian Pasta Bake, Tossed Salad, Soft Bread Sticks, Mixed Fruit Cup	26 Swiss Steak, Mashed Potatoes/Gravy, Corn, Whole Grain Bread, Apple Cake with Topping	27 <u>Sites Closed</u> <u>HAPPY THANKSGIVING</u>	28 <u>SITES CLOSED</u>

Richland County Health & Human Services Elderly Services—Nutrition Program

For information (or reservations) about the Nutrition Program, please call:

Germantown - Judy Thompson @ 983-2786 @ 11:45 pm **Gotham** - Tina Shaw @ 583-2763 @ 12:00 pm

Richland Hills - Chris Young @ 647-2323 @ 11:45 am **Viola** - Linda Walker @ 627-1869 @ 11:30 am

Boaz - **Karen's Supper Club** - Serve on Wednesdays ONLY at 11:30 am - 536-3792

Hub City - **Home Plate** - Serve on Thursdays ONLY at 12:00 pm - 647-6566

December 2003

Occasionally, it is necessary to make changes in the menus. All meals are served with bread and milk. Please call the meal site for reservations at least one day in advance.

1 <u>Cook's Choice</u>	2 Meat Loaf, Baked Potatoes & Sour Cream, Stewed Tomatoes, Whole Grain Bread, Pears	3 Roast Beef, Mashed Potatoes/ Gravy, Beets, Whole Grain Bread, Fruited Jell-O with Topping	4 Turkey Tetrazini, Cheese Bread, Peas, Tossed Salad, Apple Crisp	5 Pork Cutlet, Cheesy Au gratin Potatoes, Cabbage Salad, Whole Grain Bread, Molasses Cookie
8 Baked Cod, Baked Potato & Sour Cream, Carrots/Peas, Whole Grain Bread, Peaches	9 Chicken ala King, Baking Powder Biscuit, Mixed Vegetables, Cottage Cheese w/Pineapple Twist, Sugar Cookie	10 Spaghetti & Meat Sauce, Tossed Salad, Soft Bread Sticks, Fruit Crisp	11 Roast Pork, Au gratin Potatoes, Squash, Whole Grain Bread, Applesauce Gelatin	12 Salisbury Steak, Mashed Potatoes & Gravy, Corn, Whole Grain Bread, Toll House Bar
15 Ham, Sweet Potatoes, Italian Blend Vegetables, Whole Grain Bread, Pineapple	16 Round Steak Stroganoff, Buttered Noodles, Broccoli, Whole Grain Bread, Banana Pudding with Banana Slices	17 Ruby Glazed Chicken, Baked Potato/Sour Cream, Green Beans, Whole Grain Bread, Christmas Cookie	18 Beef Pot Roast/ Potatoes/ Carrots/Celery, Cabbage Salad, Whole Grain Bread, Gingerbread Cake	19 Pork Chop & Sauerkraut, Potatoes, Apple Salad, Striped Delight Torte
22 Oven Fried Fish, Baked Potato & Sour Cream, California Blend Vegetables, Whole Grain Bread, Mixed Fruit Cup	23 Swiss Steak, Mashed Potatoes & Gravy, Corn, Whole Grain Bread, Cherry Cheesecake	24 <u>Sites Closed</u>	25 <u>Sites Closed</u> <u>Happy Holidays</u>	26 <u>Cook's Choice</u>
29 Bar-B-Q Chicken, Baked Potato & Sour Cream, Squash, Whole Grain Bread, Applesauce	30 Beef Stew/ Vegetables, Baking Powder Biscuit with Honey, Cabbage Salad, Carrot Cake	31 Lasagna, Cheese Bread, Tossed Salad, Juice, Peaches	Jan. 1 <u>Sites Closed</u> <u>Happy New Year</u>	2 <u>Cook's Choice</u>