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The mission of the Area Agency on Aging of Northwest Arkansas is to commit financial and human resources to enhance the lives of the Northwest Arkansas senior community.

We are a private, non-profit agency in compliance with titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act, committed to the non-discriminatory delivery of services and an Affirmative Action Equal Opportunity Employer.

MAKING JOYFUL HOLIDAYS FOR PEOPLE WITH MEMORY DISORDERS

For those living with Alzheimer's disease or dementia, the excitement of the holiday season might have the opposite effect. Baylor College of Medicine experts have a few tips to help make this season as joyful as possible for those with memory disorders and their families. "Too much noise and activity along with a disruption of routine can be overwhelming for someone with dementia. It can cause them to withdraw, become angry or scared," according to Dr. Mary Kenan, a psychologist with Baylor's Alzheimer's Disease and Memory Disorders Center. Maintaining a routine is important in reducing agitation and improving mood. Disruption can trigger behavioral symptoms, which also can make caregiving more difficult.

Kenan offers some tips to help create a meaningful holiday for all.

- Focus on the present. Alzheimer's and other memory disorders are progressive diseases that each year can bring new changes and challenges. Try not to compare past holidays to the current condition.
- Rather than test your loved one's memory by asking, "Do you remember who this is?" introduce each person by name. For example, "This is Jane, your niece."
- Schedule times for family and friends to arrive or visit in small groups. If that isn't an option, find a side room or area where guests can visit quietly with your loved one.
- Include your loved one in certain tasks for the day, such as setting the table or decorating, if you know they can handle the undertaking. Try to maintain routine as much as possible. If your loved one with a memory disorder customarily takes a walk after eating lunch or dinner, try to maintain this activity and go with him or her.
- Watch for signs of anxiety or distress and intervene immediately using techniques you know may calm him or her down. For some that means sitting quietly together, going for a walk or even taking a drive around the block.
- Develop new ways of marking the holiday season. For example, ask family and friends to come prepared to tell a favorite story from past holiday seasons involving the loved one with Alzheimer's. Reminiscing is an important therapeutic tool.
- Use the sights, sounds and smells of the holidays to stimulate your loved one's senses. Your loved one may be able to participate in the singing of well-learned holiday songs.
- Ask for help. Caregiver's stress also can increase the stress of your loved one. Delegate holiday responsibilities to friends or family.

Source: Baylor College of Medicine

Reprint from www.caregiver.com

MEDICARE OPEN ENROLLMENT OCTOBER 15—DECEMBER 7

WHAT'S EXTRA HELP?

"Extra Help" is a Medicare program to help people with limited income and resources pay Medicare drug costs (Part D) premiums, deductibles, coinsurance, and other costs.

You also won't have to pay a Part D late enrollment penalty while you get Extra Help.

Some people qualify for Extra Help automatically, and other people have to apply.

You'll get Extra Help automatically if you get full Medicaid coverage, help from your state paying your Part B premiums (from a Part B Medicare Savings Program), or SSI benefits from Social Security.

What is MSP (Medicare Savings Program)?

The Medicare Savings Program is a state-run program that helps Medicare beneficiaries with limited income and resources pay some or all of their Medicare premiums, deductibles and coinsurance.

Other ways to lower your Prescription drug costs:

Join Medicare Part D prescription drug plan:

- +Compare Medicare drug plans to find a plan with lower drug costs.
- +Check if the company that makes your drug offers help paying for it.
- +Find out if your state offers help with drug costs.
- +Ask your doctor if you can take a generic drug, or a cheaper brand-name drug (if available).
- +Check costs for mail order pharmacy. Sometimes using mail order pharmacy is cheaper.

For more information and to apply for Extra Help or MSP, contact your local AAA office.

PROTECTING YOURSELF FROM MEDICARE MARKETING VIOLATIONS

During Medicare's Open Enrollment Period (OEP), you will likely experience more marketing from private Medicare plans, like Medicare Advantage Plans and Part D plans. Companies try to reach consumers in various ways, like television commercials, radio ads, events, mailings, phone calls, and texts. The government has rules, though, to protect you from aggressive or misleading marketing. Knowing the rules can help you make

Watch out for people who:

Ask for your Medicare number, Social Security number, or bank information, especially before you decide to enroll. Someone can use this information to enroll you in a plan without your permission.

Say they represent Medicare. Plans are never allowed to state they represent or are endorsed by Medicare or any other government agency. They cannot use the Medicare name or logo on their marketing materials in a way that implies this.

Send you unsolicited text messages or phone calls.

Plans must provide you with the option to opt out of communications about Medicare products. It must be done annually and in writing. Also, before enrolling you, plan representatives must explain the plan's effect on your current coverage. For example, if you have a Medigap, a plan representative must explain how you will lose that Medigap if you enroll in Medicare Advantage.

Pressure you to enroll in their plan. You can use the entire Open Enrollment Period to make your decisions. You will not receive extra benefits for signing up early.

Offer you gifts to enroll in their plan. Gifts must be given to everyone at an event regardless of their enrollment choice, and cannot be worth more than \$15.

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Upcoming Events

NOVEMBER
is National Family
Caregiver Month!

Parkinson's Resource and Wellness Fair, November 1, 2023 10:00am—12:00pm, Schmieding Center, Springdale

Beating Parkinson's Together Workshop, November 3, 2023 11:00am—2:00pm

CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUPS

Baxter County—

Location: Mruk Center on Aging
618 Broadmoor Dr.
Date: 4th Thursday of each month
Time: 10:30 am—12:00 pm

Boone County—

Location: Northvale Baptist Church
301 N. Adams St., Harrison, AR
Date: 2nd Tuesday of each month
Time: 6:00 pm

Carroll County—

Location: 1st United Methodist Church
Eureka Springs
Date: 2nd Tuesday of each month
Time: 1 pm

Marion County—

Location: Marion County Senior Activity & Wellness Center
Date: 2nd Wednesday of each month
Time: 1 pm

Newton County—

Location: Newton County Senior Activity & Wellness Center
Date: 2nd Friday of each month
Time: 2 pm

Searcy County—

Location: Marshall
Date: 3rd Tuesday of each month
Time: 2 pm

Benton County—

Location: St. Bernard Catholic Church, 1 St. Bernard Lane, Bella Vista, AR
Date: 3rd Tuesday
Time: 1:30—3:00 pm

Location: Village House
1801 Forest Hills Blvd,
Suite 206 - Bella Vista
Date: 1st Thursday of each month
Time: 12:30—1:30pm

Location: Fellowship Bible Church
1051 W. Pleasant Grove
Rogers
Date: 3rd Tuesday

Washington County—

Location: Linda Burnett House
3121 Magnolia Place, Fayetteville
Date: 1st Tuesday each month
Time: 10:30 am—12:00 pm

Location: Springdale
Contact: Schmeiding Center
for Senior Health and Education
(479) 751-3043

Location: Fayetteville
Contact: Washington Regional Senior Health Center
(479) 463-4444