

Elder Network Quarterly

January, February and March, 2016

Alexandria, MN

Upcoming Volunteer Meetings for 2016 are as follows:

March 7- Julie Olderding and Chrissy Haugen, Occupational Therapists from the Douglas County Hospital will be joining us. Julie and Chrissy will help us gain an understanding of the DriveABILITY Program. Determining when it is no longer safe for us to be behind the wheel can be so difficult. Let's learn about the DriveABILITY Program and how it can be beneficial to our community.

April 4th- Sara Stadtherr, Director of Marketing for Knute Nelson, will be with us. She will update us on the changes taking place at Grand Arbor and the new partnership with our local YMCA.

May 2- Jess Steinbrenner from the Alzheimer's Association will join us and help us understand how we can communicate with those dealing with an Alzheimer's diagnosis.

June 6th, Scott Kent from the Alexandria Police Department will be back by popular demand. He will talk about safety for seniors.

July-No Meeting, enjoy the 4th of July.

I hope that each of you will join us on May 2nd. This presentation by Jess Steinbrenner from the Alzheimer's Association will be a little longer than our regular meeting so please plan for a 90 minute session. Her presentation will include tips and suggestions as to how communicate as our clients and loved ones progress through the various stages of the disease. Please invite anyone that may benefit from this information as we will have plenty of room. We will meet at 1:00pm in the Fellowship Hall of Calvary Lutheran Church.

Jean Bristow. RN & Peer Volunteer Coordinator

"IT WAS ONCE SAID THAT THE MORAL TEST OF GOVERNMENT IS HOW THAT GOVERNMENT TREATS THOSE THAT ARE IN THE DAWN OF LIFE, THE CHILDREN; THOSE THAT ARE IN THE TWILIGHT OF LIFE, THE ELDERLY; AND THOSE WHO ARE IN THE SHADOWS OF LIFE, THE SICK, THE NEEDY AND THE HANDICAPPED."



Hubert Humphrey

Do You Remember 60 years ago 1956:

Dwight Eisenhower was President.

US population was 168,903,031.

Life expectancy was 69.7 Years.

Cost of a First Class Stamp was 3 cents.

The movie "The Ten Commandments" premiered in October.

Elvis Presley released his first hit "Heartbreak Hotel".

Rocky Marciano retired as the only undefeated Heavy Weight Champion with a record of 49-0 with 43 of the wins by knockout.

The Interstate Highway System was approved over 41,000 miles.

CENTRAL MINNESOTA ELDER NETWORK ANNUAL MEETING

Our Annual Meeting will be held on Tuesday March 15, 2016.

It will be held at the Alexandria Senior Center.

Beginning at 1:00pm.

Your attendance would be appreciated

We will be providing updates on the program over the past year including reports from our Peer Volunteer Coordinator, our respite Coordinator as well as our Program Director.

Coffee and bars will be served.

Welcome to our Volunteer Class of 2015

We recently completed our training of new volunteers. We want to welcome them aboard and thank them for their concern for and involvement with the Seniors of Douglas County.



The new volunteers are from left to right:

Jerry Kalinowski
Bruce Jordan
Larry Zilliox
Willie Wrede
Steve Nelson
Rosalia Ray
Grace Lambert

UPDATE:

We're sad to report that Holly Jerzak our Respite Coordinator is no longer with us. Holly decided that at this time her family issues had to take precedence. We will miss her great personality and her commitment to our Respite Program. Though she was only with us a short time she had a positive impact on our program and clients. Holly has said she will be willing to help us train the new Respite Coordinator and help out in a pinch. I want to personally thank her for what she has done and her willingness to help us out if possible.

REQUESTING YOUR HELP:

Because of Holly's departure, we would like your assistance in finding someone to fill her position. We would like an RN or an LPN with experience working with the elderly. This is a very part time position between 260 and 360 hours per year. For the most part you can set your own schedule. Other than the Gathering on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month the work schedule is very flexible.

If any of you know of someone who would be interested in making a difference in the lives of our seniors please ask them to call or email:

Jim Brendel at (320) 763-9084 or email at eldernet@embarqmail.com

Your assistance will be greatly appreciated.

8 IMPORTANT QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR DOCTORS

Courtesy Today's Caregiver

One of the recent missions in the healthcare system is to make medicine more patient- and family-centered. Illness does not only affect the patient, but also those involved in the care and responsibilities of the individual. Never feel that a medically-related question is a dumb question. After all, you're the closest witness to the daily symptoms, struggles and living activities of the affected individual.

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8 IMPORTANT QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR DOCTORS (Continued From Previous Page)

1. What are the symptoms of this diagnosis?

New caregivers are often afraid to show their vulnerability in not knowing the specifics of a diagnosis. You would be shocked to hear the number of caregivers who leave an appointment and are frustrated at not finding out basic information about the patient. Finding out what to see or expect from the course of a diagnosis can help inform your doctor of the progression or regression of the illness at the next visit. Additionally, this information alleviates some anxiety and stress of new caregivers through the initial phases of treatment.

2. What is this person able to do and not able to do?

Many first time caregivers are unsure how to handle the daily living activities and tasks of patients. Doctors usually have experience in knowing what patients can handle during the early stages of a diagnosis. Find out what the illness can limit the person from doing. Can they still resume driving? Can they maintain physical exercise routines? What foods are still acceptable to eat?

3. What are the most helpful things I can do as a caregiver?

Once you leave a doctor's office, many of the daily responsibilities for a patient fall in the caregiver's hands. Asking this question not only informs caregivers about their role in this new adjustment, but builds rapport between doctors and caregivers. Physicians or specialists can offer caregivers some boundaries around what can help or hurt an individual's functioning and coping around an illness.

4. How can I get more information on the medications they're taking?

With more medications hitting the market, it's increasingly difficult for family members and caregivers to track the side effects, dosing and administration of a specific prescription. Monitoring medications for patients is one of the most important tasks for primary caregivers to assume. Knowing the medication schedule can help caregivers and patients negotiate a schedule for taking the medication and working around other daily living tasks.

5. What is the plan of treatment going forward?

I'm always surprised when this topic is not discussed in further detail at an initial appointment. You shouldn't have to leave an office with an ambiguous outlook of what the illness will hold. Having a tentative idea of future medical appointments, procedures, surgeries or examinations will help caregivers schedule their time better and be more informed of the treatment options of the patient.

6. What options are available if the diagnosis gets worse?

We all want to see the optimistic side of an illness and find ways that the patient can recover effectively. This question is usually not on the mindset of new caregivers, partially because it's a daunting thought to consider. Caregivers have to be prepared if symptoms or the course of an illness start to deteriorate. Your doctor will appreciate your forward thinking and considering all possible options down the road.

7. Can I have a copy of the records?

The medical information of a patient is not limited to professionals. With a release of information and signed authorization, caregivers and other members in the patient's treatment can receive a copy of medical records. These copies can help you track the progress of a patient between appointments. Additionally, you can always bring these documents to appointments and ask further questions.

8. How can I reach you if I have any further questions?

Communication should not be limited to just appointments. This question can show your doctor that you have motivation to be involved in the patient's treatment plan. Yes, doctors are incredibly busy and have limited windows of time for phone and email communication. But it's important to have some assurance that your doctor will be a supportive resource through this challenging time.

The journey of medical appointments after a family member or loved one has received a diagnosis should be a collaborative process. Because of the high patient loads, updates of electronic medical records and frequency of staff meetings, doctors can often miss valuable information discussed in short appointments. As a caregiver, you play a vital role in the treatment that a patient receives.



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Make a difference in the lives that follow.

In-service (1:00-2:00 p.m.) & **Supervisory Meetings** (2:00-3:00 p.m.) are held at Calvary Lutheran, 605 Douglas Street, Alexandria. The next one will be March 2, 2016. The presenters will be Occupational Therapists from Douglas County Hospital and the topic will be drivability. These in-service trainings and supervisory meetings are all held at Calvary Lutheran on the first Monday of each month. If there is any change to this you will be notified.

ANNUAL MEETING: March 15, 2016 at the Alexandria Senior Center beginning at 1:00pm

If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, please send an e-mail to eldernet@embarqmail.com or call us at 320-763-9084.

Elder Network Journal is printed quarterly to support and promote Elder Network. You can contact us at our office in the Knute Nelson Admin Bldg., 420 12th Avenue E, #32, Alexandria, or call 763-9084, email: eldernet@embarqmail.com mailing address is PO Box 232, Alexandria.

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