



HOME CARE PLUS

trusted care at home

Summer Newsletter 2013

Welcome to our summer 2013 newsletter packed full of relevant information and updates on issues of interest within the sector.

In this issue we have an article on the GENIO project which is trying new ways of supporting people with dementia in the south Dublin area. We also have information on travel for seniors as well as a short account of our clients afternoon out at the cinema. We also give a summary of an important report published by Home and Community Care Ireland on the home sector.

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Summer Travel Tips for Seniors

Seniors are at their best when they are active and engaged in the world. Staying physically fit and mentally stimulated is the best way to promote a long and healthy life. As we get older, our aging parents often need some help from adult children in preparing for events that take them out of their comfort zone. If you and your parents are planning a holiday away from their home, here are some tips for seniors to help prepare for healthy and safe summer travels:

- 1) Bring all medications in their original bottles and keep a list of the medications and dosages with you at all times. Consider bringing extra medication and keep it in a carry-on bag in case you lose your luggage.
- 2) Keep a list of medical conditions and doctors' telephone numbers.
- 3) Know if medications affect the body's ability to deal with heat. Antibiotics may make your skin more sensitive to the sun, and diuretics may dehydrate you faster.
- 4) Make sure your accommodations are senior-friendly.
- 5) Remember "SHS": sunglasses, hats and sunscreen.
- 6) Wear comfortable, sturdy shoes for walking around. Don't be afraid or embarrassed to ask for a wheelchair in airports or museums.
- 7) Avoid being outdoors on very hot and/or humid days. Stay indoors in air-conditioned surroundings. If you must go out, go early or late when the sun isn't as intense and temperatures are lower, and wear cool clothing.
- 8) Plan indoor recreational activities for the middle, hot part of the day (museums, movies, restaurants, etc.).
- 9) Carry a water bottle and stay hydrated. Know where convenient public toilets are located if you venture out.
- 10) On the train, bus and/or plane, avoid deep vein thrombosis (blood clots in the legs) by not sitting in one place for too long. If you're travelling on a long flight, get up and take a lap of the plane once every hour.
- 11) Remember that a change in time zones may cause jet lag, so get enough sleep.

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GENIO Project - See the person and not the dementia.

A local group is trying out new ways to support people with dementia and invites the citizens of Blackrock and Stillorgan to participate.

The term dementia describes a set of symptoms that include loss of memory, mood changes and problems with communicating and reasoning. Due to the age profile of people living in this part of Dublin, we actually have the highest national urban level of dementia in the country. And nationally it is expected that the number of people living with dementia will increase from 42,000 today to 140,000 by 2041 because the population is ageing, and people are living longer.

The Stillorgan-Blackrock area has therefore been chosen together with 3 other areas (Kinsale, Mayo and South Tipperary) to pilot new ways to prevent people with dementia moving unnecessarily to long-term care. The local project, Living Well with Dementia is designed to support people with dementia to live fulfilled lives in their own homes and in their own community.

Many people with dementia are very capable and would like to continue their life-long interests such as going to the shops, playing bridge, meeting a friend for a coffee or walking the dog. All they need is to have a supportive and knowledgeable community around them. So over the next 3 years training and support will be offered to enable groups, clubs, and businesses to become dementia friendly.

Living Well with Dementia was launched in Kilmacud-Crokes GAA club in Stillorgan by An Tánaiste, Eamonn Gilmore, in August 2012. A local consortium was formed to deliver the project. It consists of people with dementia, their carers, and people from the community representing volunteers, business-people, health and social care professionals, and representatives from statutory and Non Governmental Organisations. The project is led by Eilis Hession, Manager of Services for Older People, Dun Laoghaire.



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Central to the project is listening to the person with dementia and their primary carers. We did this at a local carers' workshop and as a result a number of events are planned including a "Valuing the Carer" night, a regular newsletter, a walking club and an inclusive choir. A weekly activity programme for people with dementia and their carers has begun in Stillorgan Community Centre.

Members of the public will play a huge part in ensuring the success of the project. If you already attend an activity such as bridge, golf, sporting event, active retirement group, and theatre or music events and would be willing to accompany someone with dementia, please contact us. As a business-owner you can contact us about becoming dementia-friendly.

We especially need volunteers (both male and female) to support activities such as walking groups, befriending, an inclusive choir, social events and transport. Training and support of our volunteers will be provided.

The Living Well with Dementia is co-funded by Atlantic Philanthropies and the HSE and supported by Genio Trust.

For more information, please contact Bridget Doyle on 01 706 0119.
E-mail: info@livingwellwithdementia.ie Web: www.livingwellwithdementia.ie

Afternoon at the Cinema

Home Care Plus recently organised an afternoon out to the cinema for our clients to see "All You Need is Love" starring Pierce Brosnan. We collected clients in cases where their carers couldn't bring them and dropped them home afterwards.

These outings are a great chance for us to get to know our clients even better and also to break up their routines a bit and get them socialising out of their homes. The afternoon was a great success with requests to keep an eye out for the next suitable movie!

The More Efficient Use of the Older Persons Budget

Home and Community Care Ireland recently published a ground breaking report into how we can get more out of the existing older persons budget and at the same time improve the quality of service. This report comes at a time when the demand for older persons services is increasing with state resources decreasing through budget pressures, staff moratoriums and redundancy schemes.

The bottom line of the report points to possible savings of €2B in the next 8 years to 2021 through two simple initiatives.

Firstly it calls for ending of ring fencing budgets for one type of care over another. This is in line with government's often stated aim of letting "the money follow the patient". Presently the older persons budget is about €1.4B with the vast majority of this, €1B, being ring fenced for residential care through the Fair Deal Scheme. The report questions the wisdom of this taking into account that the majority of people want to stay in their own homes for as long as possible.

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Next year it is expected that the single assessment tool will be in place which will allow us to assess someone's needs and then as the report suggests, offer them a budget which they would be free to spend on the type of care they wanted whether that be residential care home care or other types of community care. Presently there are around 30% of patients in residential care who are deemed low or medium dependency who would be suitable for care in their own homes. The report calculates savings next year alone of €69M if funds from the Fair Deal Scheme were freed up for home care.

Secondly, the report recommends more open and transparent commissioning of home care through tendering out all home care packages and home help hours that the HSE cant provide from their own internal resources. If this was done in the upcoming tender for next year, there are possible savings of €48 in 2014.

Presently nearly €60M is given through section 39 funds to home help organisations to provide home help in a very inefficient manner as shown by several internal HSE reports pointing to gross mismanagement of funds such as claiming funds for non existent clients.

Normally when someone talks about savings of the magnitude of €2B it is in the context of cuts to frontline services. Here we are talking about no cuts to frontline services but instead a significant increase in the amount of funds for care of older persons. This is a win-win situation for everyone. Neither of these proposals are radical nor need any root and branch reforms. We call on the government to act on these proposals as soon as possible to ensure that we are in a position to care for our older population going forward in a manner they are entitled to. You can look at the full report on the HCCI website at www.hcci.ie .



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Notes From A GP

The recent Crèches controversy may have passed by the time you read this, but the lessons learnt hopefully will be with us for a long time. Some of the parents and children who had been attending the crèches are patients of mine. They have been deeply affected by their experiences. Mostly the parents rather than the children as far as we can know at this stage.

From the expose there has been a lot of bashing of private provision of care whether it be for children or for adults but I couldn't help asking myself is it the model of care provision that is at fault or is it the regulatory and supervisory structure? Surely what's important is that the best quality of care is provided independent of any ideological argument about private versus state provision?

To suggest that state provision of care is less prone to human weaknesses than private provision I think is somewhat naive. What we need is to ensure that whoever is providing the care has the proper incentives to give the best care possible and also to be constantly trying to improve that care.

The best way to do this is through information and choice. In the cases of the crèches by making inspection reports available easily and making it easier for parents to make their choice of crèche means that crèches have to be at the top of their game in order to be viable.

Many people blamed the HSE for not doing more inspections, but that is not the only problem. The problem clearly is that the owners, managers and some of the staff were not passionate about what they were doing and some staff members were clearly unsuitable in their roles. This comes down to recruitment policy. Recruitment is at the core of any care service and this means face to face interviews, proper reference checking, excellent induction training and active subsequent supervision.

I previously put my first child in a crèche a long time ago, the reason we picked a crèche over a child minder was the expectation that the crèche workers would work together and ensure the child was in a safe environment. With hindsight I can see that I probably didn't have enough information on the crèche.

So what is important in selecting an organisation to look after your loved ones? Firstly you need to realise that you are doing the service provider a favour by using them and as such you need to act in accordance. Ask questions. Questions about recruitment policy, training and supervision. Ask to talk to staff. I think it's important for the employees to take responsibility for their roles and be passionate in what they do. Ask to see HSE inspection reports. Talk to people who are already using the service. A lot of responsibility falls on you and you have also to take responsibility for decisions and ensure that you have got the most information possible to make an informed choice.

We all want to ensure that the types of scenes we saw in the recent Primetime programme are not repeated and we all have our role to play in ensuring that.

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National Carers Week Coffee Morning

We recently held a carers coffee morning in our offices to say a small thanks to our carers and the wonderful work they do. We had a great turnout with some pretty impressive home baking as well. We might have to organise a carers sports day as well to work off the calories!!

We are very aware in Home Care Plus that no matter how efficient and professional we are in the office, at the end of the day we are judged on our carers and their interaction with our clients. With this in mind we strive to foster a family feeling within the organisation and our challenge is to keep this as we grow.

Elder Abuse Conference

Siobhan, Liza and Con attended a conference on Elder Abuse in UCD run by the National Centre for the Protection of Older People. The conference highlighted the issue of elder abuse with some interesting talks and presentations from world renowned speakers. The conference also offered workshops and training session on signs of elder abuse, prevention strategies and ways to intervene if you suspect you or someone you know is a victim. Elder abuse comes in all shapes and sizes, ranging from physical abuse to neglect to financial fraud. With more and more of the population becoming seniors elder abuse is on the rise, but many people don't know how to recognize or report elder abuse. The conference hoped to help address this issue.



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Memory Box for Dementia

Home Care Plus encourage our clients who suffer with dementia and their families, to put together a rummage box in the home. This box helps the dementia sufferer to recall memories from the past and enables them to reminisce about bygone times. People with dementia can often recall distant events and the rummage box can include items of interest, photographs or even items they may have used during their working lives. The rummage box can be useful in creating a sense of calm and provide a distraction when a dementia sufferer might be restless or upset. Creativity can also be encouraged through painting and drawing. Our care givers are encouraged to plan these activities in the home, with their clients, whenever possible.

Our carers at Home Care Plus, have enjoyed putting together their own memory boxes during their training. It helps them understand what person centred care really means. Home Care Plus believes caring for the care giver is an essential part of providing quality care.

For any advice or creative ideas on putting together a rummage box for your family member just contact us here at Home Care Plus.

Pearls of Wisdom

A positive attitude may not solve all your problems, but it will annoy enough people to make it worth the effort.

Herm Albright (1876 - 1944)

The advantage of a bad memory is that one enjoys several times the same good things for the first time.

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844 - 1900)

The worst loneliness is not to be comfortable with yourself.

Mark Twain (1835 - 1910)



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