

# CHEMUNG COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF AGING AND LONG TERM CARE

"When you do things from  
your soul, you feel a river  
moving in you, a joy" Rumi



## CAREGIVER NEWSLETTER

**SEPTEMBER 2019**

Homecare and  
Respite

### **Program's Spotlight:**

Homecare Options  
Making Sense of it All

Thursday, September  
19th 2019 5:00 pm-  
7:30 pm at First United  
Methodist Church at  
1034 Broad Street.  
HHDS

A panel of Aging and  
Long Term Care  
Professionals will  
discuss the many  
aspect of homecare.  
Come and learn what  
you should know  
before you need to  
know it!!

See Flyer for more  
details.

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Welcome September,

September is the perfect time to think about Homecare Options. We are getting back to our routines and creating new ones. The weather will be changing soon and we will be indoors with our loved ones for longer periods of time. You may find yourself feeling overwhelmed and tired. Let's think about what would help you and your loved one. This is the Topic of the Department of Aging and Long Term Care Public Hearing on Thursday, September 19th at the United Methodist Church in Horseheads from 5:00 pm - 7:30 pm. Come and be informed of your Homecare choices. Hope to see you there!

Regards,

Stephanie Baker, Aging Services Assistant  
Laurie Hansen, Aging Services Specialist

### **Caregiver Support Services**

**September 3rd, 2019: Stroke Support Group:** 2:00pm to 3:00pm at St. Joseph's Hospital, Cusick Meeting Room, 555 E. Market St. Elmira. Contact Dana or Holly at 733-6541 ext. 2522 for further information

**September 5th, 2019: Care Partners Support Group** 2:00pm to 3:30pm at Appleridge Living Center 168 Miller St. Horseheads, NY.

**September 16th 2019: Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Group:** 1:00 pm at Transformation Community Center 314 W. Church Street, Elmira

**September 19th, 2019: Alzheimer's Association afternoon Caregiver Support Group:** 12:15pm to 1:15pm at The Courtyards at Bethany Village, 3005 Watkins Rd. Horseheads. Call (585)760-5414 for more information or if you need respite care for your loved one during this time.

**September 27th, 2019: Parkinson's Disease Support Group:** At Big Flats Community Center at 476 Maple Street, Big Flats from 1:30 to 3:30.

**Monday's: Parkinson's Disease Support Group:** At Bethany Lutheran Fellowship Hall located at 256 Walnut Street, Elmira from 11:00 to 12:00. For more information call 734-8669.

# CHEMUNG COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF AGING AND LONG TERM CARE

"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give" Winston Churchill

The Department of Aging and Long Term Care has free resources and a lending library covering a wide variety of aging, long term care and caregiver topics. In addition, we have trained staff available to speak to individuals as well as groups about caregiving and aging issues. For more information or to speak to a trained staff please contact us at 737-5520, or visit us at [ofa@chemungcounty.ny.gov](mailto:ofa@chemungcounty.ny.gov)

## Save the Date

### Healthy Living for Your Body and Brain

This program will be offered Thursday, October 17th at the Community Arts of Elmira. This is a free program for the community that centers on the connection between the health of the brain and the body. Demonstration on A Matter of Balance, Tai Chi, Bone Builders and Art Reflects.

For more information please call 737-5520. Reservations required.

## How to Take a Vacation When You're a Caregiver

Taking care of an elderly parent can be draining. Whether you're the day-to-day caregiver or the child with primary responsibility for emotional and practical support, it's essential that you get some time off to refresh yourself and stave off burnout. Yet going away can seem impossible. There are so many details and worries to deal with as a caregiver that it might seem simpler to just give up on the idea of a vacation. But there are options. Anne Albert of Great Barrington, Mass., moved her mother, Rosemary Perry, in with her family after she was diagnosed with rapidly progressing dementia at 78. "It's a full-time job to get someone with dementia going every day," says Albert, 42, who had to stop work as a freelance fashion-shoot producer to take care of her mother, a former nurse. To complicate matters, her mother wouldn't accept help from anyone except Albert. "I was at my wits' end," she recalls. Planning a vacation with her husband and two preteen daughters was a challenge. The answer proved to be an assisted-living residence that offered respite care, one Anne selected after checking out numerous facilities. "Being somewhere else, my mother had to accept care from someone other than me," Albert says. "She wasn't happy about it, but she found some staff people she liked there." Late last summer, Albert, her family, and their two dogs spent a relaxing week on Block Island in Rhode Island, where, for the first time in eight months, she was free of caregiving duties. "You come back with a fresh mind when you're not so immersed in it all the time," she says. "It's easier for me to deal with her and have empathy when I have time for myself."

## Who Will Substitute for You?

If your parent can take care of himself, you might only need someone to check in during the day, bring over meals or provide transportation while you're away. A friend, neighbor, or a volunteer from church or synagogue might be willing to do this on a short-term basis. But you will definitely need someone trustworthy to take charge in case of emergency. Many nursing homes, assisted-living residences, senior communities and post-hospital rehab facilities offer respite services on a short-term basis. "A family member who will fill in for you, who is as invested as you are in your mom or dad, that's ideal," says Maureen Karsen, a social worker at Vanguard Medical Group/Care At Home NJ, a nonprofit that assists the homebound elderly and their caregivers in northern New Jersey. Start with a family meeting, by phone or Skype if necessary. Get your siblings involved. Talk about your need for respite, what kind of care your parent might need and how to pay for it. Discuss in advance when you will be away and who will be the point person in an emergency. If your parent needs more constant or skilled care, you'll need other solutions.

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"It's not how much you do, but how much love you put in the doing" Mother Theresa

## In-Home Care Options

Ask a relative or sibling to stay over. Best case: your parent will be able to stay at home in familiar surroundings with someone she knows and trusts. Jody Schoenfeld's mother Ruth Abramson, 97, has lived with her and her family for more than seven years. Abramson, who is in "pretty good shape," according to her daughter, needs some daytime help but can't stay alone overnight. When Schoenfeld and her husband go away for a weekend, their 35-year-old son often stays with his grandmother. "We pay him the same as we would pay another caregiver," notes Schoenfeld, 62, an artist in Chatham, N.Y. But it's not always possible to get a relative as a caregiver. A brother or sister might be able call or visit more often during your absence, but feel unequal to the task of full-time care.

Pay your parent's daytime caregiver to stay over. The advantage here is that your parent is already comfortable with that person. Schoenfeld's mother needs more of a companion than a caregiver. When Schoenfeld's son is not available, she hires the woman who drives her mother on shopping errands to stay the night. This past winter, Schoenfeld and her husband spent a week in Amsterdam and two daytime helpers took turns staying overnight with Abramson.

Hire a licensed home care aide. This is the best option if your parent needs a greater level of care. Ask friends or your local senior services center for a referral to several agencies that provide licensed home care aides. The National Association for Home Care & Hospice website maintains a comprehensive database of more than 33,000 home care and hospice agencies searchable by location. The price for home care varies. In northern New Jersey, where I live, agencies charge \$200 per day for a live-in aide, or an hourly rate of \$20 to \$25. Be sure to pay the aide to come over for a few hours in advance of your trip so your parent can get to know the caregiver — and so he or she will be familiar with your home and responsibilities. "As much as possible, you'd like your parent to participate in choosing the caregiver," says Karsen. "You want them to be comfortable and happy."

## Out-of-Home Respite Care

Many nursing homes, assisted-living residences, senior communities and even post-hospital rehabilitation facilities offer out-of-home respite services on a short-term basis, from one day to several weeks. They provide a range of care depending on your parent's needs, from help with daily tasks like dressing and eating to skilled nursing — as well as socialization and planned activities. Some have special facilities for Alzheimer's patients. Costs generally range from \$100 to \$250 a night, depending on location. Insurance might cover part of the cost if licensed medical professionals are involved. Ask at the facility what other coverage might be available. This could include veterans' benefits, Medicaid, foundation grants and funding by state agencies. To find top out-of-home care, ask for referrals from your senior services center or Area Agency on Aging. The ARCH National Respite and Resource Center provides a wealth of information and has a national locator tool to help caregivers and professionals find respite services in their community. If possible, help parents get adjusted to the environment in advance, says Karsen. "Start with having the person go there during the day and then try an overnight. Make it familiar surroundings for your loved one," she suggests.

# CHEMUNG COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF AGING AND LONG TERM CARE

"To love a person is to learn the song in their heart, and sing it to them when they have forgotten" Thomas Chandler

## Talk to an Aging Life Care Expert

An aging life care professional or ALCP (formerly called a geriatric care manager) can be a knowledgeable guide to figuring out the various choices — as well as someone to oversee the parent's care and be the point person in an emergency. Dianne McGraw, president of the Aging Life Care Association, says: "An ALCP can tell you what the options are, talk about local facilities, make visits to the older person while you're away, monitor a parent who has a home care aide, and be on call in case of an emergency." The fee depends on the area of the country. In New Orleans, where McGraw is an aging life care professional with Home Care Solutions of New Orleans, the cost is \$125 an hour. McGraw, who has been in practice for 25 years, recalls, "I was with one of my clients in the emergency room on a New Year's Eve. The family was away but not out of reach. I wasn't permitted to make a medical decision, but I was the liaison and representative for the family. We got the family on the phone, and the patient was admitted to the hospital."

## Important Information to Keep on Hand

No matter where your parent stays in your absence, says McGraw, it is essential to organize important information for whoever is providing or overseeing care. Make a notebook or folder that includes the following:

- the primary and secondary emergency contacts
- a list of other family contacts
- a list of physicians (with their phone numbers and addresses), the preferred hospital and the pharmacy
- a list of all medications and which doctor prescribed them
- documents, including power of attorney, living will, advance directives, and Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) orders
- insurance cards

"Keep everything together so the caregiver can grab it and go if they need to get to the hospital," McGraw advises.

## Dealing with Guilt and Anxiety

"Caregivers feel guilty about taking that respite," says Karsen. Some guilt-producing thoughts include: "Nobody can do it the way I do it," "Mom is used to me," or "If something happened I could never forgive myself." Indeed, a parent can be so resistant to your going away that you don't pursue it. When my mother was ill during the last five years of her life, she experienced tremendous anxiety when she knew I was away from home. I remember having a three-day work assignment just a few hours from where she lived and getting dozens of worried phone calls from her, even though she had a full-time live-in aide. Afterward, the aide recommended that I simply not tell my mother when I went away and I ended up going on a couple of short trips without informing her. I called every day but made excuses for why I couldn't come over. I disliked the duplicity, but it saved my mother enormous psychological stress. It also saved my sanity. Even when parents are agreeable, they can still get anxious as the time approaches, Schoenfeld says. McGraw advises you don't announce your planned trip three months early. That could create more anxiety. Taking a break from caregiving is a necessity, notes therapist Karen Levine, who practices in Great Barrington, Mass. "You carry the weight of the responsibility in your heart and mind. Leaving on vacation gives a different message to your brain and heart," she notes.

By Wendy Schuman <https://www.nextavenue.org/how-to-take-a-vacation-when-youre-a-caregiver/>



# SAVE THE DATE

## *Homecare Options: Making Sense of it All*

**Chemung County Department of Aging and Long Term Care**

**Annual Public Hearing**

Thursday, September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2019- 5:00p.m. - 7:30p.m.

First United Methodist Church, 1034 West Broad St. Horseheads, NY

A panel of Aging and Long Term Care professionals will discuss the many aspects of homecare including:

- Recognizing the signs that support is needed
- Determining what help and support is needed
- Communicating with your care team (Doctors, hospital staff, homecare providers, etc.)
- Overview of home care options and ancillary services
- How to pay for in-home care options: eligibility and covered services

Community exhibitors will be available to share helpful information about home care services and programs. Light refreshments will be available. **For more information, to register, or for special accommodations for any special needs please call 607-737-5520 by September 13<sup>th</sup>.** Please come and learn what you should know before you need to know it!

September is **Suicide Prevention Month**

# The Power of *ONE*

**Walk for Suicide Prevention**

*#BeThere*  
— — — — —  
— — — — —  
*#ThePowerofOne*

**Come join the walk and stay for:**

Bagpipes demonstration (10:30 a.m.) ★ Live DJ  
(DJ Metz) ★ Art displays ★ Sidewalk chalk painting  
★ Therapy animals ★ Recovery rock painting ★ Various  
interactive wellness activities, including Yoga and Tai-chi  
★ Recovery t-shirt painting ★ Over 30 tables of suicide  
prevention resources from the VA and local community ★  
Free hotdog lunch (while supplies last)

For additional information contact Jennifer Haggerty, LCSW  
Suicide Prevention Coordinator at: 607-664-4366

**Thursday, September 12th**  
**10:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.**  
**Bath VA Medical Center Parade Field**