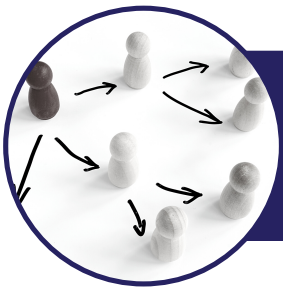




JANUARY 2024

# REGION 9 AREA AGENCY ON AGING CAREGIVER NEWSLETTER

Serving the Counties of: Alcona, Alpena, Arenac, Cheboygan, Crawford, Iosco, Montmorency, Ogemaw, Oscoda, Otsego, Presque Isle and Roscommon



## HOW TO DELEGATE CAREGIVING TASKS

Caregiving is extremely stressful, and if you do not take care of yourself, not only could it cause health problems for you, but it could result in you being a less effective caregiver. It is essential you have a life outside of your duties as a caregiver, and one way to ensure this is to make time by delegating some of your responsibilities. It takes a strong, organized person to ask for help and delegate tasks. Follow these tips to learn how to delegate caregiving tasks effectively.

1. Take time to make a plan.
2. Start writing things down such as doctor appointments, vital information, and even medicine schedules.
3. Find the right people to help.
4. Reach out to close family, friends, and neighbors.
5. Give clear instructions for your desired result. Do not leave room for confusion.
6. Set a clear schedule of tasks and duties.
7. Visual aids such as calendars and dry erase boards are useful for maintaining schedules and checklists.
8. Make sure there are backups in case of emergencies.
9. Recognize that others may do things differently and that is okay.
10. Establish trust and communication.
11. Schedule regular check-in phone calls to others providing help.
12. Use Apps and other technology to connect everyone.
13. Make sure to say thank you.

### Possible Tasks to Delegate:

- Grocery Shopping
- Medication Management
- Errands to Post Office
- Personal Care
- Transportation
- Companionship
- Household Cleaning
- Meal Prepping
- Outdoor Chores
- Laundry
- Handling Finances



## TIPS FOR LIFE AFTER CAREGIVING

As a caregiver, you have invested countless hours in meeting your care recipient's needs. Now that your time as a caregiver has ended, you may feel uncertain about what to do next. Here are some tips to help you with the transition.

- Embrace the fullness of grief.
- Exercise, get enough sleep, and eat right.
- Find meaning in this new role.
- Celebrate your free time and reflect.
- Re-build your social network.
- Take one day at a time.
- Focus on your needs and health.
- Express your vulnerability.
- Use healthy and appropriate coping mechanisms.
- Ask for and accept help.
- Join a support group.
- Delay major decisions.
- Embrace new routines.
- Accept inevitable relationship changes.
- Rediscover activities, interests, and duties that are important to you.
- Set goals that help you to make your dreams come true.
- Consider using your experience to help others.

**You are in a time of transition. Don't expect to know all the answers or every step.**



## THREE ESSENTIAL LEGAL DOCUMENTS REGARDING HEALTHCARE

**1**

### **HIPAA Authorization**

Allows the doctor to keep approved family members in the loop regarding a loved one's medical status and billing information.

**2**

### **Medical Power of Attorney (POA)**

Enables a person to appoint a trusted person to handle specific health care decisions on their behalf. HIPAA authorization only grants caregivers access to information, but a medical POA grants the caregiver the ability to make medical decisions on behalf of a care recipient. The POA must be prepared while the person still has the mental capacity to give an caregiver these powers.

**3**

### **Advance Care Directives/Living Wills**

Record a person's wishes for emergency and end-of-life care before a medical crisis strikes. With a living will, caregivers don't have to stress over difficult decisions. It will indicate specific treatments, that a person does or does not want to receive.



## MAKING THE MOST OF MEALTIME

Eating and food are at the center of many of life's occasions, celebrations and moments together with loved ones. Of course, eating is also a necessity—we rely on nutrition and hydration to survive. But what happens to these important and essential moments when dementia affects a loved one's eating? In what ways can a loved one's ability to interact with food begin to change?

For people with dementia, eating and drinking can become challenging as the dementia progresses. Dementia can cause difficulties with co-ordination and remembering the processes or sequences involved with eating and drinking. These difficulties can make mealtimes slow and drawn out.

1. Eat at the same time, every day.
2. Develop mealtime routines and ensure consistency.
3. The way food is presented and served.
4. Minimize distractions.
5. Allow a person to sit and eat in a place where they feel comfortable.
6. They may experience visual impairments that make it difficult to see the food in front of them.
7. Avoid using patterned table cloths and plates.
8. Have a contrast between the color of the plates and the food.
9. Ensure the area is bright and well-lit.
10. They may struggle with the use of a knife and fork, if so provide finger foods.
11. Provide regular prompts as to where their cutlery is and offer guidance to them on how to use it.
12. Limit the number of options.
13. Allow the person to choose the food they want to eat at the time they will be eating it.
14. Remove all distractions such as the TV and Radio station.
15. Don't rush. Be patient and give the person enough time to finish the meal.
16. Cut the food into small pieces and make it soft enough to eat.
17. Set the mood to a warm and happy tone.

5.2 million seniors aged 60+ faced hunger.  
That's 1 in 14 seniors or 7.1% of all seniors. 63%  
of seniors visiting food banks say they have to  
choose between food and medical care.





# FOOD SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

## **Food and Nutrition Services of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)**

The schools, early childhood education programs, child care centers, afterschool programs, or other programs that children attend may offer free or reduced meals through the federal Child Nutrition Program, which provides breakfast, lunch, snacks, and summer meals and milk. Contact the school, center, or program to ask if they participate in any of the child nutrition programs and how to apply. Relative caregivers should inform the program that they are raising the child and whether or not they are doing so through a court order. To find your state office that manages the Child Nutrition Program visit:

[www.fns.usda.gov/contacts](http://www.fns.usda.gov/contacts)

## **Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)**

States administer federal funds for supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children up to age five who are found to be at nutritional risk. To find your state office that manages the WIC program. [www.fns.usda.gov/wic/wic-contacts](http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/wic-contacts)

## **Foodbanks**

Organizations that provide free food and sometimes other items, such as diapers, to families in need. To find local food banks: [www.feedingamerica.org/foodbank-results.aspx](http://www.feedingamerica.org/foodbank-results.aspx)

## **Golden Grocery Giveaway - NEMCSA**

A monthly food program that provides nutritious well-balanced foods to supplement the diet of those who qualify.

Serving: Alcona | Alpena | Arenac | Cheboygan | Crawford | Iosco | Montmorency | Ogemaw | Oscoda | Otsego | Presque Isle.

Contact [foodprograms@nemcsa.org](mailto:foodprograms@nemcsa.org) or (989) 358-4712 to enroll in the program.

You are eligible if:

- You live within one of our service counties (listed above)
- You are 60+
- You fall within the Federal Poverty Guidelines.

## **Food Boost Program - NEMCSA**

Offer extra food with the Golden Grocery monthly giveaway, at local pantries and through home delivery!

Serving: Alcona | Alpena | Arenac | Cheboygan | Crawford | Iosco  
Montmorency | Ogemaw | Oscoda | Otsego | Presque Isle.

Contact Tammy at [foodprograms@nemcsa.org](mailto:foodprograms@nemcsa.org) or (989) 358-4708 to enroll in the program.

You are eligible if:

- You live within one of our service counties (listed above)
- A person or household meets the below income guidelines OR receives SNAP, WIC, FDPIR, CSFP or a child receives free/reduced meals at school.



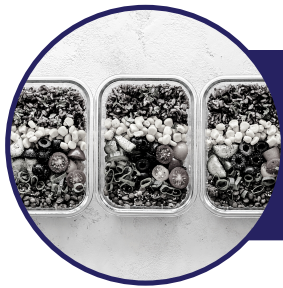


## WAYS TO DEAL WITH MEDICAL DEBT

Managing medical debt can seem like a monumental challenge. These expenses are often unplanned, and can be sizeable even with help from your insurance.

- Review your bills. Look for duplicated billing, unauthorized charges, and errors. Make sure your insurance company has paid for all covered expenses.
- Negotiate your medical costs. The best time to negotiate your medical costs is before treatment.
- See if you qualify for an income-driven hardship plan. The provider may forgive a portion of your debt and divide the remaining balance into smaller, more manageable payments.
- Consider a medical bill advocate. A medical bill advocate can file appeals with your insurance company and negotiate with your medical provider, and create a workable payment plan.
- Look for financial assistance or charity care programs.
- Consider a payment plan.
- Use medical credit cards.

**4.5 million older adults have a past-due medical bill . . .  
Caregivers are particularly vulnerable.**



## MEAL PLANNING FOR AN OLDER ADULT AT HOME

Nourishment is essential to life. We turn to food for our basic dietary needs like protein, vitamins, minerals and more. But it's also a source of pleasure and comfort. That can change during our older years when taste buds change, dental health is more challenging, arthritis can make food prep painful, and medications and mood disorders can steal our appetite. How to make sure your loved ones get the nourishment they need.

- Make a plan and write it down.
- Stock up on cereal. Older Adults do not have to wrestle with a jar, just open a box, and they also get fluids as well.
- Try soups and smoothies. These foods are nutrient-dense, they are rich in fiber and easy to eat.
- Prioritize protein. Some options include: cottage cheese, ricotta cheese, nut butters, eggs, frozen meatballs, chopped chicken, tuna pouches, and baked tofu.
- Follow the Mediterranean Diet.
- Prep versatile ingredients for the week.
- Be mindful of taste changes over time.
- Fill the freezer with frozen foods.
- Make meal prep a group project.
- Make left overs and freeze them.





## HOW TO DETERMINE AN OLDER ADULT NEEDS HELP AT HOME

Look for these common indicators that an older adult may need help at home or an increased level of care.

### **Difficulty Performing Activities of Daily Living:**

- Bathing and grooming
- Dressing
- Toileting
- Continence
- Walking and transferring (e.g., moving from the bed to a chair)
- Eating

### **Changes in Physical Function and Appearance:**

- Noticeable weight loss due to poor diet, difficulty cooking, eating, shopping for food, etc.
- Wearing soiled clothing or dressing inappropriately for the season/weather due to difficulties dressing.
- Poor personal hygiene and unpleasant body odor as a result of infrequent showering or bathing.
- Unkempt hair, untrimmed nails, or poor oral hygiene indicate a noticeable decline in grooming habits and personal care.
- Bruises, wounds, or other marks on the body could indicate falls or changes in mobility.
- Noticeable burns on the skin could indicate a senior is experiencing problems cooking.

### **Changes in Behavior and Mental Status**

- Lack of motivation.
- Loss of interest in hobbies and activities.
- Difficulty keeping track of time.
- Failure to return phone calls to friends and family members.
- Changes in mood or extreme mood swings.
- Increased agitation.
- Verbally or physically abusive behaviors.
- Changes in sleep patterns (e.g., insomnia or sleeping all day).

### **Neglecting Household Responsibilities**

- Changes in household cleanliness and organization.
- Extreme clutter or evidence of hoarding.
- Stacks of unopened mail, late payment notices, or bounced checks.
- Unpaid bills, calls from collectors or utilities being turned off.
- Spoiled food that doesn't get thrown away.
- Little or no fresh, healthy food or overall low food supply.
- Stained or wet furniture or carpet.
- Urine odor in the house, which may indicate incontinence.
- Cookware or appliances with noticeable burn marks could indicate food has been left unattended while cooking or reheating.
- Failure to maintain outdoor areas.
- Signs of unsafe driving (e.g., automobile dents and scratches).
- Unfilled prescriptions.

# IMPORTANT DATES

## Powerful Tools for Caregivers

APRIL 25, - MAY 30, 2024  
1:30PM-2:30PM

## Caregiver Webinar Series 1:00 PM-2:00 PM

FEBRUARY 9, 2024: IMPORTANCE OF  
PLANNING AHEAD FOR LEGAL MATTERS

## Healthy Living Webinar 1:00 PM-2:00 PM

FEBRUARY 14, 2024: MINDFUL  
COOKING AND NUTRITION

MARCH 13, 2024: MANAGING WORK-  
LIFE BALANCE

APRIL 10, 2024: MANAGING STRESS  
AND MENTAL HEALTH

## CAREGIVER CONFERENCE

FRIDAY, APRIL 19, 2024  
MIO BAPATISH CHUCH  
10:00AM-4:00PM

## CHRONIC PAIN PATH

FEBRUARY 19, - MARCH 25, 2024  
1:00PM-3:30PM

## DEMENTIA CAREGIVER SERIES

DEMENTIA INFORMATION FOR  
EVERYONE: MARCH 20, 2024  
ACTIVITIES FOR PERSONS WITH  
DEMENTIA: MARCH 27, 2024  
DEMENTIA BEHAVIORS AND SELF-  
CARE: APRIL 3RD, 2024



Trualta is a free online personalized,  
skills-based training platform for  
family caregivers caring for someone  
living at home.

Enroll at: [www.region9aaa.trualta.com/login](http://www.region9aaa.trualta.com/login)



## PLANNING FOR RETIREMENT

Estimate your financial need, by thinking about the retirement lifestyle you want. Consider seeing a financial advisor for assistance.

Learn about Social Security benefits. Social Security should be just one part of your Retirement Plan.

Sign up for your employer's retirement saving plan and contribute all you can. Maximize your match potential.

The average estimated cost of retirement in Michigan is \$1,021,429. Yet over 40% of have estimated they will need less than \$500K.



## THE IMPORTANCE OF FALLS PREVENTION

Falls are the leading cause of fatal injury and the most common cause of trauma-related hospital admissions among older adults.

Falls result in more than three million injuries treated in emergency departments annually, including over 800,000 hospitalizations. However, falls are preventable.

Falls, with or without injury, can carry a heavy quality of life impact. A growing number of older adults fear falling and, as a result, limit their activities and social engagements.

This can result in further physical decline, depression, social isolation, and feelings of helplessness. We urge you to combat both the statistics and the results of fear! Arm yourself and the loved ones you care for. Education is the first important step.

To see if you or someone you know home fall safe visit [www.ncoa.org/article/falls-free-checkup](http://www.ncoa.org/article/falls-free-checkup)



## WHERE CAN I FIND MORE HELPFUL INFORMATION?

Region 9 Area Agency on Aging Special Projects Coordinator is available weekdays, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. to answer your questions, register you for caregiver workshops, provide resources, and to support you and the person you are caring for.

Contact Brooke at 989.358.4616 or  
[mainvilleb@nemcsa.org](mailto:mainvilleb@nemcsa.org)