

The Elder Edition

A Quarterly Newsletter From Elder Services of Worcester Area, Inc.

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Summer 2010

ESWA Strives To Empower Consumers

For the past 36 years, Elder Services of Worcester Area (ESWA) has put the consumer at the center of all decision-making regarding programs, services, and new initiatives. ESWA is building upon this core value and strengthening our ability to empower consumers to direct their own care.

Much of this activity is occurring through the Central Mass Aging and Disability Resource Consortium (ADRC), a collaborative agreement between ESWA, Central Massachusetts Agency on Aging, Center for Living and Working (CLW), Montachusett Home Care, and Tri-Valley, Inc. The goal of ADRC is to create a “no wrong door” approach to those in need of long-term care supports by providing a seamless, coordinated system of information and access to services. Staff from all Central Mass ADRC agencies meet regularly to share program information and collaborate on supporting consumer choice of setting and services. CLW, ESWA, Montachusett Home Care, and Tri-Valley, Inc. also manage the Personal Care Attendant Program, which allows consumers with Mass Health to hire and manage their own direct care workers. Further, ESWA, Montachusett Home Care, and Tri-Valley, Inc. offer Consumer Directed Care services for eligible consumers who are not Mass Health recipients.

Additionally, ESWA is moving forward with efforts to educate consumers and empower them to take control of their health. We are working with UMass Memorial Health Care geriatricians to identify patients who would benefit from participating in ‘My Life, My Health’, a chronic disease self-management program, and “A Matter of Balance”, a falls prevention program. Both trainings will be conducted by ESWA staff and take place in the fall. ESWA has recently had three staff members trained by Eric Coleman, a national expert on Care Transitions Intervention. Two of these staff members will act as Transitions Coaches to patients leaving the hospital to help them learn self-management skills needed to assert a more active role in their care. This intervention is centered around medication self-management, a patient managed Personal Health Record, understanding follow-up care, and red flags that indicate that a condition may be worsening.

ESWA looks forward to developing partnerships and sharing expertise to offer programs and services for consumers in Central Massachusetts. ESWA also continues to actively seek out new and creative ways to meet the needs of those with chronic conditions who need support.



ELDER SERVICES

OF WORCESTER AREA, INC.

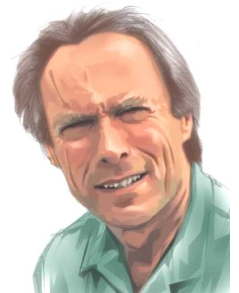
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Serving the following Communities*

Auburn, Barre, Boylston,
Grafton, Hardwick, Holden,
Leicester, Millbury, New Brain-
tree, Oakham, Paxton, Rutland,
Shrewsbury, West Boylston and
Worcester



“As we grow older, we must discipline ourselves to continue expanding, broadening, learning, keeping our minds active and open.”

Clint Eastwood
80 years old

*Protective Services Program also serves: Hudson, Marlborough, Northborough, Southborough and Westborough

Before Leaving The Hospital...

The federal government has prepared a “Discharge Planning Checklist” to help patients and families ask the right questions when they’re leaving a hospital or nursing home. One national Medicare study found that nearly one in five hospital admissions resulted in readmissions within 30 days of discharge. People who are readmitted tend to be older and have a multitude of chronic illnesses. High readmission rates for people with chronic illness may be due to such factors as inadequate information by hospital discharge planners to patients, caregivers, and post-hospital providers; poor patient compliance with their care plan; insufficient reliance on family caregivers; the worsening of a patient’s clinical condition; and medical errors. It’s important to know what kind of medical and support care you are going to need when you return home. You and your caregivers should be treated as part of the discharge planning team. Keep asking questions until you get answers that make sense to you.

The “Discharge Checklist” is divided into 4 sections:

- **What’s Ahead?** Where will I get care after discharge (be sure you tell the staff what you prefer)? What family member or friend will be helping me after discharge (write down their name and phone number)?
- **My Condition.** What is my health condition, and what can I do to help myself get better? Write down a list of all your prescriptions, over-the-counter drugs, and vitamins. Tell the hospital staff what drugs you took before you were admitted. Ask what each drug is for.
- **Recovery and Support.** Will I need medical equipment (who will arrange for this)? Will I need help with bathing, dressing, using the toilet, climbing stairs, cooking, shopping, house cleaning, paying bills, getting to doctor appointments, picking up prescriptions? What other tasks will require special skills, like changing a bandage or giving a shot (can I be trained for this)? Is there a counselor/support group in my area for people who are coping with my illness? What help can I get in paying for the care I need, who can I talk to about insurance coverage, and how much will I have to pay? Can I get written discharge instructions and a summary of my health status? Can you write down any appointments or tests I need in the next few weeks?
- **For Caregivers.** What questions do you have about items on this list? What items on this list can you help me with? Can you get my prescriptions/diet needs early so we don’t have to make extra trips after discharge?

If you feel you are being rushed out of the hospital too soon, ask the staff for your “notice of non coverage,” and once you have that, call 1-800-252-5533 to make an appeal with the Mass PRO.

Who We Are, What We Do

ESWA’s Mission: To maximize the independence and self-determination of elders with services which will enable them to live in their own homes, preventing or postponing the need for institutional care. *(The agency and its programs are funded in whole or in part by contracts with or grants from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Elder Affairs. It also receives Federal financial support under the Older Americans Act provided by the Central Massachusetts Agency on Aging. Funders also include United Way of Central Massachusetts, City of Worcester’s Department of Health & Human Services, Elder Affairs Commission Division, local Councils on Aging, participant donations, grants and individual support.)*

<p>Compliments of John Binienda State Representative 17th Worcester District</p>	<p>Compliments of Lew Evangelidis State Representative 1st Worcester District</p>	<p>Compliments of John Fresolo State Representative 16th Worcester District</p>	<p>Compliments of Jim O’Day State Representative 14th Worcester District</p>
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NEWS FROM SHINE JUNE 2010

Medicare Fraud and Abuse

Whenever you receive a payment notice from Medicare, review it for errors. The payment notice shows what Medicare was billed, what Medicare paid, and what you owe. Make sure Medicare was not billed for health care services or medical supplies and equipment you did not receive. If you have a question or concern regarding a Medicare claim, you should discuss it directly with your physician, provider, or supplier that provided the service.

Tips to prevent fraud and abuse:

- Don't ever give out your Medicare Health Insurance Claim # except to your doctor or other Medicare provider.
- Don't let anyone except appropriate medical professionals review your medical records or recommend services.
- Don't contact your physician to request a service that you do not need.
- Do be careful in accepting Medicare services that are represented as being free.
- Do be cautious when you are offered free testing or screening in exchange for your Medicare card number.
- Do be skeptical of providers who maintain they have been endorsed by the Federal government or Medicare.

Do avoid accepting health care items/services from a provider who tells you that the item or service is not usually covered, but they know how to bill Medicare to get it paid. **You can access the monthly SHINE chat line, sponsored by the Central Massachusetts Agency Aging, on the second Tuesday of each month. To attend the SHINE Session, go to www.SeniorConnection.org and click on Connection for Caregiver button. Then click on the Support Groups and Chats button. Create a username and password, log in and click on SHINE. If you need help on any aspect of your health insurance, SHINE offers free counseling at your local Senior Center or Council on Aging, simply call and ask for a SHINE appointment by phone at 1-800-AGE-INFO (1-800-243-4636).**

ElderCare 2010

“Living Long by Aging Strong” was the slogan for ElderCare 2010, which was held at the Manor Restaurant in West Boylston on May 11th, 2010. The event was attended by hundreds of seniors and caregivers who enjoyed the raffles, refreshments and free seminars. Over 60 exhibiting companies specializing in long-term care services and products for the senior population were on hand to answer questions and distribute information about their programs. ESWA staff presented two informative seminars entitled “My Life, My Health” and “Getting Your Loved One To Say YES To Help.” Cosponsoring the event along with ESWA were the Central Massachusetts Agency on Aging, Family Services of Central Massachusetts, Elder Disability and Law Advocates, Fallon Community Health Plan, Vitality Magazine, Fallon Clinic, and UMass Memorial Health Care.



Information & Referral Specialist Nikki Berthiaume answering questions for seniors at the ESWA table during ElderCare 2010.

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Foreign/Domestic · Body Work ·
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*Located across from ESWA

Politics Aside...

an Elder Edition interview with the Vice Chair of the Committee on Elder Affairs

What are the most pressing issues currently facing seniors in the Commonwealth? Health care and residential care are two crucial issues facing our seniors today. The costs of just about everything related to health care have skyrocketed over the years, while the incomes of our seniors have not. Those living on fixed incomes, dependent on pensions or Social Security, are finding it increasingly difficult to cope with prescription drug costs that are sometimes hundreds of dollars per month. Additionally, learning that one's health insurance won't cover a particular procedure can be financially crippling. We have to ensure that we protect elderly residents from dramatic cost increases that are not matched by any increase in their incomes.

Could you explain Senate Bill 890 (an Act regarding patient safety), of which you are a cosponsor? S-890 attempts to address the issue of nurses being made to care for too many patients, in a manner that overburdens the nurse and is unsafe for the patient. The bill establishes a Nursing Advisory Board, which will consist of 8 members representing long-term institutional care, acute care, community-based care, public health, school care, and higher education. Members will be appointed by the Governor based on recommendations from the board of registration in nursing and the Massachusetts Center for Nursing. The Nursing Advisory Board will advise the governor and the general court on matters related to the practice of nursing, including the shortage of nurses across Massachusetts in all settings and services; develop a research agenda, apply for federal and private research grants, and commission and fund research projects to fulfill the agenda; and recommend policy initiatives to the governor and the general court. The bill also directs of the Board of Higher Education to establish a student loan repayment program and a faculty position payment program, to encourage students to work in the profession of nursing or for existing nurses to teach nursing within the commonwealth. The board will also be directed to provide grants to institutions of higher education and health care institutions in the commonwealth to foster partnerships between higher education institutions and clinical agencies that promote the recruitment/retention of nurses.

Before becoming a legislator you worked in law enforcement. Were there any programs that you worked on that specifically involved protecting seniors? As Deputy Superintendent at the Worcester County House of Corrections, I oversaw the office's TRIAD program, which was aimed at providing essential safety tools to senior citizens, including File for Life. I also set up and oversaw a health expo aimed at seniors. As such, senior safety was a focus of my position there.



*Senator Michael Moore
2nd Worcester District*

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United Way of
Central Massachusetts



