

CareLINK

A Newsletter For Caregivers

**OCTOBER 2010/
NOVEMBER 2010**

A Caregivers Newsletter that is published every other month for those who care for a loved-one, no matter the health situation. Enclosed we hope you find helpful information that you can use!

CareLINK can also be found at:

<http://www.co.kenosha.wi.us/dhs/Divisions/Aging/>

~Sponsored & Published By The Kenosha County Aging & Disability Resource Center~

Confidentiality – HIPAA or Hippopotamus?

Most likely, you have been exposed to some of the concepts of HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) in recent years. Perhaps you have been asked to sign a HIPAA form when you arrived at a doctor's office, emergency room, or signed into a hospital as a patient. What is HIPAA all about?

For many health care organizations, HIPAA was a "hippopotamus" to implement. Although ethical health care facilities and providers have always practiced confidentiality when it comes to patient matters, HIPAA mandates by law how this must be done. Creating extra paperwork, policies, and the need to establish a "privacy officer" within the organization led many to call this law the "HIPAA Hippo"! The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996, like many laws, contains many items. Our focus here is the "privacy rule."

Implemented in 2003, HIPAA is both federal law and a national standard for the health care industry. It spells out certain rights for patients of all ages. It also penalizes and fines health care providers and facilities that do not follow the rules outlined by HIPAA. Under HIPAA, patients can find out how their information is being used and who it is being shared with. Patients can establish a time limit on the release of this information. In addition, the law specifies a patient's right to examine and obtain his records in a timely fashion. This applies whether the patient record is paper or electronic (on a computer). Additionally, the law provides for individuals to dispute errors in their health care records, and to file complaints if they believe their privacy has been violated.

Privacy rules apply to the relationship between a health care provider/facility/organization and the patient. But what if you are caring for someone who is confused, incapacitated, or mentally unable to take care of his affairs? This is where HIPAA can become very tricky for caregivers. Privacy rules also generally require that persons who are legally authorized to act on behalf of an individual regarding health care matters be granted the same rights to access of information. However, the rule defers to state law to determine when a person has the legal authority to act on behalf of another in matters related to health care. Parental rights in the case of children or health care powers of attorney are two examples of state-recognized authority.

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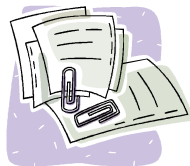
When you need answers...
**262-605-6646 or 1-800-472-8008
TTY 262-605-6663
www.co.kenosha.wi.us/dhs**

How can a Caregiver best navigate through the health care system and HIPAA?

What if you are a paid caregiver? Sometimes you are the one who spends the most time with the patient, but you most likely do not have legally recognized authority to act on behalf of the one in your care.

Whether you are a paid caregiver or a family member caring for a loved one, some points to discuss about the privacy laws with the person in your care:

- ◆ What does he want your role to be? Does he want you to be involved directly in his health care visits or have you listed as someone the provider can speak to on his behalf?
Or, does he prefer that his health care visits remain private, just between him and his health care provider or between the provider and another person or family member?
- ◆ If the person in your care is confused or unable to make decisions for himself, who is considered “next of kin?” Do they have legal authority to act for the patient? If so, speak with them about any concerns you have.
- ◆ Know who holds the state-recognized authority, such as health care power of attorney, for the one in your care. This can be very important, especially in emergencies.



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Do long waits in doctors' offices frustrate you? Consider that waiting room time can actually be a break from the usual routine. One way to make the time more enjoyable is to bring along a new hobby such as knitting or an absorbing novel. Once you get interested in a book or a hobby, you'll look forward to the brief mental break.

Tylenol Safety



Tylenol is known to be toxic to the liver at high doses. However, it is important to understand that it only causes liver failure when more than the recommended daily dose is taken. Tylenol is considered safe, even in patients with liver disease, as long as it is taken only as directed and in appropriate doses. Below are risk factors for liver damage or disease:

- Are exposed to blood or bodily fluids on the job.
- Are regularly exposed to toxins or chemicals such as aerosol cleaners, bug spray, paint fumes and tobacco smoke.
- Have injected drugs, especially if you shared a needle.
- Have had frequent, unprotected sex with multiple partners.
- Have had a tattoo or piercing with an unsterile needle.
- Consume alcohol, which can have toxic effects, especially when taken with over-the-counter drugs containing acetaminophen.
- Use herbs or mega doses of vitamins.
- Have conditions such as obesity, diabetes, or high triglycerides.
- Received a blood transfusion before 1992 and may be at risk for hepatitis C.
- Have ever had an abnormal liver function test.

If you can answer yes to any of the statements above, you should see your doctor and ask for a liver enzyme test. It's painless, and most importantly, it's dangerous to wait.

Source: Adapted with permission from the American Liver Foundation

Preventing Falls Among Kenosha's Seniors



Sure Step is a program developed from a two-year study in Kenosha County by Jane Mahoney, M.D. and Terry Shea, P.T. of U. W. Madison School of Medicine and Public Health and UW Hospitals and Clinics. The intervention involves an in-home assessment by a nurse or physical therapist, a follow-up visit and a monthly telephone call for 6-12 months.

The Kenosha County Aging and Disability Resource Center is offering this intervention through grant funds for persons 65 and older living in the community with a history of falls, particularly those who have mild cognitive impairment and have a family caregiver. Evaluation of the program has shown a 55% reduction in number of falls among people who go through the program.

About one-third of older adults fall each year. Ten percent of falls result in hospitalization. Fallers are at increased risk for nursing home placement, and even death from the injuries sustained. For information about Sure Step and other falls prevention programs, contact the Kenosha County Aging & Disability Resource Center at 262-605-6646.

Caregiver Support Group



This Support Group is for the family or friend who is caring for a loved-one.

When: 1st Tuesday of each month.

Location: Aurora (East) Building
8348 Washington Ave.
Racine, WI.

Time: 6pm -7:30pm

Contact: Liz at 414-339-9570

Receive future CareLINK Issues by e-mail.

If you are interested in receiving CareLINK by e-mail please go to the website address below to subscribe:

[http://www.co.kenosha.wi.us/dhs/
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Newsletter_CareLink.php](http://www.co.kenosha.wi.us/dhs/Divisions/Aging/Newsletter/Newsletter_CareLink.php)

Helpful Resources

US Department of Health & Human Services - Health Information Privacy

www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy

Can help caregivers through the maze of rights concerning HIPAA and the person you are caring for.

Support Groups

For information on local support groups, please contact the ADRC at 262-605-6646 or 1-800-472-8008.



~Take Note~

Comparing Medicare Part D Plans for 2011:

The Elder Benefit Specialist program is offering this workshop to help you learn more about Medicare Part D plans and how to compare these plans. This workshop will be held throughout October, November and December. Please call the ADRC at 262-605-6646 or 1-800-472-8008, for dates, times, locations, and make your reservation as seating is limited.

Advocacy Voices Together - Advocacy Training:

Learn how to talk to stakeholders and policymakers and teach others. You will learn how to tell your story and motivate others to take action.

Date/Time: Saturday, October 9th, from 10am - 2pm.

Location: Brookside Care Center, 3506 Washington Road, Kenosha, WI.

Please call 605-6646 to register or, 697-4637 if you have any questions about this training.

Fun 'n Fit:

All are welcome to attend this free Resource Fair for people with disabilities. Many activities and exhibitors, including the National Champion UW Whitewater Warhawks Wheelchair Basketball players. Free transportation is available by calling the Kenosha Achievement Center, 658-9093 by Oct. 13th.

Date/Time: Tuesday, October 19th, from 10am - 4pm.

Location: YMCA - Callahan, 7101 53rd Street, Kenosha, WI.

Please call the ADRC if you have any questions, 262-605-6646 or 1-800-472-8008.

Caregiver Legal Issues:

Becky Dutter and Susan Anderson with the Adult Protective Services Unit at the Aging & Disability Resource Center will present this informative workshop for caregivers who are caring for a loved-one with a memory loss. This free workshop will help you understand the differences between a Living Will, Power of Attorney and Guardianship, and their importance. Refreshments will be provided.

Date/Time: Monday, November 15th, from 7pm - 8:30 pm.

Location: Westosha Community Center, 19200 93rd Street (Hwy. C), Bristol, WI.

If you plan to bring your loved-one who has memory loss while you attend the workshop, free on-site respite care will be available. Please call Kathy Hinks by Monday, November 8th at 262-605-6646 or 1-800-472-8008 to make a respite reservation.

~Just A Thought ~

Do not judge each day by the harvest you reap, but by the seeds you plant.

~ Robert Louis Stevenson