

December 2022

Caregiver Chronicles



Every Generation Needs Regeneration.

—*Charles Spurgeon*

AREA ON AGING OF DANE COUNTY • 2865 N SHERMAN AVE, MADISON, WI 53704

608-261-9930 • [HTTP://AAA.DCDHS.COM](http://AAA.DCDHS.COM)

We're now in the third holiday season since the pandemic upended the world in 2020. Many of us will embark on the most "normal" holiday schedules and events we've had in a long time, which is reason for celebration. The ability to gather, connect, and participate in cherished rituals and activities will likely not be taken for granted again by those of us who lived through it.

Even as we emerge with tools to help protect us from the deadliest aspects of the virus, we may still be feeling exhausted by the cumulative stress of the pandemic's length and its accompanying losses. There are people we lost to COVID-19 who are no longer around our holiday tables and present at gatherings. Some of us have been caring for highly-vulnerable loved ones and, as such, have avoided exposures to protect them—keeping us even more isolated than we might otherwise have been. According to a research brief from the University of Wisconsin-Madison Extension on the impact of COVID-19 on Wisconsin Caregivers from May 2020 to June 2021* key findings indicated that during the pandemic:

1. Caregivers of adults were more likely to report that COVID-19 is a threat to their communities and household than non-caregivers. During a time when so many are understandably eager to return to holiday celebrations as we remember them in the past, we can continue to be mindful of those who are more vulnerable by:

Making a plan to update vaccinations and boosters. These vaccines are currently available: COVID-19 primary series for everyone 6 months and older; updated Omicron booster for everyone 5 years and older at 2 months after your first primary or booster dose. See <https://publichealthmdc.com/coronavirus/covid-19-vaccine> to find out where to get your vaccination in Dane County. (Don't forget your flu vaccine as well.)

Having tests on hand allow people to take a COVID-19 test at home and make decisions that will keep those around them safe. Free self-tests are available to Wisconsin residents delivered right to the door. You can now order a free package of five rapid antigen COVID-19 tests every month at dhs.wisconsin.gov/news/releases/111722.htm.

2. Caregivers took more precautionary behaviors, used fewer coping behaviors, and were more likely to forego healthcare than non-caregivers. It can be wearing to feel responsible for taking measures when you'd just like to go back to feeling normal, too. However, 9 out of 10 deaths from COVID-19 are now in people 65 or older, the highest rate since the pandemic began.**

Caregivers may find they can share the responsibility for keeping all family members safe by talking about it in advance of holiday events, letting others who will gather know expectations early on testing or vaccinations—or mask wearing as warranted.

*<https://aging.extension.wisc.edu/articles/families-under-stress/>

**<https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2022/11/28/covid-who-is-dying/>

Caregivers can strengthen their coping behaviors by focusing on self-care and connecting with others to provide support. [Click here](#) for a list of Caregiver Support Groups in Dane County. They can also contact the [Dane County Caregiver Support Program](#) or call the ADRC to talk to someone live from 7:45 am — 4:30 pm (see page 9 for contact details) about available resources.

After all the delay in the healthcare system due to pent-up demand and significant departures of care providers in the healthcare field, if you are a **caregiver who had foregone your own healthcare** in order to protect your care partner from exposure or because of the strain of navigating a highly-stressed healthcare system, make a resolution to schedule appointments now if you are overdue. If a change in your employment or circumstances has left you in need of health insurance contact *Covering Wisconsin* for information on free or low cost health insurance options (see page 6 to learn more). If you are turning 64 in 2023, you can learn about Medicare (see page 9 for information sessions in 2023).

3. Caregivers had significantly greater levels of stress than non-caregivers and continued to report an increase in feelings of burnout over the course of the pandemic. Caregivers need a break now more than ever. Cumulative stress occurs when several prolonged concerns pile up with no recovery or resolution in sight. If not managed, they can cause exhaustion, mood swings, and burnout.

Caregivers can contact the [Dane County Caregiver Program](#) or the ADRC (page 9) for help. In 2023, *Dane County Caring for Caregivers Grant Program* will begin a new year. You can call Jane De Broux at 608-381-5733 beginning December 19, 2022 to get on the list for a 2023 grant assessment and application interview. For qualified applicants, the grant can provide respite and supplementary services for caregiver support. For details on the grant program and to see who is eligible, see the [Caregiver Program brochure](#).

4. Caregivers with better community-based support had lower levels of distress during the pandemic. In our work with caregivers, we have found this to be true. Caregivers who were able to locate a support group, benefit from a grant program, engage with a senior center or coalition in their community, connect with resources at their church or community organization, or work with resources to support caregivers of persons with Alzheimer's or dementia fared much better through these extraordinary times.

If you are interested in reading the research brief you can access it here: [Families Under Stress: Assessing Caregivers' Adaptation, Coping and Resilience through the COVID-19 Pandemic](#).

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

Jane De Broux
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Reduce Your Holiday Stress

It's time for the holidays once again—decorating, shopping, parties, family gatherings, presents, greeting cards—and the list goes on. While many people look forward to the hustle and bustle of the season, others see the holidays as a time of stress, chaos, and sadness. People who have experienced changes due to Alzheimer's, stroke, or other medical conditions may feel a great deal of loss during the holidays. Those who are caring for these loved ones may feel overwhelmed trying to keep up holiday traditions while continuing to provide care. They may also be uncertain about gathering with friends and family for fear the changes in physical health, behavior, and personality may make others uncomfortable.

If you are experiencing anxiety over the upcoming holiday season it is important to realize that these feelings are normal, and you are not alone. There are ways to reduce stress during the holiday season, so take a moment to consider what you can do to better manage your life during this busy season. Here are some suggestions:

Adjust your expectations. You can't and don't have to do everything you've done in the past. Talk with your loved ones and choose a few traditions to carry out.

Ask for help. Involve other family members or friends in your holiday preparations. Not only does this reduce your stress, but it provides you and your care partner with opportunities for socialization. Write down tasks that need completing so you can be specific when people offer to help.

Prepare family and friends before getting together. Update family and friends on how your loved one has changed and what they can expect during their visit. Offer suggestions on how best to communicate.

Offer gift suggestions. Give friends and family ideas for useful gifts they can give such as music CDs, photo albums, comfortable clothing, videos, or audio books. Don't forget your own wish list! Gift certificates for dining and laundry or cleaning services are usually much appreciated.

Keep the needs of your care partner in mind. Remember that distant memory stays intact the longest and plan activities for those with memory loss accordingly, avoiding new games or activities. Many stroke survivors lose the ability to feed themselves and may find it uncomfortable to eat in front of guests. An afternoon of looking at old slides or photos and reminiscing might be more appropriate than sharing a meal. Schedule gatherings during the day rather than in the evening since symptoms often worsen in the evening.

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Be good to yourself. Make it a priority to care for yourself. Get away with friends for lunch, a movie, or a concert—it might be just what you need. Take some private time for yourself to read, journal, or enjoy a scented bath. Determine what recharges and rejuvenates you and make the time to do it.

Don't let the hustle and bustle of the holidays add anxiety to your life! Find ways to simplify and enjoy a holiday season filled with love, joy and good memories!

—Jane Mahoney

Older Americans Act Consultant (formerly)
Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources

Regenerating Holiday Activities

Are there activities and gatherings you enjoy that connect generations? For example, if you enjoy making cookies, set up a time to do so with older adults and the children and grandchildren in the family. You can combine the creative process with shared time together. With a little planning, everyone can participate. Kids of all ages can join in the decorating. For those who may find age or physical challenges make handling the cookies difficult, they may enjoy telling holiday stories and reminiscing about holiday past-times.

To keep everyone engaged and moving along with the cookie production, it can be fun to set up categories to reward with a small gift or treat for the most colorful cookie, best animal cookie, biggest or smallest, anything that will allow all to participate. Those who cannot be actively engaged in the creating of the cookies can decide categories so that everyone's work is recognized and gets a treat. Activities like this one help the different generations in the family connect, make memories, and accomplish a holiday task for everyone to enjoy. A multi-generational play list of holiday songs during the activity can also be fun and keep things lively and moving.



Need help Paying for Health Care?

Make an appointment to
learn about free or low-cost
health insurance options.



Learn more & ask questions:

Sat. Dec. 3rd, 10am-2pm
Madison Public Library
Hawthorne Branch
2707 E. Washington Ave

Or, chat with us
online Mon-Fri
9am-4pm



Navigators from Covering Wisconsin will be available to provide **free help**. Call (608) 261-1455 or visit coveringwi.org/enroll to make an appointment. Appointments preferred, walk-ins welcome.

covering
Wisconsin
Connect to Care, Engage in Health
www.coveringwi.org

Nutrition: Snow Day Staples

Another way to plan ahead and keep stress levels lower is to stock your winter pantry—for yourself and your care partner if you live in different households. Having shelf-stable foods at the ready to create nutritious meals when you're snowed in is a helpful way to care for yourself and loved ones.

Shannon Gabriel, RDN CD recommends these great options:

Canned items:

Salmon, chicken, tuna, beans, lentils, soups and broths, vegetables (tomatoes, corn, green beans, and carrots), and fruits (pineapple, mandarin oranges, applesauce, peaches, and pears)

Grains, Nuts, Seeds, Fruit:

Brown rice, quinoa, oats, rice cakes or crackers, whole grain or vegetable pastas, cereal, nuts, seeds, peanut or almond butters, and dried fruits (apricots, prunes, and raisins)

Whole foods:

Potatoes, garlic, and onions

Shelf-stable milk:

Powdered, condensed, or boxed almond, rice, or soy

Oils, Vinegars, Sauces & Spices:

Olive, avocado, or canola oil, white or balsamic vinegar, mayonnaise, marinara sauce, ketchup, mustard, jam, honey, and spices (garlic powder, onion powder, chili powder, cinnamon, cumin)



Shannon Gabriel provides personal nutrition counseling for adults age 60+ looking for ways to improve their overall health. You can reach Shannon at 608-261-5678 or Gabriel.Shannon@countyofdane.com.

Monthly MIPPA Moment: Important 2023 Medicare Updates

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

New in 2023, the cost of the Medicare Part B premium for most people in 2023 will go down from \$170.10 per month in 2022 to \$164.90, a decrease of \$5.20 per month. The Medicare Part B deductible is also decreasing from \$233 in 2022 to \$226 in 2023, a decrease of \$7. Part A will have a 1-3% increase in costs for 2023. Medicare Savings Programs that can help with costs remain in place at the Wisconsin Medicaid agency - more information about those programs can be found here: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p1/p10062.pdf>

There are also changes to Medicare enrollment periods that will get your coverage started earlier. When signing up the month you turn 65 or during the *remaining 3 months* of that Initial Enrollment Period (IEP), coverage *now starts the first day of the following month* for all with no delay for the months after your 65th birthday. During the General Enrollment Period (GEP) coverage also will start on the *first of the month after signing up during the GEP in 2023, instead of July 1* of that year. This is a huge and welcome change!

Other changes include a \$35/month cost limit on *certain* (but not all) insulin products for all Medicare Part C and Part D plans, more free vaccines covered under Medicare Part D including the Shingles vaccine now and a new Part B benefit that extends coverage after a kidney transplant for anti-rejection drugs beyond the current limit of 36 months.

Finally, a new Special Enrollment Period will be available in 2023 to cover new "exceptional circumstances". This option will help people who miss an enrollment period due to certain events like a natural disaster or another emergency, incarceration or losing Medicaid coverage. Your time to enroll will depend on the circumstances. You can get more information about how to qualify and when to apply at [Medicare.gov](https://www.cms.gov/About-CMS/Agency-Information/Emergency/Downloads/MedicareBeneficiaryDisasterEnrollmentQsandAs.pdf) or at <https://www.cms.gov/About-CMS/Agency-Information/Emergency/Downloads/MedicareBeneficiaryDisasterEnrollmentQsandAs.pdf>.

Adapted from Medicare.gov and CMS.gov. For more MIPPA Program information, call MIPPA Program Specialist, Leilani Amundson, at 608-240-7458. This project was supported by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services with financial assistance, in whole or in part, by grant number 2101WIMIAA, from the U.S. Administration for Community Living, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 20201.



FREE Virtual (Online) Welcome to Medicare Seminars

Sponsored by Area Agency on Aging of Dane County's
Elder Benefit 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 14, 2023, 9-11:30 am
Email aaa@countyofdane.com register by 1/5/23

This seminar will be offered via Zoom.

Additional Dates:
(Location: TBD)

March 18, 2023
May 13, 2023

July 15, 2023
September 16, 2023
November 11, 2023

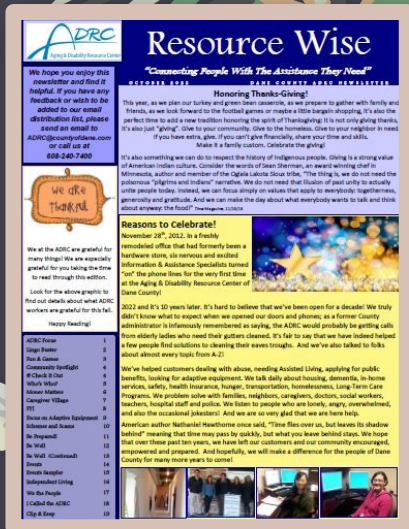


Monday through Friday
Call 7:45 am—4:30 pm

(608) 240-7400

Website: www.daneadrc.org

Email: ADRC@countyofdane.com



Click photo to read

CAREGIVER TELECONNECTION

www.caregiverteleconnection.org



Date Time Topic A LEADING VOICE FOR CAREGIVERS

All sessions are available by telephone and on Zoom

Thursday December 1	2:00 pm Eastern 1:00 pm Central 12:00 pm Mountain 11:00 am Pacific	Getting Through the Holidays with Tam Cummings, PhD <i>This month is especially challenging for families. The person with dementia has changed and it's okay to change your holiday plans to match their needs and yours. We will strategize various self-care methods and ways to meet family expectations as well. **Sponsored by VITAS Healthcare**</i>
Tuesday December 6	11:00 am Eastern 10:00 am Central 9:00 am Mountain 8:00 am Pacific	The Flu and You with Elliot Montgomery Sklar, PhD <i>This is projected to be the worst flu season in a decade, with outbreaks already in many parts of the country. How do we tell the flu apart from COVID? How well does the flu shot protect us? How can we best be prepared and protected? Join us!</i>
Wednesday December 7	2:00 pm Eastern 1:00 pm Central 12:00 pm Mountain 11:00 am Pacific	How to "Keep Our Cool" in Life and Over the Holidays with Dr. James Huysman, PsyD, LCSW <i>Join Dr. Jamie as we connect with our higher awareness through the eyes not only of gratitude but other ways to "keep our cool" to reduce our stress and become more reflective and open minded for ourselves, our families, and especially for our children who learn from us.</i>
Thursday December 8	11:00 am Eastern 10:00 am Central 9:00 am Mountain 8:00 am Pacific	Dear Lucy: Who am I? with Lucy Barylak, MSW <i>When caring for someone with dementia, caregivers may lose their identity, role and relationships. The session will focus on why this could happen and how to manage and accept change in a positive and meaningful way.</i>

(Continued on page 7)

THE CAREGIVER CUP PODCAST
with Cathy VandenHeuvel
filling your cup as a working caregiver

The Caregiver Cup Podcast

Learning To Celebrate Differently As A Caregive

01:05 | 25:43

Learning To Celebrate Differently As A Caregiver

25:43

The Caregiver Cup Podcast's goal is to help the working woman fill her cup first to be an effective caregiver while pursuing her passion and goals. Green Bay resident, Cathy VandenHeuvel is a career woman, wife, mother, grandmother, caregiver, gardener, and pet mom. She's had experience caring for her parents, her spouse, and as a long-distance caregiver. Click on the photo above to access her podcast or see page 11 to listen directly from your phone or tablet.

Monday
December 12
1:00 pm Eastern
12:00 pm Central
11:00 am Mountain
10:00 am Pacific

Managing the Holidays: Interactive Discussion about How to Cope with Zanda Hilger, LPC *Join in a yearly interactive conversation about holiday activities when you are a caregiver. What are your challenges, what has worked for you in the past, what have you had to change from traditional celebrations, and how do you balance caregiving and self-care? ****Sponsored by the North-Central Texas Caregiver Teleconnection Program*****

Tuesday
December 13
11:00 am Eastern
10:00 am Central
9:00 am Mountain
8:00 am Pacific

Cómo reconocer y abordar los efectos del estrés durante la temporada navideña con Dr. Nestor H Praderio *¡Las vacaciones de Navidad y Año Nuevo ya están aquí! Un tiempo para la alegría, la felicidad y el buen ánimo. Pero para muchos, puede ser un momento de sentir una inmensa presión y tal vez una profunda desesperación. N. H. Praderio, M.D. facilitará una discusión sobre cómo reconocer y abordar los efectos del estrés durante la temporada navideña.*

Thursday
December 15
12:00 pm Eastern
11:00 am Central
10:00 am Mountain
9:00 am Pacific

Understanding the neuropathology of Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias with Jeffrey Darling, PhD *Please join Jeffrey Darling, PhD as he explores Alzheimer's and Related Dementias, brain pathology and biomarkers. He will discuss the disease, stages, diagnostics, hallmarks of the disease. He will also provide a general overview of a brain PET Imaging, giving an overview of what a scan is like and what images look like.*

Friday
December 16
12:00 pm Eastern
11:00 am Central
10:00 am Mountain
9:00 am Pacific

Avoiding the Potholes of the Dementia Journey with Evalyn Greb, LCSW and Glenda Rogers *Most of us have heard about the stages of dementia and how they impact the one for whom you are caring. This presentation will focus on how caregivers of persons with dementia can learn to steer through the rocky road of dementia, armed with information and advice from other caregivers. You can be aware of what your future might hold and how to ease the journey. Join us!*



A program of the WellMed Charitable Foundation
Register online at www.caregiverteleconnection.org
call 866.390.6491 Toll Free



If you have a smart phone you can use the QR code on the left to take you directly to the episode, "Learning to Celebrate Differently as a Caregiver" from *The Caregiver Cup Podcast* with Cathy VandenHeuvel.

Activate your cell phone QR scan application or your camera and tap the banner that appears on your phone or tablet. Follow the instructions to listen.



Resources for Caregivers of persons with Alzheimers or dementia

If you are caring for a person with dementia, please consider completing the **First Responder's Tool** with information that can be used in an emergency. The completed form can be hung on the refrigerator or kept in a prominent, accessible location. It can also be shared with family members, case managers, your local EMS or Mental Health Officers/Deputies with the local police/sheriff if appropriate.

The First Responder Tool can be found [here](#) along with more information on the [Dementia Crisis Program](#). Contact the Dementia Care Program Specialist at 608-286-8183 with any questions.

FIRST RESPONDERS TOOL			
<i>Please remember TALK Tactics: Take it slow Ask simple questions Limit reality checks Keep eye contact</i>			
HELPFUL INFORMATION FOR FIRST RESPONDERS WHEN ASSISTING PERSON WITH DEMENTIA			
PERSONAL INFORMATION FOR PERSON WITH DEMENTIA			
Name	Date of Birth		
Language(s) spoken and understood	Name preferred		
My Address			
ARE THERE WEAPONS IN THE HOME? <input type="radio"/> YES <input type="radio"/> NO IF YES, PLEASE LIST WEAPONS BELOW			
EMERGENCY CONTACTS			
Name	Address	Phone Number	
SOMEONE TRUSTED WHO PERSON WITH DEMENTIA RELIES ON TO MAKE DECISIONS			
Name	Phone Number		
MEDICAL INFORMATION			
Medical Conditions			
Allergies			
Pain Areas			
Preferred Hospital			
IMPORTANT: Please attach medication list and dosage instructions.			
Regular Routines			
Difficult time of day for me			
Do I wander?			
How long can I be alone?	Choose time period Other		
SENSORY AIDS NEEDED			
Hearing Aids <input type="checkbox"/>	Glasses <input type="checkbox"/>	Walker <input type="checkbox"/>	Cane <input type="checkbox"/>
Other sensory aids			

Things that upset me	
How I show distress	
How I am calmed	
Best way to communicate with me to help me understand and participate	
Comfort items to take along with me	
Other important things for other to know about me to best help me during a crisis	
Date Completed	Completed by
Relationship	Phone Number

Dane County 24-Hour CRISIS Line: (608) 280-2600