

# Caregiver Chronicles

January 2017



AREA AGENCY ON AGING OF DANE COUNTY  
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[HTTPS://AAA.DCDHS.COM/](https://aaa.dcdhs.com/)

Photo by Jane De Broux



*How many lessons of faith and beauty we should lose,  
if there were not winter in our year!*

—Thomas Wentworth Higginson

### Looking Ahead to 2017



As we begin 2017, the Dane County Caregiver Program staff and the Dane County Caregiver Alliance look forward to supporting caregivers in our community. If you're a caregiver for an older adult, we will continue to connect you with the resources you need to help care for yourself while helping them age in place. If you are a grandparent raising grandchildren, we have resources for you. In 2017, with the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act, older adults (age 55+) caring for adult children with disabilities are also eligible to participate in the "Caring for the Caregiver" grant program. Grants are available to pay for respite and supplementary services for caregivers, including self-care support such as meditation classes and complementary medicine.

If you need referrals, or to make connections in the community, we can help. Please feel free to call or come into the office to talk about caregiving strategies and supports. We can connect you with support groups and community programs. We continue to gather and compile additional online resources for caregivers, including long distance caregivers of older adults who reside outside Dane County. Don't know where to start? We can help.

Watch *Caregiver Chronicles* for news about educational sessions on topics like technology and driving cessation; upcoming presentations at Dane County businesses for their caregiver employees; and Meditation for Caregivers and Powerful Tools for Caregivers classes.

We would also love to hear from you. Feel free to call and email with your questions, concerns, and suggestions throughout the year.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane De Broux".

Jane De Broux  
Caregiver Program Coordinator  
Dane County Area Agency on Aging



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## Resolutions for Caregivers: Fifty-two Chances to Make it Work

Now that the hectic pace of the holiday season is over (at least for another 12 months), you can finally take a breath—that is, unless you are one of the 65 million Americans who care for a loved one. When you're a caregiver, a moment to put the world on pause and get a break never seems to arrive. As a result, caregivers are at risk for adopting bad habits such as smoking or drinking, and neglecting good habits such as getting enough sleep, eating well, exercising, and taking time to focus on themselves. Time alone, friendships, self care, and entertainment take a back seat. This year, resolve to be kinder to yourself.

### Three steps to making self care a priority:

**1. Make a plan.** Your desire to improve the situation alone doesn't translate into change. Success is more likely if you identify concrete steps to get you there, so breaking a big goal into small increments is a key part of your plan. For example, if you'd like to resume your exercise routine, make time for walks in your schedule. Make sure you have any needed tools or equipment needed; in this case, good walking shoes.

**2. Track your progress.** It can help to talk to someone who is invested in your success. Ask a friend or other support person to hold you accountable and be your cheerleader. Be sure to celebrate small victories on the way to your goal. Tools like exercise trackers can help you measure progress and connect you with others who have similar goals.

**3. Stay committed to your goal.** Keep it simple (one resolution is better than two or three) and treat occasional variations from the plan as normal, temporary setbacks on the path to reaching your goal. Be kind to yourself if you have a bad day and start fresh the next day. Beware the perfectionism trap—a lapse does not equal failure. If you can accept a glitch and keep going you have a far better chance of success in reaching your goal. Some things are out of our control.

### The Monday Campaigns

Healthy Monday, <http://www.healthymonday.org/>, is based on the scientific research and support of prestigious institutions such as Johns Hopkins, Syracuse University, and Columbia Universities. Their research shows that beginning a new routine on a Monday will make you more successful at whatever you want to achieve. The premise is simple—just as the New Year is a time when we make resolutions, every Monday is an opportunity to renew that promise to ourselves. Healthy Monday research shows that most Americans feel Monday is the day for a fresh start.

In your role as caregiver, use each Monday as a time to ask yourself what you've done for yourself lately. Acknowledge the time you have chosen to renew yourself and make plans for ways to recharge in the coming week, whether it's for five minutes or five hours.

You have fifty-two weeks to reach your goal for 2017. Choose at least one thing that you would like to accomplish *just for you* this year and give Healthy Monday a try. We'd love to hear your ideas for self-care and Healthy Mondays. Send them to [debroux.jane@countyofdane.com](mailto:debroux.jane@countyofdane.com) and we'll share in future issues of the newsletter.

*Based on an article by Deanna Truedson adapted from a blog by Sherri Snelling, a nationally-recognized expert on how to help caregivers balance "self-care" while caring for a loved one. She is the former Chairman of the National Alliance for Caregiving (NAC), the leading caregiving advocacy non-profit organization, based in Washington, D.C.*

### Helping an Aging Family Member Plan for the Future

The importance of advance planning for aging adults (especially those suffering from chronic illnesses) cannot be overstated. Without the right legal and financial documentation, caregivers and their loved ones could be faced with a host of problems in an emergency. Doctors may refuse to discuss important medical information with a caregiver, a dying elder may not get the end-of-life care they desire, and control over an incapacitated loved one's bank accounts and property could be given to a complete stranger.

#### 6 Must-Have Legal Documents for Family Caregivers

You can help a loved one plan for their current and future medical and financial needs by working with them to prepare six essential legal documents, described in further detail below:

##### Important documents for managing medical care

**HIPAA Authorization:** The Health Information Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) aims to protect medical record privacy. This law prevents doctors and other medical professionals from discussing an individual's health information with anyone but that person. Even caregivers can't access an elderly loved one's medical records, or talk to their doctor, until they sign a HIPAA form. Fortunately, this document is easy to obtain; most doctor's offices have extra copies on hand.

**Healthcare Power of Attorney (POA):** This document allows an individual to grant legal authority to a trusted relative (i.e. the family caregiver), or friend, to make healthcare decisions on their behalf. A person with healthcare POA can determine (among other things) where an elder lives, what they eat, who bathes them, and what medical care they receive. (\*see note below)

**Advance Healthcare Directive:** An advance healthcare directive combines a healthcare POA with a living will. A living will outlines how an individual wishes their end-of-life care to be managed (i.e. aggressive medical care versus hospice care), and may also include a Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) order, or instruction not to insert a feeding tube if they become incapable of eating on their own. Learn how to

##### Important documents for managing finances

**Financial Power of Attorney (POA):** A financial POA gives a trusted family member, or friend, the ability to make legally-binding decisions about a person's financial assets. An individual with financial POA has the authority to manage their loved one's finances, which may include paying bills, liquidating assets to cover expenses, or making other investment decisions. (\*see note below)

**Trust:** Trusts—essential estate planning documents that specify how a person wishes certain assets to be disbursed—come in several different varieties. Each type of trust has its own rules and requirements that affect how funds will be distributed after a loved one passes away. The main difference between a will and a trust is that a trust can be enacted while a person is still alive, or after they have died. A will only goes into effect after an individual has passed on.

**Will:** There are many different kinds of wills, each with different stipulations regarding how assets and property are to be doled out after a person dies. As previously mentioned, a will can only be activated by the death of the individual. For more information on writing wills, see [What is a Will and Why Every Senior Should Have One](#).

An elder law attorney can assist with the preparation of these documents; as well as valuable guidance for taking into account your loved one's individual situation and preferences when planning for the future. **(cont'd p. 5)**

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## Online News & Resources

### [Patients of female physicians likely to live longer, avoid hospital readmission, study shows](#)

“Public health researchers at Harvard found that elderly patients were less likely to die or be readmitted to the hospital within 30 days if treated by female doctors rather than male. . . . they [findings] also suggest the methods of female physicians —if replicated broadly—could significantly improve the quality of medical care in the United States.

<http://bit.ly/2hAp15n>

## Caregiver Resources Statewide

[Wisconsin Family Caregiver Support Program Facebook page](#)



Website is here: [www.wisconsincaregiver.org](http://www.wisconsincaregiver.org)

If you haven't already, please like and follow the Dane Caregiver Alliance Facebook page as well. Keep up on caregiver news and events in Dane County: [Dane County Caregiver Alliance Facebook page](#)

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**(cont'd from p. 4)**

Getting the necessary documents in order before a medical or financial disaster strikes can make an extremely difficult situation just a bit easier to navigate. Knowing that you're carrying out your loved one's wishes, even though they may not be able to voice them, can ease the crushing feelings of guilt and doubt that caregivers often experience in these situations.

*\*An additional note about POA: There can be confusion with regards to the difference between "durable" and "nondurable" powers of attorney. A durable POA is one that endures a person's incapacitation, meaning that, until a person either passes away, or is able to regain control of their own affair, the POA remains in effect. This is as opposed to a nondurable POA, which becomes null upon a pre-defined contingency—such as a particular date, or in the event of a person's incapacitation. For additional information on POA, see: [Things You Can and Can't Do With POA](#).*

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*Provided courtesy of AgingCare.com, the go-to destination for family caregivers. AgingCare.com provides resources and guidance through financial and legal concerns, such as [guardianship of elderly parents](#). This article is one of a series of articles included in the eBook, *Family Caring for Family*. Download your free copy at [www.AgingCare.com/ebook](http://www.AgingCare.com/ebook).*

### Alzheimer's and Dementia-specific Information

Alzheimer's Foundation of America Care Connection Webinar:

### Planning and Preparing for Early-Stage Alzheimer's Disease

January 12, 2017

2:00 pm CST

The webinar will provide an educational overview of individuals in the early stages of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. There will be information on symptoms, concerns, and how to maintain quality of life, as well as tips and techniques on how to keep loved ones safe.

Presented by Bobbi Matchar, a social worker who has worked in the field of aging since 1980. For the past five years she has directed the early-stage Alzheimer's programs at the Duke Family Support Program in the Duke Center for Aging in Durham, North Carolina. Bobbi has a masters degree in social work from Hunter College School of Social Work in New York and a masters in healthcare administration from the University of North Carolina School of Public Health.

[Click here to register](#)



#### **The Aging and Disability Resource Center of Dane County (ADRC)**

The ADRC offers free, unbiased information and assistance on resources and services for older people and adults with disabilities. Staff provides information to all callers regardless of their income, assets, age, or disability, and they help callers identify options, solve problems, and plan for the future.

***Open 7:45 am—4:30 pm Monday through Friday***

**Call** (608) 240-7400

**Visit** the ADRC office, 2865 N. Sherman Ave,  
Madison

*Appointments are not necessary*

**Website:** [www.daneadrc.org](http://www.daneadrc.org)

**Email:** [ADRC@countyofdane.com](mailto:ADRC@countyofdane.com)

Learn from the comfort of home



Date	Time	Topic	Call. Learn. Share.
Thursday, January 5th	11:00 am Eastern 10:00 am Central 9:00 am Mountain 8:00 am Pacific	<b>Understanding the Stages of Dementia with Tam Cummings, PhD</b> <i>Tam Cummings, PhD, is a noted expert in dementia care and the author of a groundbreaking book, Untangling Alzheimer's. In this session, Tam will explain how to match specific patient behaviors to the seven stages of dementia. This understanding of how damage to the brain at each stage impacts mental capabilities and behaviors, as well as how long each stage is estimated to last, is critical in helping medical professionals and family members prepare for the next phase of the disease.</i>	
Monday, January 9th	1:00 pm Eastern 12:00 pm Central 11:00 am Mountain 10:00 am Pacific	<b>Improving Communication and Relationships with Zanda Hilger, LPC</b> <i>What are the relationship and communication needs of the people we care for; how can we improve communication with other family members? Learn some next techniques and strategies. Sponsored by the North Central Texas Caregiver Teleconnection</i>	
Tuesday, January 17th	3:00 pm Eastern 2:00 pm Central 1:00 pm Mountain 12:00 pm Pacific	<b>Avoiding Caregiver Burnout with Barry Jacobs, PsyD</b> <i>Barry J. Jacobs, Psyd., a clinical psychologist and family therapist, is one of the country's leading thinkers, writers and educators about family caregiving. He is the coauthor of the recently published Meditations for Caregivers: Practical, Emotional, and Spiritual Support for You and Your Family. In this session, Dr. Jacobs will discuss caregiver burnout and practical ways to avoid it.</i>	
Wednesday, January 25th	3:00 pm Eastern 2:00 pm Central 1:00 pm Mountain 12:00 pm Pacific	<b>Legal Issues for Caregivers with Carol Bertsch, Elder Law Attorney</b> <i>Carol Bertsch is a practicing elder law attorney, who is well known in her field as a fierce advocate for older adults and their family caregivers. She is a member of several organizations including the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys, Bexar County Women's Bar Association, San Antonio Bar Association, and the National Association of Women Business Owners. Listen as Carol discusses those important legal issues and documents with which caregivers and seniors need to be familiar.</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

\*\*\*Registration required at least 24 hours in advance\*\*\*

# Caring for the Caregiver Program

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- You are willing to receive the newsletter via email
- You are no longer interested in receiving the newsletter

Contact:

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