



South Madison Coalition of the Elderly

128 E. Olin Avenue Suite 110 Madison, WI 53713

Volunteer News

Summer 2011

Phone: 608-251-8405 Email: coalition@smcelder.com

Volunteer Guardian & Representative Payee Meeting

Our volunteer meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 10, 2011 at 6 pm.

We will have resource information available and also focus on discussing the duties volunteers have after a ward/beneficiary passes away.

This will be an informal, round table discussion and we will enjoy our talk with wine and cheese as well as other beverages and snacks.

Please come and join us for this interesting and helpful review while enjoying conversation with other volunteers.

COORDINATOR'S NOTES....

Greetings! We hope you have enjoyed the transition from spring to summer and have been enjoying the warmer weather. It almost felt as if we were going to go from spring straight into fall!

It has been a busy time at South Madison Coalition and we would like to introduce our newest volunteers. We have Candice McDowell and Valerie Arteman as our newest volunteer representative payees and Kristy Schuster will be a volunteer guardian. All have gone through the training session and we anticipate matching them in the near future.

I would encourage you to attend our next meeting which will include providing various resource information and discussing what your responsibilities are upon the death of your ward/beneficiary. This will focus on the financial aspect which can get confusing at times.

As always I am looking for more volunteers so if you know someone who may be recently retired and looking for some meaningful volunteer work, please share with them our information and don't hesitate to call Katie directly.

MA Transport Update

Many of you may be aware the state has implemented a new system to set up Medical Assistance rides that took effect July 1, 2011.

If your ward has Medical Assistance those rides will now be arranged through Logisticare. Because of the change in the way rides are set up, some may not be able to get a ride scheduled due to lack of notice or

information that may verify eligibility for the ride.

If you find you are receiving bills for transports to medical related destinations please contact your ward/beneficiary's case manager or social worker.

Please read our July newsletter for more detailed information about the change. You can find that on our website, smcelder.com

RESOURCE UPDATE

The Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups (CWAG) has Benefit Specialists available who can help people understand their benefits as well as entitlement programs such as Social Security, SSI, Medicare, Medical Assistance and Food Share.

If you have questions about these or other programs you can call them at 224-0606.



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Staying Safe in the Hot Weather

Many of the older adults we work with are at risk of heat related problems due to their age, medical conditions or living conditions. According to the Federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, hundreds of elderly people die each year from heat related afflictions. Sometimes simply having a glass of water and access to a fan can make a difference between life and death.

Hyperthermia is the name given to a variety of heat-related illnesses such as heat stroke, heat cramps or heat exhaustion. Older adults are particularly at risk because their ability to respond to summer heat can become less efficient with age.

A person's risk is not based only on the outside temperature but also includes the general health and lifestyle of the individual. Health factors that increase risk include:

- Age related changes to the skin such as poor blood circulation and sweat glands;
- Heart, lung and kidney diseases;
- Use of some medications such as Beta Blockers used to regulate blood pressure, anti-depressants, psychiatric drugs or anti-Parkinson's drugs

Other factors that may increase the risk factors included hot living quarters, overdressing and a general lack of understanding of the weather conditions.

If you suspect your ward or beneficiary may be suffering from hyperthermia (heat stroke, heat cramps, heat fatigue, etc), there are some things you can do to help:

- Offer fluids such as water, fruit and vegetable juices but avoid drinks that have caffeine;
- Encourage your ward/beneficiary to bath, shower or sponge off (if they require assistance for these tasks, contact the case manager or home health agency to request the help);
- Apply a cold, wet cloth to the wrist and/or neck;
- Contact your ward/beneficiary's primary Dr or home health agency to report your concerns.

The oversight or follow up you provide in your role as a volunteer guardian or representative payee could make a difference to those we serve who may live alone and not recognize the possible danger of the warmer weather along with their medical conditions, could bring.

Food Share Program

Food Share is a federal program run by the State of Wisconsin and administered by each county and is intended to help families and single people with little or no income. These individuals usually live in the community in their own homes or apartments. The benefits are received monthly and used to buy food at stores using a debit card called the Wisconsin QUEST Card.

The benefits can be used for foods such as:

- Breads and cereals;
- Fruits and vegetables;
- Meats, fish, poultry;
- Dairy products

The program requires an annual review which verifies income/assets and may be done when the annual medical assistance review is done, for those receiv-

ing these benefits. Volunteer guardians/estate or rep payees can provide this information to the social worker or the county in order for the ward/beneficiary to continue to receive this benefit.

If you are uncertain if the older adult you work with receives this benefit, please talk to the social worker you work with to verify.