

HEALTHWORD
Putting Health Promotion in Motion

September 2004

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HEALTHWORD is a monthly e-mail newsletter produced by the American Society on Aging's Live Well, Live Long project, funded by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Live Well, Live Long provides education and resources to professionals in the field of aging to help them improve health promotion and disease prevention efforts aimed at older adults. Current and past issues of this newsletter are available on the Live Well, Live Long website at <http://www.asaging.org/cdc/HealthWord.cfm>.

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FEATURE:

MEDICARE DRUG CARDS: NEW ASSISTANCE FOR ELDERS, NEW CHALLENGES FOR PROFESSIONALS

Between June 2004 and the end of 2005 (until the Medicare Part D drug benefit begins), private companies will offer discount drug cards approved by Medicare. All individuals eligible for Medicare due to age or disability can buy a discount card unless they have Medicaid prescription drug coverage. Four million Americans have already applied for the cards.

Medicare-approved cards may save some money on certain prescription drugs. Special assistance is available for people with low incomes, including up to \$600 per year in 2004 and 2005 to help pay for drugs.

Why all the concern? Many elders are puzzled by the program's complex and often baffling requirements. For example, there is no standard Medicare discount card, and Medicare eligible people must choose only one card. Each private company's Medicare drug discount card offers different discounts and for different sets of drugs. Pharmacies may differ in the prices that they charge for drugs; shopping around to find the greatest savings among pharmacies may be more cost effective than using the discount card at more expensive pharmacies. If older adults have a Medicare private plan that offers a

discount card, the member may only be able to join the plan's discount card program and no other cards.

ASSISTANCE FOR PROFESSIONALS

Besieged by a flood of inquiries from elders regarding the new discount card program, providers in the field of aging have been seeking help for their clients. This summer, the American Society on Aging (ASA) and the Medicare Rights Center (MRC) in New York launched the ASA Medicare Advisor Program, made possible by an educational grant from Pfizer. The MRC (<http://www.medicarerights.org>), a widely respected, impartial advocate and resource center, provides technical content for the training and other support material for the program.

With ASA, MRC has created training modules on the Medicare drug discount card. The modules feature the following:

- * Talking points focusing on key questions about the prescription drug discount cards
- * Customized versions of the module for the ten states that currently offer a prescription drug program or discount cards
- * Free, downloadable information packets

Participants also receive free continuing education credits for certain professions, access to an online provider community, and weekly electronic updates for providers navigating the Medicare system.

ASA plans to coordinate training for 10,000 professionals nationwide. Approximately 3,000 individuals have registered to become special ASA Medicare Advisors. ASA is still looking for more advisors! To enroll in the Medicare Advisor Program, visit <http://www.asaging.org/medicare>. For more information, contact Patrick Cullinane, director of special projects at ASA, at pcullinane@asaging.org.

BEST PRACTICES: DIABETES EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

Professionals can find excellent sources for diabetes education materials online, many of which have been designed for diverse older adult audiences. Here are three websites:

THE NATIONAL DIABETES EDUCATION PROGRAM

<http://ndep.nih.gov>

The current NDEP diabetes prevention campaign, "Small Steps, Big Rewards," is focused on small, realistic steps that individuals can take to prevent or delay the onset of diabetes. As with all NDEP campaigns, materials contain culturally appropriate ideas and information on losing weight by eating healthier and getting more physical activity.

Here are a few sample tip sheets:

It's Not Too Late to Prevent Diabetes. Take Your First Step Today (target: older audience)

http://www.ndep.nih.gov/diabetes/pubs/nottoolate_tips.pdf

More than 50 Ways to Prevent Diabetes (target: African American audience)

http://www.ndep.nih.gov/diabetes/pubs/50Ways_tips.pdf

THE AMERICAN DIABETES ASSOCIATION

<http://www.diabetes.org>

The American Diabetes Association (ADA) offers resources for professionals, including PowerPoint slides for presentations, brochures for the public, and a free e-newsletter. Professional members receive peer-reviewed publications and resources for networking (such as member directories and participation in professional councils). Find links to these resources on the Health Professionals and Researchers Homepage (<http://www.diabetes.org/for-health-professionals-and-scientists/resources.jsp>) or call (800) DIA-BETES (342-2383).

Other useful tools and programs offered by the ADA:

* The Advocacy and Legal Resources Homepage contains insurance and discrimination information for people of all ages who have difficulty obtaining health insurance because of their diabetes

* Information for congregations on how to organize a "Diabetes Day," a faith-based program in African American and Latino communities. During a designated service, the pastor or another individual briefly discusses the seriousness of diabetes. Support groups for people with diabetes, healthy cooking classes, and exercise workshops follow.

* The ADA's Diabetes and Cardiovascular Disease Toolkit contains informational flyers on nutrition, physical activity, blood pressure, glucose monitoring, and other health issues for people with diabetes.

* ClubPed is an online tool to track steps and find local walking groups.

LIVE WELL, LIVE LONG WEBSITE

<http://www.asaging.org/cdc>

As part of its Live Well, Live Long health-promotion education program, this fall the American Society on Aging will launch its "Diabetes Prevention and Management: Small Steps With Big Rewards" Web-based module. The module will address ways to improve the quality of foods available to older adults who are isolated geographically or due to disability. It will also promote physical activity for elders through easy, safe exercise routines that can be done at home. The module also will provide examples of nutrition curricula and creative physical activity and nutrition classes, as well as model practices for improving existing diabetes education programs.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Event: Road Trip! Where Will the Journey Take You?

Sponsors: SE4A Southeastern Aging Network Training Conference and North Carolina Conference on Aging

Dates: October 17-20, 2004

Location: Research Triangle Park, N.C.

The theme of this conference is engaging in policy development, research, training, service provision, and practice to enhance the overall well-being of older adults. A collaborative effort, the professional conference will provide educational and networking opportunities for anyone interested in long-term care, vital aging, family issues, and work and retirement. For more information, visit <http://www.aging.unc.edu/nccoal/>.

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Event: Quality Through Leadership

Sponsors: International Council on Active Aging and the American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging

Dates: October 25-28, 2004

Location: Nashville, Tenn.

Join nonprofit aging-services professionals for an educational event designed to increase your leadership team's capacity to lead, grow, transform, and thrive. Selected health promotion sessions:

* Wellness Programming -- How to Achieve Resident Participation

* HIV/AIDS: Challenges for Professionals in Aging Services

* Wellness Beyond Fitness: Using Dining as a Catalyst

For more information on the conference, visit <http://am2004.expoexchange.com/>.

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Event: 24th Annual Arkansas Aging Conference -- Aging Well, Living Well: Taking the Journey Together

Sponsors: Arkansas Association of Area Agencies on Aging and Arkansas Department of Human Services/Division of Aging and Adult Services

Dates: November 1-3, 2004

Location: Hot Springs, Ark.

The annual Arkansas Aging Conference is a statewide event for professionals working in the field of aging, as well as elders and others interested in aging issues. Presentations and workshops will focus on nutrition, health and wellness, creative aging, family and caregiver issues, advocacy, and nursing-related issues. To register for the conference, visit <http://www.arkansas.gov/dhs/aging/>.

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Event: Active Aging 2004 -- Catching the Wave
Sponsor: International Council on Active Aging
Dates: November 11-13, 2004
Location: Orlando, Fla.

At this conference, Chaya Gordon from the American Society on Aging will present a session titled "How to Integrate Cultural Diversity Into Physical Activity Programs." Participants will learn how to design programs and program elements that relate to an older adult's cultural identity, with the goal of creating physical activity programs that are more inclusive for elders of diverse cultural backgrounds. For more information about the conference, visit <http://www.icaa.cc/convention/conventionmain.htm>

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Event: Research on Women's Issues in Transportation Conference
Dates: November 18-20, 2004
Location: Chicago, Ill.

Sponsored by the Transportation Research Board, the conference is designed to identify the additional research and data needed to inform public and private policies that directly or indirectly address women's mobility, security, and safety concerns. The conference will focus on data-driven comparative analyses of men and women's travel patterns or safety, different subgroups of women, and international women's issues. To learn more or to register, visit <http://gulliver.trb.org/conferences/women/>.

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For more educational offerings in the field of aging, visit the searchable "Events in Aging" calendar on the ASA website: <http://www.asaging.org/calendar>.

Have an event related to health promotion and aging that you would like to tell your colleagues about? Please submit your event, call for papers, or grant announcements to Nancy Bui at nbui@asaging.org. Include the title, organization, date and time, location, contact information, and a short description of the event.

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