



MONEY FOR RESPITE AVAILABLE NOW

State funds are currently available to families of patients with a dementia-related diagnosis. The program provides up to \$3,500 of respite care per family per year. It can be used for in-home aides, adult day care or for a short term facility stay. The person needing care cannot be covered by Medicaid, must have an income of \$30,000 a year or less, and liquid assets of \$80,000 or less. To apply, call 1.800.994.9422 and ask about the Alzheimer's Respite Grant.

LESSONS FROM THE STUDY OF CAREGIVERS

Recent data from long term studies of family caregivers has shown that those who seek guidance from professionals fare better in two ways: 1) delayed nursing home placement for their loved one and 2) improved caregiver health. In order of efficacy, the type of help found to be beneficial is:

- *One-on-one guidance* from a professional
- *Skilled teaching*: courses on the disease that demonstrate specific skills
- *Support groups*: social and emotional sharing with other caregivers

As busy as you are, it's important to take advantage of programs and resources. Our **Eldercare Help Line 866.474.5230** or a caregiver consultation at VNA Community Healthcare **203.458.4259** can get you started. Be on the lookout for our spring program calendar and information provided by caregiver websites, the Agency on Aging and disease-specific organizations.

FALL PREVENTION

The key components of fall prevention are: exercises for improved walking and movement, reducing medications, safe footwear, blood pressure control, vision correction, assistive devices and home modifications. Having a physical therapist do a *home safety evaluation*, is a good first step. This assessment is typically covered by Medicare for *home-bound* persons and will identify home modifications, equipment and techniques. To see if you qualify, call Karen Naccarato at **203.458.4275**.

CAREGIVER TIPS: "PARTNER" WITH YOUR PHYSICIAN

- Prepare for medical visits and phone calls. Write down symptoms and the sequence of events that occurred. Be concise.
- Bring your current insurance card and co-pay to every visit.
- If you want something specific from the doctor - say so in a pleasantly assertive way; don't wait until the doctor is leaving the room to discuss the real reason why you came.
- If you like your doctor, but find that he or she sometimes doesn't listen or include you in decision making, let him or her know. Try saying something like: *It takes me awhile to explain my situation. I know you are busy, but I am feeling a little rushed.* After you have expressed how you feel, describe what you want.
- Discuss, don't demand, the latest drug or treatment.
- Take notes. Tell your doctor if you don't understand something.
- Before you leave the visit or hang up the phone say - *Just let me be sure I understand what I am supposed to do.* Then list the steps you think you are supposed to take.
- Cooperate with practice procedures. Don't expect to get a routine prescription refilled at 2 a.m.
- Get a second opinion if you feel uncertain about a doctor's recommendations or treatment.
- If you are a caregiver and have a question you do not want to ask in front of the patient, call or mail it to the doctor ahead of time.

QUOTABLE QUOTE

Love may be blind, but marriage is a real eye opener.
-Anon

CONTACT INFORMATION

As a caregiver,
what are *your* main concerns?

Let us know by contacting Jane Olson at **203.458.4259** or email jolson@vna-commh.org.

The "Caregivers' Corner" is a publication from VNA Community Healthcare's *Caregiver Support Network*