

October 2024

# CAREGIVER CHRONICLES

BULLETIN



## Dane County Caregiver Program

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## Autumn and Automobiles: Planning for Aging Drivers

It's that time of year when my social media is filled with people sharing plans for Fall drives to view color and beautiful scenery. Autumn is the season when the travel itself is as much the point as the destination. As so, it's also a good time to think through a driving/mobility plan for yourself or your loved one.

A driving plan is not just about how to get the keys away from someone whose driving skills are a concern due to aging. It is also critical to focus on the health consequences of the transition from driver to ex-driver. Families, medical professionals, and the drivers themselves all need to consider the profound effect driving has on critical day-to-day issues. Once an older adult stops driving it may dramatically limit their access to sources for food and nutrition and, along with that, opportunities for social engagement. Both are vital to health and wellbeing.

There are normal aspects of aging that can, and do, impair safe driving, including vision problems, slower reaction time, and decreased range of motion in joints. Medications are also a significant issue, and it's important to evaluate the effect of any new or changed prescriptions.

While younger drivers are more likely to cause an accident by speeding or driving recklessly, older drivers cause accidents by:

- Driving through a red light or stop sign
  - Making improper left turns in front of motorists or bicycles
  - Driving too slow or far below the speed limit
  - Breaking unexpectedly and following too close
  - Misjudging distances and improper lane change
  - Driving the wrong way, including in parking lots
  - Failing to yield to pedestrians
  - Difficulty seeing during dawn, dusk or night hours
  - Distractions caused by health conditions
- (continued)

(Older adult drivers, continued from page 1)

Many seniors continue to be good, safe drivers as they age, but there are normal changes that can affect driving skills. As joints get stiff, muscles weaken and reflexes are slowed it is more difficult to turn your head to look back, steer quickly or safely hit the breaks. Eyesight and vision changes also can affect safe driving. Medical conditions such as Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, arthritis and strokes may also affect driving as well as the medications taken to combat these and other illnesses.

When senior adult drivers begin to have issues, it is important to assist at-risk drivers in the process of reducing or stopping driving. In the beginning, a senior might limit driving to daylight, shorter trips, and routes that involve minimal traffic.

If you are concerned about an older adult driver or, if you want to be safe as possible as an older adult driver, there are resources available including:

[ChORUS](#) Clearinghouse for Older Road User Safety  
Information on highway safety for older drivers, passengers, pedestrians, and cyclists

[AARP 55 ALIVE Mature Driving Course](#) (online)

Center for Disease Control—[MyMobilityPlan](#) that helps you make a plan to stay mobile and independent as you age

[AAA Senior Driver Safety & Mobility](#) for their defensive driving program (online); evaluate your driving ability, and information on new technologies in vehicles.

If you need transportation options or to evaluate a way forward post driving cessation contact:

One Stop Shop Transportation Call Center  
Email: [transportationcallcenter@danecounty.gov](mailto:transportationcallcenter@danecounty.gov)  
Phone: 608-242-6489

[RSVP Driver Services](#) provides rides for older adults to medical appointments. If you live in Madison or Monona, call RSVP at 608-441-7898. If you live in Dane County outside of Madison contact your local senior center.

You can also contact your local senior center to learn about upcoming programs they may feature on driver safety.

—Jane De Broux, Caregiver Specialist



## Monthly MIPPA Moment: Medicare Open Enrollment Period

MIPPA (Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act) has a goal of educating older adults on Medicare's cost-saving benefits & preventive services.

October 15th through December 7th is Medicare's annual Open Enrollment Period (OEP), also known as the Annual Election Period (AEP), is the time of year when you can make changes to your Medicare coverage. Any changes you make will take effect on January 1. You can make as many changes as you want during this period, but only your last coverage choice will take effect on January 1. The changes you can make include: joining a new Medicare Advantage Plan or Part D prescription drug plan, switching from Original Medicare to a Medicare Advantage Plan, and switching from a Medicare Advantage Plan to Original Medicare.

If you have a Medicare Advantage Plan or a stand-alone Part D plan, read your plan's Annual Notice of Change, or ANOC, and Evidence of Coverage, or EOC. These notices list any changes for your plan in 2025. Pay special attention to any changes in the plan's costs, the plan's benefits and coverage rules, and the plan's formulary. The formulary is the list of drugs your plan covers.

To make changes: call 1-800-MEDICARE or visit [Medicare.gov](https://www.medicare.gov) to compare options and enroll in some plans online. You can also contact plans directly to learn about the services they cover or to enroll. Certain focal points and SHIP counselors can assist as well. Confirm everything that a plan tells you before making a final decision and get everything in writing. Before joining, call your doctors to make sure that they are in the provider network for the plan you want to join.

This is a good time to review your current plan costs, with other more affordable options, including help for low-income individuals such as the [Extra Help](#) program, [Medicare Savings Programs](#), or [SeniorCare](#).

Adapted from [www.dhs.wisconsin.gov](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov).

**For more MIPPA Program information, call  
MIPPA Program Specialist, Leilani Amundson, at 608-240-7458.**

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## ≡ **FREE Welcome to Medicare Seminars**

**Sponsored by: Area Agency on Aging of Dane County's  
Elder Benefit Specialist Program**

### **What you need to know about enrolling in Medicare**

If you are turning **age 64 this year**, the Dane County Area Agency on Aging wants to help you make informed choices about your Medicare options! Do you understand what Medicare is and isn't...how to avoid penalties for late enrollment in Medicare...and how to get the most out of your health and prescription benefit plans? **Some decisions and actions about Medicare can take place 3-6 months before you turn 65, so don't wait until you are turning 65 to understand all you need to know about this important benefit.**

Want easy to understand answers to all of these complex questions? Sign up to attend one of the following **Free Welcome to Medicare Seminars**. By attending a seminar, you'll walk away with the accurate and detailed information you need from unbiased experts in benefit programs. In-Person seminars have limited space so sign up early.

**All dates are on Saturdays, 9–11:30 am**

**November 16, 2024**

In-Person

UW South Madison Partnership

Located in:

The Village on Park Street

2238 S Park St, Madison

Email [AAA@danecounty.gov](mailto:AAA@danecounty.gov)

to register by **11/8/24**





# CAREGIVER TELECONNECTION

[www.caregiverteleconnection.org](http://www.caregiverteleconnection.org)



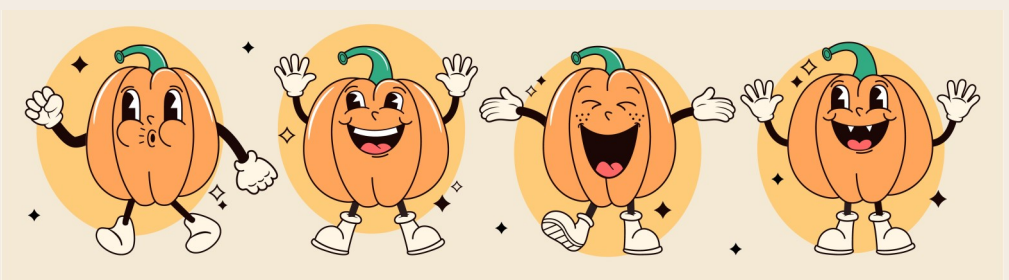
**Date Time Topic A LEADING VOICE FOR CAREGIVERS**

**All sessions will be available on Zoom and/or the telephone. Your choice!  
You may log in or call in to participate**

<b>Tuesday October 1</b>	<b>12:00 pm Eastern 11:00 am Central 10:00 am Mountain 9:00 am Pacific</b>	<b>How to Overcome Nagging Caregiver Self-Doubts with Barry J. Jacobs, PsyD</b> <i>Nearly all family caregivers encounter new challenges. Some face them with the confidence they can learn to handle them. Others, however, are wracked with self-doubts and fears of failure that undermine their caregiving performance. In this Caregiver Teleconnection, clinical psychologist and author Barry J. Jacobs, Psy.D. will discuss means of overcoming those self-doubts to eventually gain a sense of caregiving mastery and pride.</i>
<b>Thursday October 10</b>	<b>1:00 pm Eastern 12:00 pm Central 11:00 am Mountain 10:00 am Pacific</b>	<b>I Made a Promise: How to Cope with the Guilt and Heartbreak when Hard Choices Need to be Made with Jamie Cobb Tinsley</b> <i>When we make promises to our loved ones about their future care, we base it on the information we had before we knew what the future would hold. This program discusses how to cope with caregiver guilt, ways to mend a "broken heart" after placement into a community, self-forgiveness, and for all the hard choices that are made in the caregiving journey.</i>
<b>Monday October 21</b>	<b>1:00 pm Eastern 12:00 pm Central 11:00 am Mountain 10:00 am Pacific</b>	<b>Ombudsmen: Neutral Advocates Helping Family Caregivers Navigate Long Term Care with Chelsea Lang</b> <i>Learn what Ombudsman can do when family members have concerns about a long term facility or staff. <b>**Sponsored by the North Central Texas Caregiver Teleconnection**</b></i>
<b>Tuesday October 22</b>	<b>12:00 pm Eastern 11:00 am Central 10:00 am Mountain 9:00 am Pacific</b>	<b>Mastering Mindful Self Care with Cynthia Hazel, MA</b> <i>Self-care speaks about physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual balance, which helps to avoid burnout and stay energized. Taking time out to meet your own needs helps to reduce stress and places value on your worthiness. In this class, you will learn mindful ways to care for yourself that help keep you on track and on top of the caregiving game.</i>
<b>Friday October 25</b>	<b>12:00 pm Eastern 11:00 am Central 10:00 am Mountain 9:00 am Pacific</b>	<b>Entendiendo qué es una Evaluación de Capacidad con Sandra Liliana Oakes, MD</b> <i>Únase a la Dra. Liliana Oakes, ella hablara sobre una evaluación de capacidad para las personas con deterioro cognitivo y por qué son necesarias. También compartirá la diferencia entre las evaluaciones de capacidad y competencias.</i>



**A program of the WellMed Charitable Foundation**  
Register online at [www.caregiverteleconnection.org](http://www.caregiverteleconnection.org) or call  
866.390.6491 Toll Free





www.caregiverteleconnection.org



Free Learning Sessions Online!

or on your phone



Date Time Topic A LEADING VOICE FOR CAREGIVERS

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Presents

How to Include Caregivers in the Care Team: A Series for Health Care Workers

Special Guest Speakers

Elliot Montgomery Sklar, PhD
Lucy Barylak, MSW

Learn about: the role of caregivers, dealing with difficult situations, diversity and culture, and where to find resources.

Healthcare workers can better serve patients through partnership with caregivers, but there is limited formal training and support on how to engage caregivers in care planning. This series will explore the role of caregivers and their experiences in supporting the health of loved ones. We will examine issues including difficult behaviors, elder abuse and advocacy, diversity and cultural competence and we'll identify resources to support healthcare workers along the way. Certificate of attendance provided upon request.

Join us to discuss:

Table with 3 columns: Date, Time, and Topic. Topics include: Defining Caregivers & Recognizing Their Experiences, Difficult Situations & Elder Abuse, and Diversity & Caregiving.



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