

Caregiver Quarterly

A publication of Caregiver Services,
A program of the Area 1 Agency on Aging.

Summer 2005
Volume 2 Issue 3

Caregiver Services

maintains a registry, matching trained and pre-screened caregivers with potential employers, including In-Home Supportive Services clients. Information and support are available for family and professional caregivers.

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Let's Talk About It!

By Anthony Antoville

"Listening requires two ears – one for meaning and one for feeling." - Anonymous

How often have we taken what someone has said to us the wrong way? — And then, reacted with angry words or hostile actions? These are the ways that often lead to a caregiver quitting or being fired.

When we do not take the time to explain ourselves or to understand another person, we risk losing a lot. Often, we risk losing more than we ever thought possible. How can this be? Because what we know and what *we think we know* about another person, their needs and what they want are usually far apart.

Words themselves have very little meaning, until we connect our own unique experiences to those words. That is why words have different

meanings for different people.

Here are some suggestions to help make the words that you say express your real meaning to the person you are talking to and to yourself.

Hopefully, some of these simple tools will help prevent problems with communication. They can also be used after a miscommunication has happened to help set things back on the right track.

Be ready to communicate.

- Be clear what message you want to express before you say it.
- Be aware of what you want to say, how to say it and when you want to say it.

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Welcome, Teresa—Good Luck, Lucy!

If you have called Caregiver Services' Eureka office recently, you may have noticed a new voice. Teresa Christian has joined our staff as a Resource Specialist. She is filling the vacant shoes left by Lucy Ingrey. Lucy is now a HICAP Counselor/Medicare Modernization Act Specialist, working in the Area 1 Agency on Aging's Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program office located at the Humboldt Senior Resource Center in Eureka.

Teresa and her Guide Dog, Gretchen, have brought a fresh, new perspective to our office. Teresa has lots of technological tricks up her sleeve to work with our database of care providers and clients. She is now the person making most of the matches of Registry caregivers for clients needing in-home care. She will also soon receive training to be certified to provide free HICAP counseling to Caregiver Services clients.

We wish Lucy success and happiness in her new job. We welcome Teresa to the Caregiver Services' fold.

Take Care of Your Eyes

By Julie Sessa

Adults often accept vision changes as a natural part of getting older. Books and magazines with small print may be harder to read. Street signs may appear blurred until you get closer to them. But changes in vision, at any age, should be evaluated by an eye care professional. A new prescription for eyeglasses, better lighting, or in some cases, cataract surgery may be all that is needed to help people see better.

When vision changes cannot be fully corrected to the normal range with ordinary eyeglasses, contact lenses, medication or surgery, the result is permanently impaired vision, or "low vision." Low vision refers to a range of vision capabilities.

Too often, people with low vision think that nothing more can be done to help them see better, so it is particularly important that they know what kind of help is available. Adults who are well informed are more likely to seek out vision rehabilitation services when vision changes begin to affect their ability to perform day-to-day activities.

Common conditions include: glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy, cataracts and macular degeneration. Contact your ophthalmologist or optometrist for an eye exam. Some diseases have no symptoms. There are options for better vision health. Local resources are available for low vision support, rehabilitation services and adaptive equipment.

Call Senior Information and Assistance at (707) 442-9591 or toll free: (800) 408-4636 for more information.

Julie Sessa is Special Projects Coordinator for Area 1 Agency on Aging's Information Services.

Several Low Vision Support Groups in both Humboldt and Del Norte Counties offer persons with diminished sight a place to share their experiences and find understanding and solutions.

A recently formed Arcata group meets for an hour every Wednesday morning at 10:15 at the Arcata Community Center senior facility. Other groups meet regularly in McKinleyville, Eureka, Fortuna and the Garberville area. Call 839-1798 for information.

In Crescent City, a group meets at the Addie Meedom House. Call 464-7876 for information.

Let's Talk About It! (Continued from page 1)

- Be completely present and focused to speak *and to listen.*

Be real.

- Tell your truth. Say how you see the issue or problem without blaming.
- Be direct. Express what you think and feel.
- Be sure to say what your thoughts and feelings are.
- Say what is important to you.
- Allow yourself to risk being open and try not to be defensive.

Be productive.

- Be respectful. Think of other people's thoughts, feelings, wants and needs.
- Listen and recognize other people's feelings and opinions.
- Review with the other person what you have heard to make sure you have it right.
- Be open to other options. Do not be focused on only one way.

Have a goal.

- Aim for shared positive results for everyone involved.
- Focus not only on the issue but the relationship with the other person.

Be responsible.

- Be sure to include the other person in the conversation. Listen as well as talk.
- Say what you mean, mean what you say and do what you say!

Thank you to Mary Gelinis and Roger James for concepts found in "Principles of Courageous Communication" (Gelinis & James, Inc.). Anthony Antoville is Caregiver Services Manager.

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is published every three months by Caregiver Services, a program of the Area 1 Agency on Aging.

We welcome your comments.

Please send letters and change of address notices to *Caregiver Services*,

Area 1 Agency on Aging,
3300 Glenwood Street, Eureka CA 95501.

You can also e-mail us at:
caregiver@a1aa.org

Medicare Part D: Prescription Drug Benefit News

By Anne Antoville

Watch your mail for news from the Social Security Administration about the **Medicare Part D Low Income Subsidy**. From now through August, Social Security is sending letters and Low Income Subsidy applications to two million Californian beneficiaries with low incomes. Read on to learn about Medicare Part D and how the Low Income Subsidy works.

Medicare Part D: Beginning January 2006, Medicare will offer a new drug benefit, called Medicare Part D. Medicare Part D will cover prescription drugs. Private companies will contract with Medicare to provide the drug plans.

If you sign up for a Medicare drug plan, you will have to pay a premium which will be deducted from your Social Security check. The drug plans will have a deductible that you must meet before the plans cover drug costs. The drug plans will also have co-pays you must pay when you buy drugs using your Medicare Drug plan.

Low Income Subsidy: You may be able to get help with Medicare drug plan premiums, deductibles and co-pays. This help is called the **Medicare Part D Low Income Subsidy**.

If you have Medi-Cal, you should get the Low Income Subsidy automatically. You should not have to sign-up for the subsidy.

If you do not have Medi-Cal, there are two tiers to the Low Income Subsidy:

Tier One is for those with income below \$12,920 a year for singles and \$17,321 a year for married couples. Your assets must be less than \$6,000 for singles and \$9,000 for couples. You can get this help: (1) No Premium; (2) No deductible; and (3) Co-pay of \$2 for generic drugs and \$5 for brand name drugs.

Tier two is for those with income below \$14,355 a year for singles and \$19,245 a year for married couples. Your assets must be below \$10,000 for singles and \$20,000 for couples. You can get this help: (1) Sliding scale monthly premiums; (2) \$50 per year deductible; and (3) 15% co-pay on drugs.

Signing Up for the Subsidy: You will be able to enroll in the subsidy by July, even if you have not received a letter in the mail.

Note: If you have Medi-Cal, you do not need to enroll in this subsidy.

If you have questions about Medicare Part D or the Low Income Subsidy, you can contact the HICAP Office: in Humboldt, (707) 443-9747; and in Del Norte, (707) 464-7876.

Anne Antoville is HICAP Manager for Humboldt and Del Norte Counties.

3 Simple Questions to Ask: Is It a Stroke?

Sometimes symptoms of a stroke are hard to identify. Unfortunately, the lack of awareness spells disaster. The stroke victim may suffer brain damage when people nearby fail to recognize the stroke symptoms. Now doctors say you can recognize a stroke by asking three simple questions:

- (1) Ask the person to smile; (2) ask him or her to raise both arms;
- and (3) ask the person to speak a simple sentence.

If they have trouble with any of these tasks, call 9-1-1 immediately and describe the symptoms to the dispatcher. Using this test could result in a faster diagnosis and treatment of the stroke and possibly prevent brain damage.

After discovering that a group of non-medical volunteers could identify facial weakness, arm weakness and speech problems, researchers urged the general public to learn the three questions. They presented their conclusions at the American Stroke Association's 28th International Stroke Conference in 2003. The American Stroke Association is a division of the American Heart Association. For more information online, see www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=3008841

Calendar of Coming Events

Social Security & Disability—An Independent Living Skills Workshop

presented by Tri-County Independent Living, Inc. **Wednesday, June 15th, 1:30 pm to 3 pm, 955 Myrtle Avenue, Eureka.** Learn about the possible benefits a person with disabilities may be able to get through the Social Security Administration, including SSI, SSDI, Medi-Cal, Medicare and the SSA Work Incentive Programs. Call 445-8404 for information.

Diabetes—A series of free lectures on living with diabetes, sponsored by Lima's Professional Pharmacy and Bayer Pharmaceuticals, held once a month June through September, at the Warfinger Building Yacht Club Room in Eureka. Call Margaret Stevens, R.N., Certified Diabetes Educator, at 845-7117, for specific dates and times.

Orientation to Vision Loss Services—Presented on the last Tuesday of each month from 10:30 to noon at LightHouse of the North Coast, 2127 Harrison Avenue, Eureka. Information is provided about applying for local, state and national resources, including free telephones that are accessible for people with vision loss, the Braille and Talking Book Library, and other free programs. People with vision loss and their care providers are encouraged to attend.

I Can Cope—An eight-week series of classes for cancer patients and their families, presented by The Cancer Program, St. Joseph Hospital. Beginning September 14th at St. Joseph Hospital in Eureka. Call 445-8121, ext. 6312, to register.

Caregiver Trainings—Call Laura Patterson at 443-4363 (toll free: 877-977-1604) for news on caregiver trainings.