

DAS Georgia News

DHR State of Georgia

DAS Georgia News, Issue

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If you are like me the first hints of spring such as green blades of grass, jonquils, and crocuses are enough to bring on spring fever. I can so easily put aside the winter blues and the New Year resolutions. Oh yeah.....the resolutions most of us made to exercise more, eat healthy and be positive. Well, so far, I have kept up the exercise routine, shed a few pounds and kept smiling while admiring chocolates from a distance.

Very soon we will all be hearing about Georgia's live healthy campaign. The main focuses are on *Be Positive, Be Smoke Free, Get Checked, Eat Healthy and Be Active*. Our participation in this campaign may be both on a personal level and definitely a spotlight for our aging network. We will be promoting and educating older adults to walk regularly, eat healthy, and get checked for diabetes.

I challenge you to begin thinking about changes you can make in your own life beginning today. Get outside to walk around and enjoy the signs of spring. Begin to plan your spring garden and pull the winter weeds out of the ground. Buy fresh fruits and vegetables to include in your family meals. If none of this interests you, go the mall to shop, walk around the mall twice before making a purchase and by all means buy the low fat yogurt dessert. However you choose to enjoy spring, please get out and do so.



**Maria Greene, Director
Division of Aging Services**

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Quality Assurance Team Conducts ALS site visits

In January 2005, the DAS Quality Assurance Team evaluated customer satisfaction with CCSP Alternative Living Services Group Homes (ALS). ALS provides 24-hour supervision and health-related support services in state-licensed facilities, either group or family models, to Medicaid

eligible persons who are CCSP clients and who can no longer remain independent in their own homes. Family model homes are the smaller homes that may have 1-6 clients. Group model homes are larger and may serve 7-24 clients. Clients aged 60 and older currently receiving Alternative

Living Services in Group Homes for six or more months were targeted for this project. Approximately 80 homes statewide were visited and nearly 200 clients were interviewed.

- Arvine Brown

DAS Georgia News

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Community Resources*

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CCSP – Partner in Improved Consumer Quality of Life

“Older adults have the highest suicide rates, and in those over age 65 the rate appears to be increasing”

Fuqua Center Depression Training

The CCSP is in partnership with the Fuqua Research Center at Wesley Woods, Emory University to prevent depression and suicide among Georgia's elderly population by training caregivers and other service providers.

Older adults with depression have 50% higher healthcare costs than non-depressed seniors. Older adults have the highest suicide rates, and in those over age 65 the rate appears to be increasing

Clients who are not depressed use less service thereby reducing cost.

-Statewide rollout of this CCSP initiative is occurring in 3 Planning and Service Areas: ARC, SOWEGA, and Southeast GA. Care coordinators attend four 2-hour education workshops on signs and symptoms of depression, use of assessment tools, and treatment options (referral resources and interventions). Seventy-seven CCSP providers have been trained. Training has impacted 4,300 CCSP clients.

These projects teach prevention, train on use of intervention tools, identify caregiv-

ing support resources, and promote improved service provision.

Intervention includes monthly workshops and case conferences provided by the staff at Fuqua Center. As a result there has been a decrease in prevalence of depression in consumers, and more consumers are receiving appropriate treatment.

Sprint-D Teams for Dementia Care

Specialist Providers In Teams for Dementia Care (SPRINT-D)

Dementia is a condition estimated to affect 10% of those 65 and older, and over 47% of consumers 85 years of age and older.

-The CCSP is partnering with the Rollins School of Public Health, Emory University to establish a culturally appropriate, skills based training program to equip caregivers, aides, social workers and families with evidence-based strategies to deal with problem behaviors related to dementia.

- Four Planning and Service Areas are currently involved: ARC, Northwest GA, Southeast GA, and, Southwest GA. Statewide project expansion is under way.

- Intervention includes training for care coordinators about dementia behaviors, strategies for problem-solving and care planning, and teach families how to resolve difficult behaviors. Trainers meet with care coor-

dinators every six weeks to review cases and monitor client activity.

-Outcomes monitored include caregiver burden, caregiver depression, client length of stay in the community, and aide turnover among agencies.

-The project has impacted 1,138 potential CCSP clients, with 276 clients and informal caregivers enrolled to date.

Availability of informal support defers nursing facility placement.

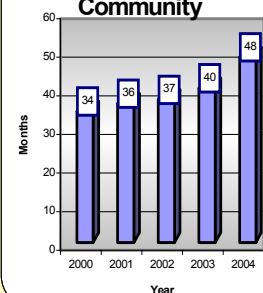
Caregivers with better methods to handle dementia clients provide community-based care longer which is less costly than institutionalization.

CCSP and Emory University are partnering to enhance the quality of life for formal and informal caregivers and consumers in the community by helping them deal with problem behaviors related to dementia and suicide.

1. President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health, Achieving the Promise (2003)

- Jennie Shew

CCSP Client Avg. Length of Stay in the Community



In SFY 2004, effective care coordination allowed clients' needs to be met so that they remained in the community an average of four additional years (48 months).



Senior Spotlight
Jessie Dickey, age 84
Blakeley, GA

Over two years ago Ms. Jessie's independent living skills began declining due to memory loss and poor diet. She was lucky though. One of her children was informed of the problems of seniors and was able to recognize her decline. She has 5 daughters who now take turns watching her in their own homes for weeks at a time. They can take her to the doctor, engage her in conversations and remind her to eat.



Ombudsman Recap

In state fiscal year 2004, the ombudsman program served 221,954 persons.

* **Legal Services** Developer Natalie Thomas received the Martha Eaves Award at the Georgia State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Conference in November. The award is given to an individual who is not an ombudsman but has made extraordinary and continuing efforts to strengthen the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program. It was created in honor of Martha Eaves for her exceptional advocacy for the Ombudsman Program.

"I am so honored and humbled to receive the Martha Eaves Award. As I told the Ombudsmen, I am in awe of the work that they do because I know the heart and commitment that it takes to do it. Advocacy is not just what we do, it's part of who we are and we serve the same people," said Thomas. Thomas develops legal services programs under the Older Americans Act Title III-B. The Elderly Legal Assistance Program steps in and offers legal guidance in many instances when ombudsmen are not able to resolve a complaint.

* The **Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program** also celebrated its 25th anniversary at the November conference.

"Today we especially recognize the hard work and dedication of the local ombudsman staff and volunteers who work every day to promote independence and improve the lives of these Georgians," Becky Kurtz said of the milestone. The program was established in 1979 to advocate for improved care of residents of Georgia's long-term care facilities. In January 2002, the State Ombudsman office was reorganized to operate as

a separate office within the Division of Aging Services. The program partners with Area Agencies on Aging to provide ombudsman services statewide through community partnerships.

* Governor Sonny Perdue's delay of the July termination of the **Adult Medically Needy Medicaid Program** gave nursing home residents, their families and legally authorized representatives more time to make alternative arrangements to pay for their nursing home care.

A new option - creating Miller trusts - became available upon the termination. The trusts ensure that persons whose incomes exceed the



Natalie Thomas, Legal Services Developer and Becky Kurtz, State Ombudsman

\$1,692 limit are able to continue receiving Medicaid and not have their care disrupted. (The limit increased to \$1,737 in January.) The ombudsman program received reports from nursing home residents that private attorneys were asking anywhere from a low of \$495 to a high of \$4,000 to prepare a Miller trust. Advocates and the legal aid community worked together to find private attorneys to assist residents at no cost.

The ombudsman program, Division of Aging Services, all the legal services providers, DFCS and DCH

have received kudos for helping to keep residents receiving nursing home care. Of the original 1700+ residents who were to lose their Medicaid due to the elimination of the adult medically needy program, none were ever discharged for their inability to pay.

* The State Long-Term Care Ombudsman program launched a website that is a well-organized resource for elder Georgians, their families and friends.

"We have eagerly anticipated launching the website in order to give the long-term care consumers of this state greater opportunities to access long-term care ombudsmen and information that can make a difference in their quality of life," said Becky Kurtz.

A secure contact form allows users to send a confidential message or request to certified ombudsmen who provide consumer-focused assistance. An interactive map gives users access to direct contact information for ombudsmen representing consumers in a specific area of the state. Visit the site at www.georgiaombudsman.org

* State Ombudsman Becky Kurtz is serving as President of the National Association of State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs (NASOP) for 2004-2006.

- Congratulations to the following ombudsmen who completed their initial certification: *Jamie Schlosser* (Northeast Georgia), volunteers *Anthony Burdette* and *Lisa Schall* (Atlanta), *Valecia Jackson* (Atlanta), *Yvonne Slate* (Southeast - Valdosta), and *Kathy Gaulin* (Coastal).

- Andrew Hales

"Old age is not so bad when you consider the alternative." ~ Maurice Chevalier (1888-1972)



GeorgiaCares' Partners

Most recently, GeorgiaCares has added the Better Business Bureau and LogistiCare to its list of 65 partners. These collaborative partnerships share a common goal of educating beneficiaries and their caregivers about consumer protection. The Better Business Bureau (BBB) is an excellent contact for helping consumers make informed decisions, resolving consumer complaints, and promoting busi-

ness ethics through reports on businesses and charities. The BBB serving Metro Atlanta, Athens and Northeast Georgia has agreed to provide GeorgiaCares information on their website and will collaborate in a minimum of six "Mall Scams" – information booths in various mall locations in their service area.

LogistiCare, the Medicaid transportation contractor for the state of Georgia, has

also helped to "spread the word" about GeorgiaCares. Providers under LogistiCare transport Medicaid beneficiaries to approved locations on a daily basis. GeorgiaCares information has been placed in over 800 vehicles statewide and the drivers have been given sunglasses clips with the GeorgiaCares' logo and 1-800 number.

- Erika Lawson

Division of Aging Services Staff Appointed to National Advisory Committee

Beverly Littlefield, Program Development and Operations Section Manager and Cliff Burt, Caregiver Specialist, recently were honored by being invited to participate in a newly formed National Advisory Committee for the School of Social Welfare at the University of Wisconsin. Along with providers and policy makers from a number of states, they attended a two-day meeting at the university at the end of January. The purpose of the Advisory Committee is to identify and assess key research findings that are most critical to integrate into a cur-

riculum for family caregivers and in assessment tools for case managers.

Coordinated by Dr. Rhonda Montgomery, who holds the endowed chair as Professor of Applied Gerontology and has been a noted researcher in care giving for over 20 years, the project, entitled *Linking Experience With Research*, will focus on the challenges that case managers face which stem from the diversity among caregivers, significant changes in the caregiving role over time, and the corresponding changes in need for assistance.

When the project is completed, case managers will have a protocol to assess caregivers' needs and to effectively target support services to family caregivers as their needs change over the duration of the caregiving experience. Funded by the Helen Bader Foundation, the project is expected to take three years.

- Marti Padgett

March is National Nutrition Month

Healthy eaters develop the skills to avoid temptations and poor choices by regularly reading health news and tips to refresh their motivation and knowledge.

Did you know that when you maintain a healthy diet the way your body feels after a healthy meal will become more important to you than the instant pleasure of having something loaded with fat or sugar.

Bring your lunch to work and control its content and nutritional value. Save money and avoid the wrong kinds of fats, sugars and over salting. Plus avoid the buffet pitfall.

You can enjoy your favorite sinful foods but the key is frequency... instead of having it several times a week indulge just once or twice a month.

Become more adventurous with food. Eating healthier gives you options to explore new vegetables, grains, spices and oils.

Here's a link for exploring healthy, non-fattening sources of flavor...

<http://www.worldspice.com/>