

CAREGIVER CHRONICLE

Connections for Caregivers

Dr. Leilani Doty and the UF Memory Disorder Clinic: Helping to Make Sense Out of Alzheimer's

By David Greenberg

As family and friends we can see when loved ones are starting to change. But it's often hard to know what that change really is. It could simply be someone getting forgetful as they age. It could be

a transient ischemic attack (TIA), often labeled a mini-stroke. Or it could be the onset of Alzheimer's or another form of dementia.

How we treat the person experiencing these changes varies based on what's causing them. And there's a way to find out if the

changes are Alzheimer's or dementia. Dr. Leilani Doty and the staff at the UF Memory Disorder Clinic can help. The



clinic stands ready to help with the difficult diagnosis of memory disorders, offer treatment options and make recommendations about resources in the community that can provide support.

The symptoms of memory disorders go far beyond simply forgetting things. They could include language disorders (speaking, reading and/or writing), a decline in regular daily activities at home or work, spatial disorders such as getting lost in the neighborhood or home, facial and emotional recognition, difficulty with decisions-making, planning activities, or completing tasks, apathy and inappropriate behavior.

And while one sees the changes in the person suffering from a memory disorder, there's often a second victim of these changes.

"We are often diagnosing two people," Dr. Doty said at a recent presentation for the
(continued on next page)

A Message From Cheryl Robinson

Hello again and happy spring! This issue of the Chronicle seems quite robust with information on several resources and supports available for caregivers.



For example, Dr. Doty, who is one of our community gems, continues to passionately and compassionately instruct us and advocate for caregivers and those living with dementia. In fact, she has just successfully held her annual training for caregivers at The Village in the last few weeks.

Vidya Hogan with Elder Options provides an overview of the long-term-care program and SHINE, two excellent

available resources. And Scott Barnett shares some information on acupuncture and physical therapy as it relates to addressing caregiver stress.

Sally Dahlem focuses on the importance of knowing who your care team really is in the community. There is information on benefit application with the Veteran's Administration and information on Medicare as well.

So, if there is a theme for this issue perhaps it is getting to know your community team and resources. Thank you for the opportunity to share this information and to be a part of your team.

Cheryl Robinson, LCSW

Dr. Doty

(continued from previous page)

Alzheimer's Association. "We have to look at caregiver stress because, while that obviously impacts the caregiver, it can also impact the patient."

Diagnosis of a memory disorder includes a full clinical evaluation, history and medical exam, and it goes beyond the patient.

"We want to hear from everyone – the patient, family and caregivers," she said. "Everyone involved has a different perspective on what is happening to the patient. I will often hear different things from the patient and caregivers."

Once a diagnosis is determined, the clinic helps with a treatment plan that may include some of the services available in our community, such as Al'z Place, Altrusa House, the Alzheimer's Association, Elder Options and more.

Dr. Doty and the Memory Disorder Clinic also work with and keep track of the research being done on Alzheimer's and other dementias. From that research, they make a few critical recommendations. First and foremost, be active. Walking is good for the brain. Second, try to learn something new every day. There are also a number of dietary considerations. Dr. Doty's strongest recommendation in that area is try to get as much of your daily vitamins and nutrients from good food rather than supplements.

Finally, Dr. Doty and the clinic serve as advocates for funding for research and treatment.

"We have 524,000 Alzheimer's and related dementia cases in Florida," she said. "We have the population. We don't get the funding. We all need to urge our elected officials to be proactive about this." *To learn more about the services provide by the UF Memory Disorder Clinic, call (352)273-5550 or go online to <http://neurology.ufl.edu/divisions-2/memory-and-cognitive-disorders>.*

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Veteran Benefits

If you are a veteran or widow of a veteran please note that you may be eligible for benefits under the Veteran's Administration. These benefits may be able to help with the cost of additional care in the home or assisted living facility. There are income and asset eligibility criteria to be met. However rules of financial benefits can change at any time so it is important to speak with a Veteran Service Officer. It helps to have discharge papers available. Locally, the Alachua County Veteran Service office holds free workshops for those interested in applying. On Tuesdays there is a Pension Workshop and a Compensation Workshop on Wednesdays. On Thursdays there is a General Informational Workshop. For more details about these, please contact the Alachua County Veteran Service Office at 264-6740.

Community Coalition for Older Adults

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From the Desk of Sam W. Boone, Jr.:

Medicare Celebrates 50 Years

By Sam Boone

Editor's Note: This is part of a series of columns that will be presented in this newsletter by Sam W. Boone, Jr., a local attorney whose primary practice areas include elder law, estate planning, probate and trust administration. It is hoped that the information will be valuable for caregivers and family members dealing with issues related to elder law.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of Medicare, created by the Johnson Administration to meet the needs of an aging population. To recognize this historic occasion the Center for Medicare Advocacy has created a list of 50 insights for Medicare. We will, over the next year or so, share them with you. Here are the first five.

Insight 1. Medicare Was Key to Integrating Hospitals

Most people know Medicare as one of the most successful social programs in our country's history. But did you know that the Medicare program was key to integrating hospitals?

Medicare created an important financial and social change tool toward the integration of hospitals. As a federal program affecting every hospital in the country, Medicare offered immense financial leverage. Any hospital that wished to be reimbursed by Medicare for the usually-uncompensated care for their oldest and sickest patients was suddenly subject to the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Insight 2. Medicare Reduced Poverty

Medicare has not only provided access to care for people who could not get private insurance, it has also significantly reduced poverty. As Nancy-Ann Min DeParle, former administrator of HCFA (Now CMS) stated:

Few programs in the history of the United States have brought as much benefit to society as Medicare. Since its enactment in 1965, Medicare has provided access to quality health care for those Americans least likely to be attractive to private insurers – those over age 65, disabled, or with end stage renal disease. Medicare has also prevented many Americans from slipping into poverty. The elderly's poverty rate has declined dramatically since Medicare was enacted. In 1995, Medicare has given families assurance that they will not have to bear the full burden of health care costs of their elderly or disabled parents or relatives.

Insight 3. Medicare Saves Lives

From Connie Cherba of Iowa: In early 2000, Edward, who was then 60 years old, applied for Social Security Disability. Despite having suffered from bipolar disorder for nearly 40 years, Edward had earned a PhD, but was not able to hold a job. While

the Social Security Disability was economically important, becoming eligible for Medicare allowed him to access what would become life-saving, preventive medical benefits. Although Edward's father died as a result of metastatic colon cancer, Edward had not been able to afford a colonoscopy. He was not eligible for any state medical assistance. When Edward first became eligible for Medicare, he had his first colonoscopy which revealed a large polyp. Medicare kept Edward cancer free and likely saved his life.

Insight 4. Medicare's Future Was Strengthened by the Affordable Care Act (ACA)



From Max Richtman, President and CEO of the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare: Before the enactment of Medicare, only 50 percent of seniors had health insurance and 35 percent lived in poverty

Fast forward to 2015 when over 55.2 million Americans are expected to be receiving guaranteed health care benefits through the Medicare program regardless of their medical condition or income.

Medicare's future has been strengthened by the Affordable Care Act (ACA), which improves care for Medicare beneficiaries by eliminating out-of-pocket costs for preventive screenings, annual wellness visits and personalized prevention plans; providing discounts on prescription drugs in the Part D coverage gap known as the donut hole, which will be phased out by 2020; and providing incentives to improve the quality of care that is provided.

Insight 5. Medicare is a Sacred Trust that Must Be Preserved

From former U.S. Senator Christopher J. Dodd: For half a century our nation, through Medicare, has made a sacred trust, a promise to our seniors. After a lifetime of hard work and paying into the system, they could enjoy the dignity of a secure retirement that includes quality, accessible health care. This is a promise that every succeeding generation has kept and one that we must keep for the 52 million Americans enrolled in Medicare today. I can think of no more successful or widely supported federal program within the last century.

Sam W. Boone, Jr. is a Gainesville-based attorney practicing elder law and estate planning. He is past-president of the Academy of Florida Elder Law Attorneys. To learn more about elder-law issues, go online to [www. http://boonelaw.com](http://boonelaw.com), or call (352)-374-8308.

Caring Through the Florida Medicaid Long-Term Care Program

By Damaris Lopez

Caring for loved ones can be both physically and financially exhausting. Florida's Statewide Medicaid Managed Care Long-Term Care Program can help alleviate some of those difficulties.

The Long-Term Care Program was put into place a little over a year ago to replace Medicaid and Nursing Home Diversion waivers and provide more services to the elderly.

"All the services are still there, but the program is just structured differently," said Vidya Hogan, Elder Options Director of Consumer Services.

The services one might receive from this program range from homemaking to personal care or even respite care for caregivers.

Respite care services provide caregivers with a break from their role. It allows them to go out and run errands, go shopping or just do daily tasks that they normally would not have time to do while someone else stays and cares for their loved one.

"It's a very important service for caregivers to be able to get out or even go take a nap and still have someone take care of their family," Hogan said.

Elder Options provides an initial screening over the phone that places people on a wait list and prioritizes them for eligibility.

"We aren't determining for eligibility at that point. We are just screening for need," Hogan said. "Once there is funding available, the state looks at the most needy clients according to the telephone interview for medical and financial eligibility."

The Department of Children and Families determines financial eligibility, and the Department of Elder Affairs determines medical eligibility. Those who have fewer resources and support are given a higher need priority, according to Hogan.

"We are basically looking at people's ability to do all the activities that we do everyday for ourselves and how much of it they can do themselves or with the help of family," she said.

If you are not deemed eligible for the Long-Term Care program, there are other state and federal programs that could help. Elder Options also screens for Community Care for the Elderly, Home Care for the Elderly and the Older Americans Act.

The Medicare Savings Program and Low-Income Subsidy Program can also help with the cost of premiums and prescriptions for beneficiaries on limited incomes.

More information on this can be found by calling the Elder Helpline at 1-800-963-5337.

Navigating the World of Health Insurance

By Damaris Lopez

If insurance talk isn't your forte, maybe it's time you try the SHINE program from Elder Options. SHINE, which stands for Serving Health Insurance Needs for Elders, is a free program that assists seniors and their caregivers in navigating through complicated insurance terminology.

"A caregiver has a whole lot on their plate," says Vidya Hogan, Elder Options director of consumer services. "They may just not have the time or the know-how to go and pick a drug plan for their family member or loved one."

That's where SHINE comes in. The SHINE program consists of trained, unbiased volunteers that can listen to what kinds of medications and drug plan a person currently has and show them the options they have.

SHINE volunteers are recruited statewide and have to go through an array of steps to become qualified. After potential volunteers complete the application, they go through a screening process and an interview process. They also have to participate in a level 2 background check before they can begin training, which involves observing and shadowing an experienced volunteer.

Many SHINE volunteers are tech savvy so that they can easily access the correct forms and paperwork needed to get someone started on the plan they choose. It's imperative that they have no ties to the insurance industry so that they remain unbiased. "When they counsel a person it's really important that they lay out the options that someone has and let them make an informed decision, but they don't recommend products or programs or companies," Hogan said.

Elder Option's SHINE program is a free service offered to any Medicare participant who wants to know what their options are. The program is also available to caregivers who take on the responsibility of their loved one's insurance plan.

The Medicare Annual Election Period (AEP) for Part D prescription plans opens on October 15 and goes through December 7. This is the time when one can sign up for, change or leave their plan.

For more information on AEP, contact the Elder Helpline at 1-800-963-5337

Acupuncture & Physical Therapy: Stress Relief for the Caregiver

By Damaris Lopez

Caring for others can be a difficult and stressful job that can strain muscles and make certain moving functions painful.

It's important for caregivers to care for themselves as well. Their well-being is very important to themselves and to those for whom they care.

Studies have shown that stress related to caregiving can easily lead to the development of other diseases.

So what can a caregiver do to relieve this stress? There are a number of ways for caregivers to de-stress, said Scott Barnett, physical therapist at Stillpoint Therapy Center in Gainesville. They include physical therapy, traditional massage, acupuncture and other traditional Chinese Medicine treatments such as cupping and Tui Na massage.

"These methods can reduce pain and swelling, and it gives us the chance to strengthen that function during physical therapy," Barnett said. "And we certainly like to try them before prescribing drugs to treat the effects of caregiver stress."

Combining these nature-based treatments with traditional physical therapy can actually enhance the benefits one would receive from physical therapy alone.

These approaches to medicine are generally non-invasive, Barnett said, and serve to promote functional independence and a better quality of life, certainly something very important for caregivers.

Acupuncture physicians like Barnett are trained to teach tai chi, yoga, acupressure and meditation techniques, as well as give dietary advice, and they can help caregivers learn how to care for themselves again.

The acupuncture or cupping will relax the

muscles, and physical therapy can improve functionality. The result is caregivers are in a better position to do what they need to do.

Additionally, physical therapists can act as liaisons between caregivers and those for whom they are caring. They give patients the motivation to do certain tasks on their own and teach caregivers to refrain from doing everything for the patient, so the patient can begin doing things for himself or herself.

The end result of physical therapy and these other treatments is to improve the quality of life of everyone involved.

"I believe that this approach provides better long-term results," Barnett said. "After all, we are part of nature so we should focus there, and not on shortcuts that provide short-term symptom relief without addressing the real cause."

Upcoming Savvy Caregiver Trainings

Savvy Caregiver Training is a six-session training dedicated to people who care for family members and friends with dementias (like Alzheimer's). Our goal is to reduce your stress by offering you easy-to-understand information about progressive dementias, related medicines, and diagnostic tools.

Thursdays; 1 – 3 pm, begins June 4, 2015 at Alachua County Health Dept., Gainesville

Thursdays; 1 – 3 pm, begins June 4, 2015 at Hope Lutheran Church, The Villages

Wednesdays; 1 – 3 pm, begins June 10, 2015 at Haven Hospice, Palatka

To learn more go to our Facebook Page (<https://www.facebook.com/SavvyCaregiverNorthCentralFlorida>) or Web Page (www.agingresources.org).

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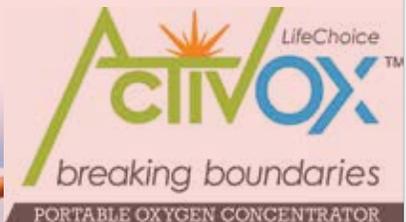
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Where Are The Owners of the Homecare Agency You Are Choosing?

By Sally Dahlem

You may not realize it but that is a valid question.

Bringing in a homecare agency to help with a loved one is a pivotal moment in the lives of all the family members involved. There are many factors involved in the decision about which agency to choose. Not the least of those is who's running the show? Who is running that agency? Are the owners local? Are they your neighbors? Or are they in some corporate office on the other side of the country?

While this is not always the case, it often follows that the larger the company, the larger the focus on the bottom line. While a local private owner is making decisions that are in the best interests of the client, a large corporation with offices or franchises across the country may be looking at profit just as much.

And that leads to another question. If the owners are not local, what do you know about the franchisee or local manager? Did someone buy a franchise because it was their heart's desire to run a homecare agency or because it was a good business opportunity? What experience does that franchise owner have in caring for your loved one?

If the answer is little to none that obviously creates a whole new set of problems. Do these people know

how to properly supervise the caregivers they are sending to your home? If the franchise owners do not have healthcare experience how will they know what to look for? Local owners mean local contacts. It is likely local owners have been working with other local providers for years. If a client needs other services such as equipment, therapy or communication with a physician's office, the owners of the local agency can likely pick up the phone and in minutes find the right people to assist the client.

I understand there is often the perception that bigger is better but that may not be true in this case. There are standards for care from the state and federal government that every homecare agency in the state of Florida must follow. A locally owned agency knows just what needs to happen in Florida. A national company with franchise everywhere is juggling regulations from 50 different states, along with national regulations.

So it's important to add the initial question – where are the owners – along with all the others raised here when you are making this pivotal decision for your family.

Sally Dahlem is a partner at Home by Choice, which provides private-duty homecare services. She and her business partner, John Markham, have more than 35 years of experience in home healthcare, assisted living, long-term care and the medical equipment industries.

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John Markham and Sally Dahlem

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Caregiver Support Groups

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3rd Thursday of the month at 9am
Open to all caregivers
Contact Robyn at 352-375-3000 for address

Alterra Clare Bridge
3rd Thursday of the month- 6pm
4607 NW 53rd Ave, Gainesville, FL 32653
Contact Gail at 376-5151

The Cancer Center at NFRMC
Heart of Healing Support Group/Meditation
Tuesdays 12-12:30pm
Call Joanie at 386-853-0162

Community Cancer Center
Living With Cancer Supports
www.cccnf.com for more information

Community Cancer Center
Lake City Support Group
2nd Wednesday every month 11am - 1pm
4520 W.US Hwy. 90, Lake City, FL 32055 For more
information call 386-755-0601

Haven Hospice
Bereavement Supports
Call 692-5123 for more information

Hospice of the Nature Coast
Wings Community Education Center
Grief Support Group- High Springs
Call 386-454-1338 for more information

Lake Area Caregiver Support Group
4th Tuesday of the month from 1-2:00pm
Trinity Episcopal Church
204 SR 26, Melrose, FL 32666
Call 352-475-3792 for more information
Park of the Palms

2nd Monday at 2pm in the Library
Contact: Gail Haynes RNC - 352-246-5601

Park Meadows Health and Rehab Center
3250 SW 41 Pl, GV
Call the Alz Helpline at 1-800-272-3900 for more
information

Senior Healthcare Center at Springhill
3rd Tuesday of the month- 2:30-4:00pm
3720 NW 83rd Street, Gainesville, FL 32606
Contact Flory at 336-3050

NF Mind Matters Stroke Support Group
4th Thursday of the month from 1-2 pm
South Tower, 4th floor Conference Room-NFRMC
Call 1-800-611-6913 for more information

The Village
(for Village residents only)
2nd Monday of the month from 1-2:30 pm
8000 NW 27th Blvd., Gainesville, FL 32606
Call 872-5332 for more information

United Church of Gainesville
1624 NW 5th Ave, GV
3rd Tuesday of the month from 7-8pm
Open to caregivers of persons with dementia
Contact Lynda at 352-219-3023

Useful Resources

Seniors vs. Crime: www.seniorsvscrime.com

Alzheimer's Association – www.alz.org/cnfl/index.asp

Elder Affairs – www.elderaffairs.state.fl.us/index.php

SHINE (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders) www.floridashine.org

Medicare – www.medicare.org

State of Florida – www.myflorida.com

National Institute on Aging (free publications) – www.nig.nih.gov

Caregiving – www.rosalynncarter.org

Driving – www.thehartford.com/talkwitholderdrivers/driversatrisk.htm

United Way – Alachua, Bradford & Putnam counties – www.unitedwaycnfl.org

National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Management - www.caremanager.org