

# Senior Insights

■ OCTOBER 2017

www.aaapb.com

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Caregiver Support Information meetings are held monthly:

Andrews Senior Center—  
3rd Tuesday @ 1:00

Big Spring Senior Center—  
2nd Tuesday @ 10:30

Fort Stockton Senior Center—  
2nd Wednesday @ 10:30

Dawson County Senior Center,  
Lamesa—3rd Tuesday @ 10:00

Memorial Health Care Center—  
Seminole—1st Wednesday @ 10:30

Manor Park, Midland—  
Last Thursday @ 10:00 and 2:00

Midland/Odessa—  
Parkinson's Caregivers - Call for  
Details

Midland Lutheran Church  
The Patio—2nd Thursday @ 2:00  
Respite Care Available

Ward County Senior Center,  
Monahans—3rd Thursday @ 10:00

Odessa Regional Medical Center—  
4th Wednesday @ 2:00

Courtyard at Parks, Odessa—  
4th Tuesday @ 2:00 PM

Pecos Senior Citizens Center—  
2nd Wednesday @ 1:00

Rankin Senior Center—  
3rd Wednesday @ 10:30

Martin County Senior Center,  
Stanton—2nd Tuesday @ 1:00



## 2018 OPEN ENROLLMENT

**Open Enrollment for Medicare Part D and Medicare Advantage  
Plans begins October 15, 2017 and ends December 7, 2017**

Now is the time for Medicare beneficiaries to review, compare and/or make changes for the 2018 plan year. If an individual needs assistance, please call the Area Agency on Aging.

When calling our agency, the Medicare beneficiary should provide their Medicare card information and a list of current medications.

Remember, it is always best to compare plans every year as plans often change!

A complete list of open enrollment events is included in the newsletter. For more information, call Patti Lindsey or Valeria Loera at 432-563-1061.



of the Permian Basin Regional Planning Commission  
Funded by the Department of Health and Human Services Commission

Permian Basin Aging Advisory Council Meetings  
are held at 10:00am on the following dates:

**October 18, 2017**

at the Permian Basin Regional  
Planning Commission

# More Than a Hug: How Caregiver Peers Can Support Each Other

Friends arrive with extra meals or share a coffee, meeting them for a stolen hour, somewhere close to home in case of another emergency. You part with a hug and the friend offers words of encouragement. "Hang in there." You hope you can.

The next long nights and days of managing caregiving on top of the rest of life's responsibilities go by in a blur. You are hanging on, but barely. While friends are essential, it turns out that other primary caregivers who share your emotional and physical roller coaster ride may offer the best source of help. And even on your most frazzled days, you may be a source of help to them as well.

**If you need more than a hug, read on.**

Asking for help is not easy for family caregivers (or many of us, really). When we understand that we don't have to be the expert in this thing called "family caregiving," we can transform our role as a family caregiver.

Taking care of family is generally ripe with guilt. Guilt for not doing enough, not spending enough time, not having the right tools, not being able to juggle all the many hats one wears. When the weight of playing this role becomes all consuming, the family caregiver isolates themselves—turning down coffee invitations, date nights and workouts at the gym. "There's no time," the dutiful family caregiver cries. But the moment you surrender the notion of being "The One" to handle it all and ask for help, you are becoming a less stressed-out caregiver.

We are not trained to care for our parents. We don't know what to do when the people who were the ones in charge become the ones who need the care. And while many of us may feel strongly that it is our duty to care for them, that doesn't mean we have the knowledge or heart to handle the myriad of roles caregiving demands.

Knowledge is one thing. We can learn about a disease or how to set up a medication box. But taming our emotions requires a strong support team. How do we deal with caring for a father who may have abused us or was simply absent from our lives? Or a mother who was an alcoholic and now needs our care? Or how do we convince our siblings that they need to help, too?

That's the worst-case scenario. It may also be that you love your parents and get along famously with your siblings, but still feel overwhelmed and underprepared to step up to the role of caring for Mom or Dad.

**Today there are more people over 65 than teenagers and a higher number of people over 85 than under five years old.** Demographics don't lie. We are becoming an older nation. It shouldn't be news to anyone, but because we strive to put off, ignore or hide aging, we tend to also turn a blind eye to the aging around (and within) us. Because of this, we are "unexpected" caregivers. We either say our parents are "just aging," or we blame all their issues on aging. Aging, in and of itself, is not the problem; rather, it's the diseases that can accompany us into older age that cause loved ones to need care.

**"Other caregivers have valuable insights," said another. "They share practical information about a variety of subjects, including transportation, health care and taking care of myself. These people help me to maintain equilibrium at all times. We all share many issues and feelings. We can empathize with each other. It's a safe place to express oneself, even to cry."**

Americans, like in many nations, will be forced to depend on family, friends and other potential caregivers. **In 1990 there were 11 potential caregivers for each person needing care. In 2050, that ratio will be four to one.** More informal caregiving networks will be needed, such as churches and local communities, to offer information and support to those providing care to aging adults.

Instead of organizations leading the support, however, I encourage caregivers to consider peer-to-peer caregiver support groups. Peer-to-peer support groups provide so much more than other caregiver resources. Other caregivers have valuable insights, can empathize and let us all know that we are not alone in our struggles.

Worth their weight in gold are the comments from members.

Any caregiver or past caregiver is a candidate for a peer-to-peer group. Group members are each given a turn to check in and express how they're feeling in relation to their caregiving, without interruption or feedback. All information that is shared stays within the group, creating a sacred space. If you're feeling alone, I encourage you to attend a peer-to-peer group. Chances are, you won't have to look far to find someone who knows how it feels to be in your shoes.

Original article—<https://caregiver.com>

**For more information, contact Susan Frederickson, Caregiver Program Specialist with the Area Agency on Aging at (432) 563-1061.**

# Emergency Preparedness: Questions Consumers Should Ask

A nursing home, assisted living, or other senior care facility should have a comprehensive emergency plan in place just like a family should, so that people can be protected and supported in times of crisis. A nursing home, by federal law, is required to have evacuation plans in the event of a natural or man-made disaster. The facility is required to “tailor its disaster plan to its geographic location and the types of residents it serves.” It must also review the evacuation plan, train new employees in emergency procedures and hold drills and periodic reviews with staff. Other types of facilities may or may not be required by state law to have a comprehensive plan in place. Consumers – including residents and their families - should inquire about the facility’s emergency preparedness and evacuation plans. Here are some questions to ask or to discuss at the next resident or family council meeting.

## THE PLAN

- What is the facility’s emergency plan for evacuation and for “sheltering in place”?

**Plans will be different for hurricanes, tornadoes, and terrorist attacks.**

## STAFFING CONCERNS

- Are there enough staff to carry out the evacuation plan during all shifts?
- What are the training procedures for staff related to emergency evacuations?
- Are evacuation drills practiced during all shifts?

## COORDINATION WITH OTHER RESOURCES

- Are there contracts in place with transportation and other facilities to provide housing for displaced residents?
- Are many facilities in the area contracted with the same transportation company, and if so, does that company have enough vehicles to handle them all?
- How is the plan coordinated with community resources, the city, county, and state emergency management?

## RESIDENT INFORMATION

- How does the facility discuss the plan with the residents?
- How will residents be identified in an evacuation?
- How will information about the resident and supplies such as medications be transported?
- Will these go with the resident or separately?

## ROLE OF THE FAMILY

- How and when will family members be notified about evacuation plans?
- How can family members be helpful in an emergency situation?
- Can family members meet the residents at a designated location and/or should they come to the facility to assist?
- If family members live out of town, what is the phone number to call off-site to get information?

**Family members have the right to evacuate their loved-one on their own and move them to a special needs shelter if they choose.**

*Original article—Itcombudsman.org*

If you would like more information and resources on emergency preparedness, go to [www.thesonumervoice.org](http://www.thesonumervoice.org). If you would like more information on Ombudsman Program or would like to become a Certified Volunteer Ombudsman and advocate for resident rights, contact Carolyn Torres, Managing Local Ombudsman with the Area Agency on Aging at (432) 563-1061.



of the Permian Basin Regional Planning Commission  
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## Medicare Part D Open Enrollment Events

10/18/2017—Odessa:	Ector County Senior Center—1225 Adams Avenue	10:00a.m.—12:00p.m.
10/24/2017—Gail:	Borden County Seniors—Borden County Event Center	11:30a.m.—2:30p.m.
10/25/2017—Odessa:	Southeast Senior Center—900 S. Dixie	10:00a.m.—12:00p.m.
10/26/2017—Seagraves:	Seagraves Senior Center—1206 Avenue F	10:00a.m.—12:00p.m.
10/27/2017—Kermit:	Winkler County Senior Center—419 E. Campbell	11:00a.m.—1:00p.m.
10/27/2017—Sanderson:	Terrell County Senior Center—105 East Hackberry	11:00a.m.—1:00p.m.
10/28/2017—Midland:	Macedonia Baptist Church—201 W. Carver	9:00a.m.—12:00p.m.
11/02/2017—Midland:	Casa De Amigos—1101 N. Garden Lane	9:30a.m.—11:30a.m.
11/8/2017—Seminole:	Seminole Senior Center—401 N.W. 5th Street	10:30a.m.—12:30p.m.
11/13/2017—Andrews:	Andrews County Senior Center—310 W. Broadway	11:00a.m.—1:00p.m.
11/16/2017—Crane:	Crane Senior Center—607 W. 6th Street	11:00a.m.—1:00p.m.

*If you wish to stop receiving this newsletter, please call 1-800-491-4636 or 432-563-1061*