

Senior Insights

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 De-
tails

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-
South Campus
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

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

**May 23, 2018, August 22, 2018 and
October 24, 2018**

at the Permian Basin Regional
Planning Commission

Medicare Beneficiaries Are Getting a New Medicare Card!

Cards will be mailed between April 2018 – April 2019

Medicare is removing Social Security Numbers from Medicare cards to prevent fraud, fight identity theft, and keep taxpayer dollars safe.

Between April 2018 and April 2019, they will be mailing each person a new card.

This will help keep your information more secure and help protect your identity.

Medicare beneficiaries will obtain a new Medicare Number that's unique to them, and it will only be used for their Medicare coverage. The new card won't change their coverage or benefits.

Medicare will provide more information when their new card is mailed.

Here's how Medicare beneficiaries can prepare:

Make sure their mailing address is up to date. If the address needs to be corrected, contact Social Security at ssa.gov/myaccount or 1-800-772-1213. (TTY users can call 1-800-325-0778.)

Beware of anyone who contacts you about the new Medicare card. Medicare never ask beneficiaries to give personal or private information to get the new Medicare Number and card.

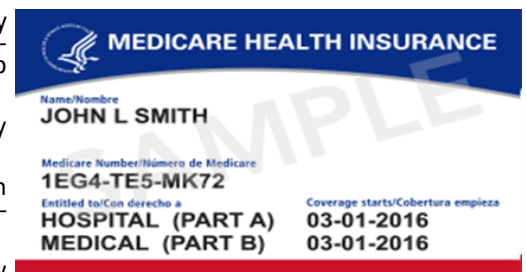
Understand that mailing everyone a new card will take some time. New Medicare cards might arrive at a different time than friend's or neighbor's.

Watch out for scams

Scam artists may try to get current Medicare Number and other personal information by contacting a Medicare beneficiary about their new Medicare card. They often claim to be from Medicare and use various scams to get a Medicare Number including:

1. Asking a Medicare beneficiary to confirm your Medicare or Social Security Number so they can send a new card.
2. Telling a Medicare beneficiary there's a charge for the new card and they need to verify personal information.
3. Threatening to cancel health benefits if a Medicare beneficiary doesn't share their Medicare Number or other personal information.

If someone calls a Medicare beneficiary and asks for their Medicare Number or other personal information, hang up and call Medicare at 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227).



For further information about Medicare coverage, contact one of the Benefit Counselors at the Area Agency on Aging of the Permian Basin at 432-563-1061 or 1-800-491-4936

Original article: www.medicare.gov/forms-help-and-resources/your-medicare-card.html



How Caregiving Can Affect Your Health

By Ashley Huntsberry-Lett

According to AARP's 2015 Caregiving in the U.S. Report, just over 34 million Americans provide unpaid care for someone over age 50. Assuming responsibility for another person's health, finances and happiness is, of course, a stressful undertaking. Complicating matters further, the majority of these informal caregivers are ill prepared and have little support to assist them in their endeavors. This has turned into a growing public health issue as seniors live longer, require more intensive care and look to family members to help them remain in their own homes as they age.

While helping a loved one manage their health and remain in the community can be very rewarding, caregivers often feel overburdened as they try to meet their needs, look after their own families, and perform at work. Self-care is the first thing to drop off the priority list, but this can have devastating effects.

The Psychological Toll of Caregiving

When stress is short-lived, the results are rarely damaging. In fact, acute stress plays a key role in enhancing focus and motivation to help us power through a challenge. However, when stress becomes a constant in life, it can become overwhelming. There are already strong emotions at play when someone you love is ailing. Not only are caregivers genuinely concerned for their loved ones' wellbeing, but they are also directly responsible for it. Pressure to perform often comes from the care recipient, other family members, medical professionals and yourself.

Over time, these emotions and the intense pressure can transform into feelings of anger, resentment, frustration and exhaustion. Since there is minimal support available to caregivers, loneliness and sadness can also arise. Most family caregivers do not anticipate how long their responsibilities will last. The average duration of this role is four years, and those caring for individuals with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia can end up providing care for a decade or longer.

Caregivers who ignore the effects of chronic stress and do not prioritize their emotional health are at risk of developing caregiver burnout and more serious mental disorders like depression and anxiety. It is crucial for caregivers to be keenly aware of their emotional limits and regularly take inventory of their moods and behavior. If you're irritable, experiencing mood swings and having difficulty concentrating, it's time to take a step back and evaluate how you can minimize your responsibilities.

The Physical Effects of Caregiving

It is well known that mental and physical health are closely linked. Long-term stress can wreak havoc on dietary habits, sleep quality, and the immune system, contributing to headaches, fatigue, digestive problems, heart disease and even substance abuse. All of these factors can be detrimental to a healthy person, but for caregivers with existing medical issues, they can be life-threatening.

Caregivers experience declines in their health due to poor diet, lack of exercise, ongoing sleep deprivation and failure to engage in preventive health measures, such as doctor's appointments, immunizations for flu and pneumonia, and recommended screenings for cancers, high cholesterol, and diabetes. A shortage of time, energy and funds are typically to blame for these oversights, as many family members place their loved ones' needs before their own. The intention behind this gesture is good, but it can ultimately backfire.

An infamous study in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) showed that senior caregivers who experienced care-related strain had a 63 percent higher mortality risk than senior non-caregivers. Prioritizing your loved one's needs is noble, but who will care for them if you are hospitalized, require care yourself or pass away?

Self-Care Is Crucial for Caregivers

No caregiver is capable of being constantly "on duty," and this includes professionals like nurses and doctors. Time off from providing care is not a luxury or an indulgence; it is a necessity. The best way to manage your mental and physical health and prevent problems from arising is to incorporate regular respite into your loved one's care plan so you have the time and ability to care for yourself.

Respite care comes in many forms and ensures that your care recipient receives the supervision and assistance they need, allowing you to lend your full focus to other important tasks. In-home care services, adult day care, other family members, and senior centers can all provide a welcome reprieve from the responsibilities of caregiving. Your newfound free time could be used to go for a walk outside, attend your own doctor's appointments, take a well-deserved nap, spend quality time with friends, or engage in a hobby you love. All of these things will help you mentally recharge and safeguard your physical health.

Naturally, you want the best for your care recipient, but you cannot provide that for them if you are not at your best. Without adequate self-care, family caregivers can jeopardize their own wellbeing as well as that of their loved ones.

Original article: <https://www.agingcare.com/articles/how-can-caregiving-affect-health-151866.htm>

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

How to Select a Safe Nursing Home

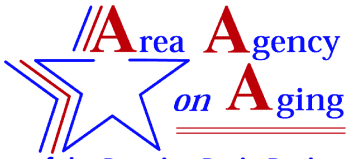
Five tips for choosing the right place for your loved ones

When the time comes that a loved one can no longer be cared for in their home, the difficult decision of whether it's time to enter an assisted living residence or nursing home becomes a reality. The intent is to find a place that allows your loved one to live with dignity, while receiving the care they need. But this selection process should be a careful one, and there are many things to consider. The attorneys at Hupy and Abraham hope that these tips will help you select a safe nursing home that meets the individual needs of your loved one.

- 1. Remember residents have rights.** In assisted living facilities, there are regulations regarding life in the facility. But as clients (regardless of being on private medical coverage or Medicaid), residents have rights such as retaining their clothes and belongings, having a say in their personal daily schedule, seeing visitors, keeping their privacy, residing in a homelike environment and choosing their own physician. A proper facility should feel like a home where residents are treated respectfully.
- 2. Check it out.** Nursing homes should maintain a particular standard of care at all times. How clean does it seem to be, what is the food like and does it seem safe/secure? Caring for elderly residents requires that staff goes above what would be required for the average adult patient. Accidents need to be cleaned up immediately; food for ill and aging individuals needs to be substantial, as well as pleasing; and ample ramps, grab bars and staff should be available to assist residents in getting around. A visit before move in is essential.
- 3. Note activity.** Activity is crucial. Unless a resident is bedridden, it is very important that a social environment is provided. Look at the facilities' daily events and activities. Look to see how often residents interact, or how much time they seem to spend outside of their rooms. If the majority of residents appear isolated in their rooms, or tuned into a TV, it's not a good sign.
- 4. Talk with the staff members and watch how they interact with** residents, as well as fellow staff members. Often neglect or abuse occurs in homes where the staff is overworked and/or understaffed. You want a facility where the staff makes an effort to spend time with residents and treats them with the respect of learning their personal schedule or situation. Staff that spends most of its time at the front office (talking, gossiping, etc.) between rounds, rather than chatting with and checking on residents, will likely provide subpar care.
- 5. Get advice, as well as feedback.** At some point, someone you know will have had some experience selecting a nursing home, whether it was for a parent or another loved one. They likely have some insight that could be helpful. Ask a facility's residents and their families for their honest opinions about the community, and check for reviews online. Most nursing homes will have some online resource where people can share their experiences and rate the facility.

Original article: <https://urbanmilwaukee.com/2018/03/01/sponsored-how-to-select-a-safe-nursing-home/>

It is important to know that there are Long-term care advocates for residents in nursing homes and assisted living facilities. Ombudsmen provide information about how to find a facility and what to do to get quality care. They are trained to resolve problems. If you want, the ombudsman can assist you with complaints. However, unless you give the ombudsman permission to share your concerns, these matters are kept confidential. Under the federal Older Americans Act, every state is required to have an Ombudsman Program that addresses complaints and advocates for improvements the Long term care system. If you would like more information about your local ombudsman program, 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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At a Boat Rental concession, the manager spots a boat out on the lake and yells through his megaphone, “Number 99, come in, please. Your time is up.” Several minutes pass but the boat doesn’t return. “Boat number 99,” he again hollers, “return to the dock immediately, or I’ll have to charge you overtime.” “Something is wrong, boss,” his assistant says. “We only have 75 boats.” The manager pauses, then raises his megaphone: “Boat number 66, are you OK?”

If you wish to stop receiving this newsletter, please call Marydyth Taylor at 1-800-491-4636 or 432-563-1061 or e-mail mtaylor@aaapb.com