

# Caregiver Chronicles

January 2021



Caring for Caregivers

AREA AGENCY ON AGING OF DANE COUNTY  
2865 N SHERMAN AVE, MADISON, WI 53704  
608-261-9930

Let our New Year's resolution be this:  
We will be there for one another  
As fellow members of humanity,  
In the finest sense of the word.

—Göran Persson  
*Former Prime Minister to Sweden*



## A New Year Waxes as the Old Year Wanes

My family has a New Year's tradition. We share with one another what we want to leave behind in the waning year and what we would like to take with us into the new or waxing year. When I found the photo for the cover of this issue, I thought it illustrated pretty much exactly how I feel about 2020—eager to push it off a ledge, kick it to the curb, and shut and lock the door behind me. Nothing can make up for the loss of loved ones, businesses, jobs or the significant life events missed. However, as that initial reaction passes, I find that my idea of what to take from the waning year does take shape. It is illustrated by the quote from Göran Persson, former Prime Minister of Sweden, also on the cover of this issue. I want to take with me—and with all of us—all the times we were there for one another as fellow members of humanity.

During 2020, caregivers actively stepped up with additional support to keep their loved ones safe. In response, all of us providing caregiver support made an effort to ramp up as well. There were some additional funds that made it possible for the Caring for Caregivers Program to introduce music therapy as a special program during COVID-19. In 2021, caregivers receiving NFCSP grant funding can continue to select music therapy as their chosen service for their care partner and/or themselves. The caregiver education platform Trualta came online providing a wealth of resources easily accessed. (Learn more about Trualta and how you can enroll and participate at no cost to you on pages 4 and 5.) And, the number of online [support groups](#), social and educational opportunities, and virtual meetings throughout the social network grew exponentially. While I can hardly wait to see people in-person again, having built these networks will make it possible to continue to reach and support more caregivers in the future. We built the systems and learned how to use them because we needed to, and now we have the infrastructure that would have taken so much longer to achieve during normal times. We will continue to create new programming and connection in 2021, hoping that we will see everyone in person once again before too long.

In addition to consideration of what to keep and leave behind in the New Year, I would like to encourage caregivers to skip the New Year's resolutions once again this year in favor of setting goals for selfcare (page 3). At this time last year, I included a version of this article in the newsletter without any idea of what 2020 would bring. After nine months of pandemic living, selfcare is even more important. If you need help finding support, resources, and more ways to care for yourself please contact me at the Dane County Caregiver Program at 608-261-5679 or <mailto:debroux.jane@countyofdane.com>.

It is my hope that we will be looking at a whole new set of circumstances at this time next year.

Happy New Year!



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

Jane De Broux  
Caregiver Specialist  
Dane County Area Agency on Aging



 Caring for Caregivers

608-261-5679

[debroux.jane@countyofdane.com](mailto:debroux.jane@countyofdane.com)

## Skip the Resolutions and Set New Year's Goals

Most New Year's resolutions are discarded pretty quickly. Studies have shown that less than 25% of people remain committed after 30 days. Yet there is value in setting goals to make things work more smoothly and to be sure you are living in a way that is true to yourself rather than always fulfilling the needs and expectations of others. Coming off a year like 2020, it has become clear that adaptability and creativity are key when it comes to making positive change.

Before setting New Year's goals this year, I encourage caregivers to begin by taking some time to think about this quote from author K. L. Toth, *"One of the greatest tragedies in life is to lose your own sense of self and accept the version of you that is expected by everyone else."* Caregiving is a role often defined by the expectations of other people – the person you're caring for; other family members and friends; and medical, legal, and human services professionals. Take a little time to focus on your needs and what you might like to bring into your life as you look ahead to a new year. Think about how you can practice self-kindness, open yourself to new solutions as the caregiving landscape changes for you, and reach out for help when you need it.

*A list of goals might include:*

### **Committing to something enjoyable**

This could be anything from scheduling a daily walk or setting aside time to read a good book to taking on a fun project like learning to knit, recreating a dish from your favorite cooking show, playing an instrument, or learning to paint. You could even take this a step further by finding an online book club or class for cooking, painting, yoga or other activity. Commit to one thing and schedule it. Carving out time that feels good and reflects your authentic self is critical to your health and well-being.

### **Delegating and asking for help**

Delegating and asking for help ensures that you can keep your commitment to doing something for yourself. Can someone call or set up a video visit with your care partner while you attend your class, group, or practice? Is there a family member, friend, or neighbor who wouldn't mind regularly taking over a chore that would free up some time for you? During COVID-19 in-home help is very limited but there may be individuals who could shop for you, drop off meals, clear snow, or be available for a masked and distanced walk. If there isn't anyone who comes to mind, brainstorm with professionals at local resources to see what's available.

### **Planning for your Care Partner's future**

There may come a day when you are no longer able to provide care due to your own limitations or because your care partner's needs are too advanced to handle. Research available options knowing that doing so can save time and stress in the future and can bring peace of mind now. And, difficult as it may be, determine who would provide care if anything interfered with your ability to do so. Designate that person as the alternate to care for your loved one in your will.

Contact the Dane County Caregiver Program for assistance and referrals at 608-261-5679 or [debroux.jane@countyofdane.com](mailto:debroux.jane@countyofdane.com).

—Jane De Broux, Caregiver Specialist  
Area Agency on Aging of Dane County

## Trualta Highlight: Activities and Recreation

Finding new activities to do with your loved one during the long winter months, and with Covid-19 restrictions in place, can be stressful and challenging. Trualta has gathered together a variety of activities for caregivers to do with their loved ones, and for care recipients to complete on their own. Under the Trualta badge *Activities & Recreation* you will find activities that work for all interests and capabilities, and are simple and easy to do. Incorporating these types of activities in your daily routine can help add a sense of purpose to your day, and you and your loved one can both have something to look forward to doing.

### Examples of breathing activities:

Use words to match your breath. Think about the word *joy* when you breathe in, and the word *peace* when you exhale. You can also use the words health and love, or love and light.

Put your hand on your stomach while you breathe in and out to feel your stomach rising and falling with each breath.



### Examples of sensory activities:

Sit outside in nature bundled up with a cozy, fuzzy blanket and a hot cup of tea. Breathe in the fresh air and take in the sights and sounds around you.

Listen to music and smell different herbs and spices. Talk about what each scent reminds you of. You can also try to take turns guessing what scent you are smelling.



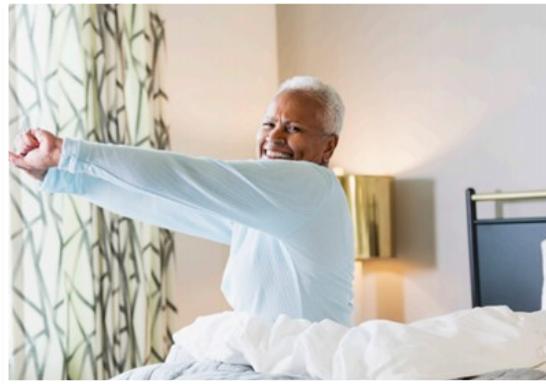
### Examples of meditation activities:

Color in an adult coloring book using colored pencils or pens.

Use guided meditation through audio apps or recordings.

### Examples of physical activities:

Always consult your doctor first about what physical movements are best for your loved one, but creating a morning stretching routine for you both to do together can help with stiffness, sore muscles, and relaxing the body. Check out the Trualta module – *Good Morning Stretches* for a video that demonstrates simple and safe stretches.



### Examples of busy or rummage baskets:

Create busy or rummage baskets with items from around the house. These types of activities can be particularly helpful for loved ones with early- to mid-stage dementia and can help decrease anxiety, agitation, and wandering. For the caregiver, they can be meditative and relaxing in their repetition. Busy baskets should be simple and easy for your loved one to use and can help them focus on a specific task.

**A jar of buttons** - Sort the buttons by size or by color. Match the buttons that are alike. Dump out the buttons and put back into the jar one-by-one.

**A container of nuts and bolts** - Match the nuts and bolts. Pour out the container and put the items back in. Sort nuts and bolts by size.

**A container of old photos** - Put the photos in an album. Sort photos by person, place, or time. Stack and restack photos.

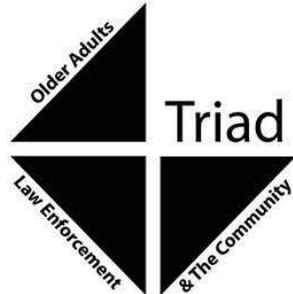


—Sarah Schupbach  
*Area Agency on Aging of Dane County Intern*

For more ideas for Winter and Covid-safe activities, visit the Activities & Recreation Badge on Trualta. The Trualta online educational platform for caregivers is an easy-to-use online free to Dane County caregivers. It includes educational modules related to all stages and aspects of caregiving, along with local Dane County resources. For more information on Trualta and to register for an account contact Sarah Schupbach at [schupbach.sarah@countyofdane.com](mailto:schupbach.sarah@countyofdane.com) or 608-335-6506.



# What's Up With Falling Down?



**Kristine Niestrom**

Director of Rehabilitation

Ageility Rehabilitation

Wednesday, January 27 at 10:00 a.m.

Falls are the leading cause of fatal and nonfatal injuries among adults 65 and older. Join Kristine Niestrom, Physical Therapist from Ageility Rehabilitation, for a discussion on the importance of fall prevention, factors that increase the risk for falls, interventions that can reduce fall risk and an exercise program demonstration that is focused on improving strength and balance to reduce your risk for falls.

**To register and receive the Zoom link, email [TriadEvents@rsvpdane.org](mailto:TriadEvents@rsvpdane.org)**



Triad brings together older adults, law enforcement and the community at-large to promote safety and reduce the fear of crime. Providing vital information about personal safety and crime prevention is key to our mission. We invite you to become an active participant in Triad activities. Volunteers are a key element in our success. To get involved, email Mike Thomsen at [mthomsen@rsvpdane.org](mailto:mthomsen@rsvpdane.org) or call (608) 441-7897.



# CAREGIVER TELECONNECTION

[www.caregiverteleconnection.org](http://www.caregiverteleconnection.org)



Date	Time	Topic	A LEADING VOICE FOR CAREGIVERS
Wednesdays in January (6, 13, 20, 27)	11:00 am Eastern 10:00 am Central 9:00 am Mountain 8:00 am Pacific	<b>Caregiving During COVID-19: A Series with Lucy Barylak, MSW and Elliot Montgomery Sklar, PhD</b> <i>Whether caregiving for a loved one or trying to care for ourselves during the pandemic – we are all experiencing a series of common emotions. When we don't address these emotions, they can impact upon our physical and mental health. Most of us lack a forum to discuss these feelings and experiences around COVID-19, which this series will provide.</i>	
Thursdays in January (7, 14, 21, 28)	11:00 am Eastern 10:00 am Central 9:00 am Mountain 8:00 am Pacific	<b>Pride of Caring: A Series for LGBT Caregivers &amp; Professionals with Lucy Barylak, MSW and Elliot Montgomery Sklar, PhD</b> <i>This series discusses the role of sexual orientation and gender identity in the context of identifying resources, services and supports of aging LGBT adults and those who care for them. In addition, policies, planning and hot topics affecting the LGBT community are explored.</i>	
Monday, January 11th	1:00 pm Eastern 12:00 pm Central 11:00 am Mountain 10:00 am Pacific	<b>Strange Behaviors: Dementia versus Delirium with Dr. Jennifer Arnouville, DO</b> <i>Learn this subtle differences between behaviors that are due to dementia or delirium. Gain confidence with handling some common behaviors in dementia patients, and with recognizing signs that can instead signify another underlying medical problem.</i>	
<b>***Sponsored by North Central Texas Caregiver Teleconnection***</b>			
Tuesday, January 12th	11:00 am Eastern 10:00 am Central 9:00 am Mountain 8:00 am Pacific	<b>Who cares for the Caregiver with Dr. Nestor Praderio</b> <i>Caregivers – you find yourself as lead control center or life coordinator for your loved one with Alzheimer's Disease or Related Dementia. You become nurse, cook, physical therapist, accountant, counselor, chauffeur, activity director and so much more. But who takes care of you? Join Nestor H. Praderio, M.D. as he reviews current data, trends and tips for maintaining a healthy role as a Caregiver.</i>	
Tuesday, January 19th	12:00 pm Eastern 11:00 am Central 10:00 am Mountain 9:00 am Pacific	<b>What is Memory and How Can I Keep Mine? with Tam Cummings, PhD.</b> <i>In this session I will explain what memory is, how it functions, and what happens to the brain during dementia. Exercises for keeping your healthy and normally aging brain strong will also be discussed.</i>	
Tuesday, January 26th	12:00 pm Eastern 11:00 am Central 10:00 am Mountain 9:00 am Pacific	<b>Best way for Dementia Caregivers to handle a loved one's memory loss with Barry Jacobs, PsyD</b> <i>In this Caregiver Teleconnections by a clinical psychologist and co-author of AARP Meditations for Caregivers, we'll discuss the importance of loosening the grip of our own memories of who our loved ones were and accepting them as they are now to best help them.</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

# Wisconsin Senior Medical Patrol

# Fraud Alert



December 2020

*Senior Medicare Patrols (SMPs) empower and assist Medicare beneficiaries, their families, and caregivers to prevent, detect, and report health care fraud, errors, and abuse through outreach, counseling, and education.*

Please feel free to share this publication with others who may benefit from its contents.

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## TO CONTACT WI SMP

**Call:** (888) 818-2611

**E-mail:** [smp-wi@gwaar.org](mailto:smp-wi@gwaar.org)

**Website:** <https://gwaar.org/senior-medicare-patrol>

**Facebook:**

@WisconsinSeniorMedicarePatrol



## COVID-19 Vaccine is in the Pipeline. The Scammers Won't be Far Behind!

The Food and Drug Administration, FDA, has authorized two vaccines from pharmaceutical manufacturers, these vaccines are now being distributed to federal- and state-approved locations. For most people living in the U.S., states and territories will make the final decisions on who will get the vaccines and when. States are also working on their own specific vaccination plans. You can check with Wisconsin Department for Health Services for the latest information regarding the vaccine:

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/vaccine-about.htm>

While we enter the distribution phase of the vaccine, there's no doubt scammers are scheming. Here's what you need to know to avoid a vaccine-related scam:

- You likely will not need to pay anything out of pocket to get the vaccine during this public health emergency.
- You cannot pay to put your name on a list to get the vaccine.
- You cannot pay to get early access to the vaccine.
- No one from a vaccine distribution site or health care payer, like a private insurance company, will call you asking for your Social Security number or your credit card or bank account information to sign you up to get the vaccine.
- Beware of providers offering other products, treatments, or medicines to prevent the virus. Check with your health care provider before paying for or receiving any COVID-19-related treatment.
- If you get a call, text, email, see an advertisement — or even someone knocking on your door — claiming they can get you early access to the vaccine, STOP. That is a scam. Do not pay for a promise of vaccine access or share personal information. Instead, contact the WI SMP Helpline at (888) 818-2611 to notify them of this development and you can also report it to the FTC at [ReportFraud.ftc.gov](http://ReportFraud.ftc.gov).

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## Fraud Alert

# SMPSCAM WATCH: COVID-19 VACCINE

Be on the lookout for COVID-19 scams:

- You *likely* will not need to pay anything out-of-pocket to get the vaccine during this public health emergency.
- You cannot pay to put your name on a list to get the vaccine early.
- No one from Medicare or the Health Department will contact you.
- Beware of providers offering other products, treatments, or medicines to prevent the virus.
- No one from a vaccine distribution site or health care payer will call and ask for your Medicare number, Social Security number, or banking information to sign you up for a vaccine.

**Contact the SMP to report Medicare fraud, errors, or abuse  
at 877.808.2468 or at [smpresource.org](http://smpresource.org).**

SUPPORTED BY GRANT # 90MPC0002 FROM ACL

Wisconsin SMP is available for outreach events, educational sessions for beneficiaries, caregivers and professionals, workshops and exhibits at events.

Please contact us at [smp-wi@gwaar.org](mailto:smp-wi@gwaar.org) for more information



@WisconsinSeniorMedicarePatrol

## Monthly MIPPA Moment: Medicare's General Enrollment Period and the Medicare Savings Programs

**MIPPA (Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act) has a goal of educating older adults on Medicare's cost-saving benefits & preventive services.**

January is always a favorite new beginning! January 1st of every year is also the beginning of Medicare's **General Enrollment Period**. If you miss your Medicare Initial Enrollment Period when you are first eligible at age 65, you can also sign up for Parts A and B during Medicare's General Enrollment Period (**January 1–March 31**), and your **coverage will start July 1** of that year. You can enroll online (<https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/medicare/>) or by calling Social Security (local, 866-770-2262; Federal, 1-800-772-1213).

- You can enroll in Part A, Part B, or both during this time.
- You may have to pay a late enrollment penalty of 10% for each 12 month period if you were eligible but didn't have Part B, with the exception of special circumstances.
- You may be eligible enroll into a Medicare Advantage (Part C) or a prescription drug (Part D) plan April 1 – June 30 of the same year you use the General Enrollment Period for Parts A and B of Original Medicare, if you do not have those and want them.

If you have difficulty paying your Medicare costs, this is an important reminder that "Medicare Savings Programs" (MSP) can potentially help pay premiums, deductibles, coinsurance, or copayments, depending on the program you may be eligible for.

[Qualified Medicare Beneficiary \(QMB\) Program](#)

[Specified Low-Income Medicare Beneficiary \(SLMB\) Program](#)

[Qualifying Individual \(QI\) Program](#)

[Qualified Disabled and Working Individuals \(QDWI\) Program](#)

To see if you may qualify for the Medicare Savings Programs, apply online at [access.wi.gov](http://access.wi.gov), over the telephone at **1-888-794-5556**, by mail (<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/library/F-10101.htm>), or in person with your local Medicaid agency. The local agency in Dane County is the **Capitol Consortium**, at 1819 Aberg Avenue, Madison, WI 53704. The Capitol Consortium can also send you an application and answer any questions you may have about the application or these programs if you call the number above.

**For more information on MIPPA Programs call MIPPA Program Specialist  
Leilani Amundson at 608-240-7458.**



**Connecting People with the  
Assistance They Need**

Monday through Friday

Call 7:45 am—4:30 pm

**(608) 240-7400**

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

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

Click on the button to follow the ADRC on  
facebook.





# FREE Virtual (Online) Welcome to Medicare Seminars

**Sponsored by Area Agency on Aging of Dane County's  
Elder Benefits Specialist Program**

## What you need to know about enrolling in Medicare

If you are turning age 64 this year, we can help you make informed choices about your Medicare options! You'll receive accurate and detailed information from unbiased experts in benefit programs.

**January 23, 2021, 9-11:30 am**

Email [aaa@countyofdane.com](mailto:aaa@countyofdane.com) to register by **1/14/21**

**March 20, 2021, 9-11:30 am**

Email [aaa@countyofdane.com](mailto:aaa@countyofdane.com) to register by **3/11/21**

**May 15, 2021, 9-11:30 am**

Email [aaa@countyofdane.com](mailto:aaa@countyofdane.com) to register by **5/6/21**

Seminars will be offered via Zoom.

Email for more information.



## Help the agencies that help older adults live safely in their own homes

*Many agencies serving older adults needed to cancel in-person fundraising events due to the pandemic in 2020. This will have a major impact on their budgets and reduce their ability to provide services and programs. Please consider this when planning your giving.*

- NewBridge Madison is selling Bridging HOPE t-shirt & NewBridge face masks [here](#).
- Northwest Dane Senior Services: [2020 Subaru Share the Love Event](#) through 1/4/21; for every new Subaru vehicle purchased or leased, Subaru will donate \$250 to the customer's choice of participating charities. Meals on Wheels is one of four national participating charities. As a member of Meals on Wheels America, NWDSS will receive a share of the donation from Subaru vehicles sold at participating Subaru Retailers.
- Stoughton Area Senior Center: Help us reach our annual fundraising goal by learning about our ways of giving [here](#).
- Sugar River Senior Center is sponsoring several fundraisers and a T-Shirt Sale. Call 424-6007 for details.
- The Hmong Institute needs the following household items for their older adults: toilet papers, dish washing soap, bleach, wipes, paper towels, toothpaste, and toothbrushes. They are also asking for monetary donations to purchase pallets of rice (cheaper if order in large quantities). Please contact Mai Zong Vue (695-4041 or [maizong.vue@TheHmongInstitute.org](mailto:maizong.vue@TheHmongInstitute.org)) for more information or to make a donation.

# Caring for the Caregiver Program

AREA AGENCY ON AGING OF DANE COUNTY

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Caring for Caregivers

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## Save paper and reduce postage costs

### Please let us know if:

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

### Contact:

Jane De Broux

608-261-5679

[debroux.jane@countyofdane.com](mailto:debroux.jane@countyofdane.com)