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ELDERCARE RESOURCE SERVICES



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"HELPING YOU HELP YOUR LOVED ONES"

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A FREE PUBLICATION ON ELDER ISSUES  
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## GETTING READY FOR SPRING

Spring is the time of year that the weather is better, the sun is higher in the sky and we can say we made it though winter.

With seniors at home this is the time to reassess what has been going on. For some families just getting through the winter feels good. Each week was complicated by another snow storm and the inability to get out. Making sure there was food and medications in their home was not easy. During the winter the goal was to make it work.

Now think about what changes could be made to make life easier for the senior and family.

For example if getting to the pharmacy was a challenge there are some companies that deliver medications at home. For seniors that require a new medication such as an antibiotic, or is

on a medication like Coumadin that is often changed, it could mean going to the pharmacy just when the weather was bad.

Food: Many food stores now deliver and this is the time to look at how the services work and the cost. Find out what is needed to put this service in effect.

Home care: This is the time to investigate options and call home care agencies in case there is a change in the seniors' health and services are needed quickly.

It's not only good to have these services in the winter, but if families take vacations or the primary caregiver gets sick there is a Plan B. The senior's lifestyle does not have to change or be interrupted.

This is also the time of year to walk around the house and complete a home safety check. Is this

the time to add bars to the bathroom or make other modifications to the home to make it safer?

Check the air conditioners to see if they work. Have checks done on the heating and air conditioning systems.

Is this the time to add Lifeline ("I've fallen and I can't get up device")?

This may also be the time to declutter and throw out older items in the house. Do a spring cleaning. Remember it is important to keep wide pathways in the house and remove scatter rugs or tack them down so they do not slip. Also go through kitchen cabinets and look at dates on cans; throwing out expired food. Check the refrigerator, too for expired foods.

## ABOUT US

**ElderCare Resource Services** is a certified aging care management company co-owned by Linda Sullivan RN, CMC, and Debbie Gitter LCSW, C-SWCM. Our unique Nurse/Social Worker team is able to provide both psychosocial and medical consultation to our clients. Linda and Debbie work together on each case. Families can consult with either of us. We are strong advocates for our clients giving them information to make them better consumers; getting their relative the best care. Together we are able to assist our clients and their families with information on Community Services, Home Care, Assisted Living, and Nursing Homes. Linda and Debbie have over 35 years working with the geriatric population. Now is the time to plan for the future. Call us if you have a question about our services. We'll be happy to chat. Look for our monthly column in the Metro West News '[Senior Questions and Answers](#)'

## APRIL IS NATIONAL DISTRACTED DRIVER MONTH

When driving it is important to focus on the road. These days many people are talking on blue tooth or through their ear piece. Additionally the weather, sun, dodging pot holes all affect our driving and put us all at risk.

During the day there are many seniors who drive to medical appointments or stores. These drivers may think they are good drivers because they can

drive during the day, but they put all of us at risk when we drive. Many seniors have cataracts, glaucoma, and other medical conditions they minimize in order to keep their independence and keep on driving.

There are also the new young drivers who just got their license. This group of people are not yet experienced with the roads. This is the fearless often fast driving

individual. They are often driving later in the day sometimes at the same time the senior is driving.

If you have an aging relative still driving, ask them to take you on an errand. Watch how they drive and if you feel safe they should still be driving. If you do not feel safe then contact their PCP to discuss your concerns.



Certified Members:

**Aging Life Care Association**

## UPDATES AND INFORMATION

On March 22, 2018 CBS did a story on Alzheimer's disease. The Cleveland Clinic has "successfully reversed Alzheimer's disease in mice." No testing has been done on humans. To see the entire article go to:

<http://boston.cbslocal.com/2018/03/01/healthwatch-reversing-alzheimers/>

In MA there is an agency called Aging Service Access Point or ASAP. This agency is funded by The Commonwealth of MA with the purpose of providing free services (or in some situations a sliding scale for some services) to seniors. They offer Meals On Wheels, Information and Referral, Care Giver Support and more. To find out where the local ASAP is in your community call the town Senior Council on Aging in the senior's place of residence.

On the national level Congress is including a \$414 million for dementia research and funding at the National Institute of Health in the 2018 budget. If passed, the research budget for 2018 will be \$1.8 billion. The Alzheimer's Association was a strong advocate in obtaining more funds. To read more go to: <http://boston.cbslocal.com/2018/03/01/healthwatch-reversing-alzheimers/>

In April new Medicare cards will begin to be mailed. Keep the old card awhile longer because not all medical billing will be able to bill under the new numbers immediately. There will be some hurdles along the way. Look at the bills that come in from medical appointments and if there is a balance call the company to make sure they billed under the correct insurance numbers. The original Medicare card will still be active until December 2019. This allows time for everyone to transition. Also, Social Security will be mailing out the new cards starting April 2018 through April 2019. Also, with the new system; if someone

forgets their new Medicare card at home, using a secure network the doctor's office will be able to look up the new Medicare card for billing. In MA we are scheduled to start receiving the new Medicare cards after June 2018.

Clinical studies are being done with a medication called foliglurax that have been showing good results on people with Parkinson disease.

This drug compensates for the lack of dopamine in the brain. They are hoping this medication will help with the tremors and involuntary movements. Currently they are in phase two trials. Check out the story at:

<https://parkinsonsnewstoday.com/2018/03/21/lundbeck-acquires-rights-develop-parkinsons-disease-therapy-candidate-foliglurax/>

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Q: My mother has a long term policy to help pay for care at home or for a Nursing Home. My mother's health is declining and I am so confused reading her policy about what is covered, how to activate the policy, and where to begin. Any suggestions?**

**A:** Start by contacting the insurance agent that sold your mother her policy. If that person is no longer with the company someone else has been assigned. If you are still not getting your answers contact us and we can help. We have read many policies and helped families understand what is covered, how to initiate a claim etc. Most policies need a medical statement, some companies send a nurse out to evaluate, and they may need copies of bills, etc. Many policies have a waiting period meaning coverage will begin after so many days after service. We have

also seen some policies cover a care manager. For those policies there is a yearly cap on our services.

**Q: My father was a veteran in the war and now has dementia requiring help in the home. He is paying privately for those services. Is he eligible for the VA to cover all of his medical expenses? If yes, how do I go about getting then covered?**

**A:** In many areas there is a VA hospital and physicians connected to the hospital. If your father sees only those doctor's he may be covered. The VA has it's own set of rules about coverage. Start by calling the VA rep in your father's town/city. Contact the local Senior Council on Aging and ask to speak to the VA rep. That person will be able to discuss your father's eligi-

bility. Ask the VA rep about a program called Aid and Attendance. Anybody who was honorably discharged during a time it was a designated war, certain financial guidelines, and has out of pocket bills such as paying for home care services may be eligible for this program. It is a lengthy process to apply however once approved there is some money to help pay for the cost of private help. There is a cap of money the VA will pay but any money received is less money out of your pocket. The Aid and Attendance Program provides a pension to the person who served during war time and/or their spouse—the person who is requiring care and has out of pocket expenses. If both people require care each person can apply for this program. There are companies that can help families apply for this benefit.