

SENIOR CONNECTION

Information for Seniors & Caregivers

MEET OUR STAFF

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

ROBERT DWYER, Ph. D.

JOHN BELDING

GINNY BRINK

ELLEN GRUVER

JESSICA LINDBLOM

EILEEN O'BRIEN

CATHY PICKERING

MELISSA SHEA

CATHY WEAVER

JANE WHEARLEY

CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS

AGENCY ON AGING (CMAA)

360 WEST BOYLSTON ST.

WEST BOYLSTON MA 01583

CALL: VOICE/TDD

(508) 852-5539

(800) 244-3032

FAX: (508) 852-5425

E-MAIL Us At CMAAging@

SENIORCONNECTION.ORG

WEB SITE:

WWW.SENIORCONNECTION.ORG

WHERE HAS THE TIME GONE?

by Robert P. Dwyer, Ph.D., Executive Director

Well, here we are. With the holidays over, a New Year is about to begin. The stresses of shopping and wrapping and giving are done.

Or are they?

Facing a New Year is supposed to be about hope, new beginnings, out with the old and in with the new. But the year we are facing, 2003, seems to be about worry and anxiety and more stress over budgets and the cost of services.

The "revenue shortfall" faced by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts over the last 2 years is, apparently, now being faced at the federal level as well. Older Americans Act funding (and most human services funding as well) is being threatened with a 9% cut across the board. This could result in \$3.16 million dollars taken away from Massachusetts. Central Massachusetts alone would lose nearly a quarter of a million dollars that now provides meals, transportation, home repair, crisis intervention, guardianship, legal services, and caregiver support programs to name a few. Some of these programs would have reduced funding. Yet others would get no funding at all.

From where I sit, I cannot think of a single program that deserves to have



a funding cut. Here at CMAA, this has already been under discussion because of recent, small cuts we have received due to changes in the recent federal census. The other side of this is that I can see hundreds of other things that could be done locally to make the lives of seniors even better. Alas, these we cannot fund.

Fine. So we face a new year with clouds on the horizon. War drums provide the background music for the question, "guns or butter?" Then what is to be done?

Not long ago, the Older Americans Act faced the issue of "reauthorization." Only two years ago, the Act was gridlocked. At that time, Congress looked to the American people for some direction, and we spoke. Phone calls, emails, and letters all made their way to the offices of our elected officials, and the OAA was passed with new money and new programs for caregivers. The same needs to happen now!

Continued on page 2 *Time*

ELDER CARE 2002

Success yet again! On 17 October, 2002 at the Holiday Inn in Worcester, ElderCare 2002 was a smash hit, where over 600 seniors and caregivers were in attendance.

The event found attendees taking advantage of the free Health Screenings for blood pressure, glaucoma, glucose, cholesterol, cardio risk analyzer, and depression/dementia. Seniors and caregivers alike were offered the opportunity to attend classes on Caregiving 101 done by the Central Massachusetts Family Caregiver Support Program, Exercise & Health for Active Older Adults by the Greendale YMCA and How To Get The Most Out Of Your Physician's Visit, presented by Dr. Sarah McGee, UMass Memorial. Seniors took advantage of The SHINE Clinic and the Brown bag clinic, which helped them clarify their health insurance and prescription needs

H&B Wine and Liquors of Worcester and The Sole Proprietor, Worcester graciously donated items for CMAA to present as door prizes. A.G. of Worcester won a sleeping bag, Marcia F. of Worcester won a Patriots cooler and Helen K. of North Grafton won a gift certificate from the Sole Proprietor/111 Chophouse. The winners were very appreciative of their goodies.

It appeared that people enjoyed themselves. Everyone went home a lot smarter and loaded down with homework reading to do regarding the myriad of elder and caregiver services available throughout Central Massachusetts.

See you at ElderCare 2003!

TIME continued from page 1

Here in Massachusetts, Mass Home Care is support the SOAP campaign: Save our Older Americans Act Programs! I urge all of you who read this newsletter to educate our elected officials on the importance of all that Title III programs offer. Remind them how much we get for what little money we already have. Ask them to think of the low and middle income seniors who gather for meals at their local senior center, or the elder who needs transportation to see a specialist in Boston, the blind elder who needs escorted transportation, the Latino elder who requires help with translation as he visits his doctor, or the elder who is in danger of eviction and needs legal assistance, or the caregiver who has not been to a movie in 18 months. Offer these pictures for our lawmakers. Make it a tapestry of services atop the mosaic of our people.

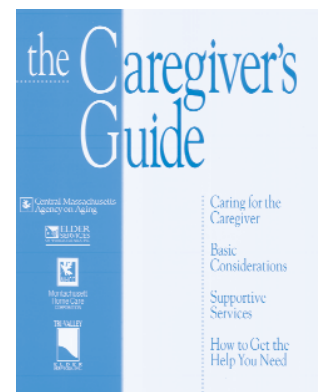
The New Year can be faced with hope and joy, as long as we do our best to remind our government not just of the good that we do, but of the needs we fill and the folks who will be lost without a complete Older Americans Act. We cannot tire, either of the services or of the advocacy it sometimes takes to provide them.

Planning for Your Caregiver Role

As a caregiver, it is often frustrating to try and find the support you need to cope with the day-to-day problems confronting you. One of the most difficult functions of being a caregiver is making decisions. How does a caregiver go about making the best decision? Pre-planning is one of the most important aspects of the decision making process. Many issues can and should be discussed before a crisis occurs. Get to know the feelings and desires of the person for whom you are caring so his/her wishes can be respected in future decisions regarding their care.

The Caregivers Guide contains information from "Caring for the Caregiver" to "Supportive Services" and is really an invaluable tool. To pick up your free copy, please call 1-800-244-3032 in MA, or (508) 852-5539 V/TDD. If you request one to be mailed, there is a small postage and handling charge.

Don't forget to pick up your copy today!



CAREGIVERS...ARE YOU IN THIS GROUP?

by John Belding, Director of Planning

Based on the response to the user questionnaire on the CMAA caregiver website, it appears that caregivers in Central Massachusetts have a profile similar to that of the country as a whole. The majority are:

- female (74%),
- married (74%),
- under the age of 65 (91%),
- caring for a parent or parent-in-law (64%).

While the CMAA sample is rather small at this point, the patterns so far generally reflect those found in national studies of caregiving. Most of those registering on the site have been caregivers for less than 5 years (85%) and spend less than 20 hours per week providing assistance (75%).

The major types of care provided were:

- transportation (77%)
- household chores (68%)
- helping with medications and medical escort (64%)
- helping with bill-paying and other financial matters (64%)

By far the most frequent problem faced by the caregivers was the unscheduled missing of work (59%); i.e. having to help with some urgent need that required leaving work early, arriving late, or missing a day altogether. This is part of a growing national trend that may have a significant impact on businesses in the coming years.

The Connection for Caregiver web-

site is intended to provide information and assistance to aid caregivers in helping their loved ones. In order to better serve this purpose we need feedback on what the specific needs are in Central Massachusetts. We do not want to rely entirely on national studies. You can help us by completing the enclosed questionnaire on caregiving and returning it to CMAA. We also encourage you to visit our interactive site, The Connection for Caregivers, by typing this URL directly in your browser window, <http://www.media.seniorconnection.org/> and let us know what we can do to improve it.



**CALLING
ALL
EXPERTS**

ARE YOU A MEMBER OF OUR CONNECTION FOR CAREGIVERS WEBSITE?

Just go to www.SeniorConnection.org and click on the Connection For Caregiver button. Once you become a member you can then sign up to participate in the following **FREE** services:

- On-Line Classes which offer diverse topics in caregiving & elder issues.
- Monthly Facilitated On-Line Support Group-4th Tuesday of every month at 12:15PM. Sessions are facilitated by Christine McWade, LICSW and Ellen Gibs, LICSW.
- 24/7 chat room where caregivers & professionals discuss caregiving issues.

OTHER FEATURES INCLUDE

- Newsletter via Email when you sign up for this feature.
- Browse our Four Corners Section and Read what Professionals are Saying!
- Watch Caregiver and Health Videos!
- Download Informational Handouts & My Medication Form!
- Take the Caregivers Survey!
- Set your Font Preference to Normal Text or Large Text!

NEEDED FOR 2003

If you are a professional in the aging or caregiver network and would like to be on the cutting edge of technology *and* human services, contact SeniorConnection and offer to write an article or teach a class ON-LINE. All you need to do is create educational material in a Powerpoint presentation and we do the rest. You teach the class just like a regular classroom. The only difference is that your students may actually be sitting anywhere in the world.

We have a GREAT opportunity for you. What GREAT class idea do you want to share with our Internet students? Over 200,000 hits so far this year can't be wrong.

Central Massachusetts
Agency on Aging
360 West Boylston Street
West Boylston MA 01583

Non-Profit Org. U.S.
Postage
PAID
West Boylston MA
Permit No. 87



To Contact CMAA, V/TDD (508)852-5539 or (800)244-3032 FAX (508)852-5425 E-Mail CMAAging@SeniorConnection.org

This project funded in part by the Executive Office of Elder Affairs of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Winter 2002



May this season of peace
bring you serenity,
and may the New Year
bring prosperity
with hope for a
better tomorrow.



Your friends at
Central Massachusetts Agency on Aging