



Executive Office of Elder Affairs

Massachusetts Family Caregiver Support Program (MFCSP) Newsletter

May 2018

CAREGIVING IN THE NEWS

[Impact of Caring for Older Parents on Children's Budget](#)

A *CNBC* article draws attention to the fact that **caring for older parents can impact their adult children's budget**. The largest monthly expenses are medicine, medical supplies, and personal care items.

[Maria Shriver Shares Advice on Managing Caregivers at Work](#)

In a *Forbes* interview with Maria Shriver, an advocate for families struggling with Alzheimer's disease, she outlines **four ways that companies can assist employees with caregiving responsibilities**.

[Interview with Jennifer Benz from the AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research: The Toll on Long-Term Caregivers](#)

The interview delves into the AP-NORC Center's latest national study on family caregiving, discussing the **emotional and financial challenges** placed on individuals caring for their older loved ones.

[Projected Costs of Family Caregiving for Cardiovascular Disease](#)

In a recent report, the American Heart Association investigated the cost of family caregiving for older individuals living with cardiovascular disease. The costs were estimated to be **\$61 billion in 2015** and are **projected to increase to \$128 billion in 2035**.

POLICY UPDATES

[Rhode Island: Proposed Expansion of Caregiver Insurance Program from Four to Eight Weeks](#)

Advocates in the state of Rhode Island are seeking to **expand the reach of the state's "caregiver insurance program"** from four to eight weeks of paid time off to care for a family member. The bill also expands who can be cared for under this program, extending it to siblings and grandchildren.

[Connecticut: Bill Aiming to Create a Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program Advances to the House](#)

Legislation creating a paid family and medical leave insurance program in Connecticut has narrowly cleared a key vote. If passed, the program would **provide up to 12 weeks of wages over a 12-month period**.

[Opinion Piece: Five Ways HHS Can Better Support Family Caregivers](#)

The RAISE Family Caregivers Act requires the federal Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) to develop, support, and revise, as needed, an integrated national strategy to support family caregivers. **Anne Tumlinson, founder of daughterhood.org**, a website for adult children caregivers, **suggests five actions** the Secretary can do to improve how our healthcare system supports family caregivers.



IMPORTANT PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENTS & REMINDERS

Thank you to those able to join the MFCSP call on April 19. It was wonderful to hear all of your stories and moments that made you proud! Please be on the lookout for more information and details on regional meetings and program visits.



May is Older Americans Month! The 2018 theme, **Engage at Every Age**, emphasizes that you are never too old (or young) to take part in activities that can enrich your physical, mental, and emotional well-being. It also celebrates the many ways in which older adults make a difference in our communities.

We encourage you to emphasize this year's theme and proudly celebrate Older Americans! Please refer to the [Older Americans Month website](#) for promotional materials, activity ideas and additional resources.



MONTHLY SPOTLIGHT

Supporting Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Year-Round at Elder Services of the Merrimack Valley

Elder Services of the Merrimack Valley (ESMV) is dedicated to grandparents raising grandchildren, a population that has rapidly grown due to the ongoing opioid crisis. In response, Merrimack Valley's Caregiver Specialists have increased the number of touchpoints and level of support offered to these grandparents throughout the year.

For example, in September, ESMV's program coordinated with Staples to distribute backpacks and school supply donations to local grandchildren. During the holidays, the program worked with local businesses to fulfill "wish lists" for both grandchildren and grandparents. Local partnerships with community organizations, advocacy groups, and businesses are critical to providing grandfamilies with support.

In addition to these year-round initiatives, ESMV's Caregiver Specialists maintain frequent communication with grandparents to offer support and reinforce that the program is there to help them with any matter, big or small. By building a long-term relationship with these grandfamilies, the Caregiver Specialists can anticipate and better respond to their needs.

Thank you, Cindy and Ashley, for all the work that you do for Merrimack Valley's grandfamilies!

Next month's spotlight is on innovative partnerships. Please contact Amanda Bernardo (Amanda.E.Bernardo@state.ma.us) if you would like to share something your program is doing!

HELPFUL RESOURCES

[The Tremble Clefs: Living with Parkinson's Through Song](#)

The Jewish Family and Children's Service uses the arts to help individuals living with Parkinson's disease **gain confidence and project a louder voice**. The "Tremble Clefs" represents both a singing and support group.

[The Caregiver's Guide to Alexa](#)

Greater Lynn Senior Services has published a guide for caregivers on **how to set-up and use the Amazon Alexa device** to assist their loved ones. Care recipients can use Alexa to make calls, listen to music and books, and ask basic questions.

[Creating a Roadmap for Transportation Independence](#)

This resource, published by the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center, **helps individuals assess if their driving skills are changing** and what **transportation options** are available to them as they get older. Locally, [Massachusetts' RideMatch](#) website can help with trip planning, including services for those with special needs (e.g., "I'm a senior 60+", "I need a lift to access the vehicle").

[Family Caregiver Distress Assessment Tool](#)

Caring for an older loved one can be among the most fulfilling experiences, yet it also impacts caregivers physically, mentally, and emotionally. The Family Caregiver Distress Assessment Tool **helps individuals identify areas of caregiving that are most challenging and recommends resources** to address those challenges.

[MassMATCH: The Commonwealth's Assistive Technology Act Program](#)

The mission of MassMATCH is to **promote the use of assistive technology (AT)** and AT services to enhance the independence of people with disabilities. The website includes information on AT programs and centers.

EVENTS AND WEBINARS

[Alzheimer's Association: A Map Through the Maze](#)

(May 23, 2018, 8:00 AM – 4:15 PM in Worcester)

Celebrating its 25th year, **A Map Through the Maze** offers professionals a unique opportunity to learn current and cutting-edge information on a wide range of topics with over 30 breakout sessions to choose from.

[American Society on Aging: Supportive Practices for Grieving Caregivers](#)

(May 24, 2018, 1:00 PM, online)

The loss of a loved one can have a devastating impact upon those that are left behind, and family caregivers are especially vulnerable. This webinar will introduce **best practices and supportive strategies to help family members cope with the loss of a loved one**.

[Family Caregiver Support Web Seminar Series](#)

(multiple dates, continuing through December 5)

The American Society on Aging's **series of twelve web seminars** address pertinent caregiving issues. Example topics include "Understanding the Aging Brain", and "Driving Safety for Older Adults".