

# Region V Aging Services Newsletter

## Spring 2009



Hi everyone, what a spring it has been! Finally things are getting back on schedule and yes, we will have a Region V Council on Aging meeting in July. Look for the agenda inside this Newsletter.

We have a great July Council on Aging program coming up. Lorrie R. Carlson, with the Silver Sneakers Fitness Program will speak on "Changing Aging." You will remember Lorrie from our meeting in Lisbon last fall when she had us all laughing and exercising.

In the afternoon, Rose Marie Gueldner, will speak to us about "ArtSage—*Creative Aging in the Red River Valley.*" Creativity, which is inherent in everyone, can be nurtured throughout life. Through creativity, the expertise gained with aging has the potential to offset the complications of aging. Engaging in artistic activities is an excellent, effective way to nurture the creativity in everyone, especially those rich in life experience. We will also have the opportunity to view a Creative Aging video.

Hope to see you all there. I have missed you!

The flood events across North Dakota this spring were one for the books. The way people came together to hold back the water, save homes, property and livestock received national attention. Mostly we were victorious but for those who were overtaken there was and continues to be much suffering and hardship. No doubt our communities will rise to help and do their best to make things whole.



**North Dakota**  
**"A Caring Place To  
Grow Old"**

**Southeast Human  
Service Center**  
2624 9th Ave. South  
Fargo, North Dakota  
58103-2350

**Serving the Counties of:**  
Cass, Ransom, Richland,  
Sargent, Steele, Trail

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# Region V Council on Aging

Friday July 17, 2009

**Riverview Place**  
**5300 South 12th Street** (Just off University Drive)  
**Fargo, North Dakota**  
public is welcome

**10:00 - 10:15 AM**

**Registration and Coffee**

**10:15 - 11:00 AM**

**Welcome by President Pat Dimmer**

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Roll Call of Counties** – Cass, Ransom, Richland, Sargent, Steele, Traill

**Secretarial Report** – Marlyne Skramstad

**Treasurer's Report** – Gudrun Harstad

**Old Business**

**New Business**

**Update from Legal Services of North Dakota** — Linda  
Catalano/Paulette Throntveit

**SHEA Update** — Edmund Lenaburg

**Announcements and Reports**—Sandy Arends



Note: If you would like to meet on a one to one basis with someone from Legal Services of North Dakota during the meeting, call Sandy Arends at the numbers below to set up a meeting time. Legal topics may include: Medical Assistance, Living Wills, Medicare, Transfer of Assets, Energy Assistance, Guardianships, Housing, Social Security, Durable Power of Attorney for Health and/or Financial, and Government Benefits.

**11:00 AM-12 Noon** “ *Changing Aging*” Lorrie R. Carlson, Silver Sneakers Fitness  
Program

**12:00 Noon** Lunch at Riverview Place - see lunch registration instructions below

**1:00 - 2:15 PM** “ *ArtSage—Creative Aging in the Red River Valley*” Rose Marie  
Guedner

**2:15 PM** Final Remarks - Adjournment

**Note:** Please register for the noon meal at Riverview by calling Sandy at 1-888-342-4900 or (701) 298-4420. Meal reservations must be called in by Wednesday, July 15, 2009. People attending are responsible to pay for their own meal at Riverview. The cost of the noon meal will be \$7.50.

# ND Family Caregiver Support Program

## Guidelines for Better Communication

Communicating with a loved one with a brain disorder can indeed be challenging. Finding the right words and getting your point across are difficult under normal circumstances. This difficulty is often compounded by your role as a caregiver. And although there are no easy solutions, following some basic guidelines should ease communication and lower levels of stress both for you and for the care recipient.

**1. Make Sure You Have Their Attention:** Statements and questions made to adults with a brain impairment should almost always begin with an identifier. This doesn't necessarily have to be the person's name, but should be a common greeting used between the two of you (very often, a term of endearment will work). For example, start a sentence with "Mom," then pause. Wait until you have her attention before continuing, especially if there is a great deal of background noise. Very often, it is difficult for impaired individuals to understand when people are talking around them, or to them.

**2. Speak at Eye Level and Enunciate.** In addition to getting the individual's attention, you also need to retain that attention. Before beginning even a short conversation, get to his or her eye level. If someone is in a wheelchair or lying down, pull up a chair. Be sure to retain eye contact and try not to occupy yourself with other things while you're engaged in conversation. Enunciate your words so that each is differentiated from the other.

**3. Use Simple, Direct Statements.** When communicating, statements should be short and descriptive. Instead of, "Mom, I would appreciate it if you finished your breakfast and got ready because we're running late," try, "Mom, please finish up so we can leave on time." The latter may sound curt, but it needn't take an angry or frustrated tone. It is simply a direct way of communicating your needs. And be sure to use sentences containing short-action increments. Rather than, "Please take off your shirt," try "Can you help me unbutton the front?" "Good." "Now can you pull your arm out of the sleeve?" "Thank you." Etc.

**4. Ask. Try Not to Tell.** Even when parenting is your formal role — you are taking care of an adult, for example — keep in mind that you are still communicating with an adult. And most adults like to be asked to do something, rather than told what to do. As such, utilize the three magic words: "can," "will" and "please." "Can you stand up so I can fix your dress?" "Will you sit in this chair?" "Please join me in the living room."

**5. Move Closer.** If you are talking to a loved one and they can't hear what you're saying, try moving closer to the person rather than raising your voice. Be respectful of a person's "personal space" (or distance at which she/he likes to communicate). But remember the ultimate goal: making yourself understood.

**6. Talk Around Difficulties and Use Gestures.** Brain-impaired individuals have very often lost part or all of their "sensory repertoire"—the sense of everyday things, people and places. If your loved one cannot remember a person or place, try to avoid thinking or expressing negative feelings that convey your frustration or worry. Instead, talk around the word by using a vague pronoun reference, e.g. he, she or it. And use (as well as listen to) gestures. A person with a brain impairment might be

telling you about a house down the street, but may have lost the word “house.” He may instead put the tips of his fingers together in the shape of a roof. Suggest words that seem appropriate and be receptive to feedback. If you truly get stuck, focus on the emotion being expressed. “It sounds like what you saw was beautiful.”

**7. Talk With, Rather Than About.** Persons with brain impairment very often get pushed to the side during conversation. People, even professionals, may feel uncomfortable about talking to an impaired individual because they’re not sure what will be understood. As a caregiver, make the care recipient the focus of your conversation. Encourage others to talk with your loved one, rather than about them. If someone continually refuses to talk directly to your loved one, a gentle reminder is appropriate. Additionally, it is okay for caregivers to cover more technical questions with a professional before or after your scheduled appointment time.

**8. Listen.** A simple point, but one not to be overlooked. You know your loved one better than anyone else; use this to your advantage. As a caregiver, very often your most important role is as a listener. And listening can be done even if your loved one does not speak; you can communicate your interest with as little as holding their hand.

**9. Give Yourself Plenty of Time.** Time, and the freedom to take your time, is a necessity. For example, allow an extra 15 minutes for travel, enough to assist your loved one in getting to, from, into and out of the car. This is especially important if the care recipient is particularly resistive or hesitant to participate in her or his own care (taking a shower, for example). Try not to get into a power struggle and maintain your other communication skills. When brain-impaired individuals are rushed they tend to get stressed. And stress very often makes people less amenable to care.

**10. Try, Try Again.** A little trite, but important nonetheless. If, as a caregiver, you find yourself in a power struggle with a loved one, it is okay to let go. Come back in five minutes. If you are assisting your parent in going outside, for example, and they resist putting on a coat, give in. Engage in another activity for five or ten minutes, such as putting on your own coat, and then come back and try again. In that five or ten minutes, your loved one may have forgotten why it was so important to resist in putting on a coat in the first place, and may give in to your request. *Used with permission of Family Caregiver Alliance. For more information, visit [www.caregiver.org](http://www.caregiver.org) or call (415) 434-3388.*

*For more information regarding the North Dakota Family Caregiver Support Program call Laura Fischer at 298-4480, or toll free 1-888-342-4900. This program can provide for the cost of respite care services, on an intermittent and occasional basis for relief of the primary caregiver. Services are provided in the following counties: Cass, Ransom, Richland, Sargent, Steele and Traill.*



**During your lifetime, did you HAVE joy?  
During your lifetime, did you BRING joy to others?  
If you have done both - you have lived a GOOD LIFE!**

## David Peterson Named New AARP State President



David Peterson, Bismarck has been named the new president of AARP North Dakota. Peterson retired in December as an assistant U.S. attorney. A native of Carpio, N.D., he spent 40 years practicing law in the state.

Janis Cheney, AARP North Dakota state director, said, "AARP is a volunteer-driven organization and the state president is a key volunteer leadership position within the state. David will bring fresh insight and perspective to our state organization. His background is well-suited to participation in our advocacy work at the state and federal level and to helping focus and enhance our volunteer engagement in North Dakota."

The state president serves a two-year term and can be reappointed for two additional terms. Peterson replaces Betty Keegan, Rolla, who served in the position for six years – the maximum term allowed. AARP has 88,000 members in North Dakota.



## 2010 Census Bringing Jobs to ND Communities – Census Jobs

The U.S. Census Bureau is gearing up for the 2010 Census—and it needs help to ensure everyone is counted.

### **The 2010 Census: Employees Making a Difference**

Every 10 years, the Census Bureau is required by the U.S. Constitution to count each person residing in the United States -both citizens and non-citizens. The census takes a snapshot of the U.S. population, determining how many people reside within the nation's borders, who they are and where they live. Data about how communities are changing are crucial to many planning decisions - such as neighborhood improvements, emergency preparedness and disaster recovery, public health, education, transportation, senior services and much more.

### **Temporary Census Jobs Offer Good Pay, Flexible Hours**

Short-term 2010 Census jobs are ideal for retirees, college students, recent high school graduates, stay-at-home parents, those seeking a second job to earn extra cash and others seeking part-time work. Census jobs also offer flexible schedules and paid training, along with reimbursement for authorized mileage and expenses.

### **Qualifying for a 2010 Census Job**

Those interested in applying for temporary jobs may do so by contacting their Local Census Office, which has begun opening nationwide and will begin hiring in early 2009. For more information on temporary employment with the Census Bureau, or to schedule an appointment to take an employment test and submit an application, call the toll-free 2010 Census Jobs Line: 1-866-861-2010. TTY Callers: Please use the Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339. *More information is also available at [www.2010censusjobs.gov](http://www.2010censusjobs.gov).*

## Booklet Explaining Guardianship Responsibilities Available Now

Court-appointed guardians in North Dakota provide a valuable service for vulnerable individuals, often making significant decisions involving financial or health care situations. North Dakota is stepping up efforts to educate guardians about their important role.

A North Dakota Olmstead Commission Work Group, together with the North Dakota Department of Human Services' Aging Services Division, has developed a booklet and fact sheet. They contain information about how court-appointed guardianships are established and the roles and responsibilities of guardians, and are intended to be resources for current and prospective guardians, families considering establishing a guardianship, and others.

The "Guardianship Handbook: Guide for Court Appointed Guardians in North Dakota" and the related one-page fact sheet are available on-line at <http://www.nd.gov/dhs/info/pubs/aging.html>.

Aging Services Division Director Linda Wright said the need for guardianships may grow because of the state's aging population and returning Iraq and Afghanistan veterans impacted by traumatic brain injuries and other disabilities.

"We have found that when guardianship services are not available, vulnerable individuals are less likely to be able to remain living independently," Wright said. "The possibility of exploitation and financial abuse increases, and vulnerable adults are unable to protect themselves."

The 2007 North Dakota Legislature appropriated \$40,000 for the Department of Human Services to establish guardianships for vulnerable adults. The funds pay for court costs for cases involving impoverished individuals.

Since August 2007, 54 guardianships have been established. Wright said the department screens each request to assure that individual's rights are protected and that less restrictive alternatives have been reviewed. Making a request does not automatically result in the establishment of a guardianship.

Wright said representatives from the Department of Human Services, the Protection and Advocacy Project, the courts, Guardianship and Protective Services, Catholic Charities, and AARP assisted the Olmstead Work Group with the development of the materials.

For information about the North Dakota Olmstead Commission, which focuses on providing services to individuals with disabilities in the least restrictive, appropriate setting, see <http://www.nd.gov/dhs/info/olmstead-commission.html>.



**Smile at yourself in the mirror.**

## **HHS Released \$30 million to Assist in Outreach to Medicare Beneficiaries**

On June 1, HHS Secretary Kathleen G. Sebelius released \$25 million in grants to help older people, individuals with disabilities and their caregivers apply for special assistance through Medicare, and an additional \$5 million for a national resource center to support these important efforts.

These grants, made possible by the Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act (MIPPA) of 2008, will provide valuable support at the state and community levels for organizations involved in reaching and providing assistance to people likely to be eligible for the Low-Income Subsidy program (LIS), Medicare Savings Program (MSP), the Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Program and in helping beneficiaries to apply for benefits. This initiative also includes special targeting efforts to rural areas of the country and to Native American elders.

This MIPPA funding, which is jointly administered by HHS' Administration on Aging (AoA) and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), is being awarded to State Health Insurance Assistance Programs (SHIPs), State Agencies on Aging (SUAs), Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs), Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs), Native Americans Tribal Organizations and local communities to help seniors, caregivers and those with disabilities on Medicare. These organizations are important members of HHS' national network of state, tribal and community-based organizations who assist seniors, caregivers and those with disabilities with health benefits information and information on other services, and enable them to remain independent and living in their communities as long as possible. For more information about these grants, please visit: [http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/AoA\\_Programs/Special\\_Projects/Medicare\\_Outreach/index.aspx](http://www.aoa.gov/AoARoot/AoA_Programs/Special_Projects/Medicare_Outreach/index.aspx)

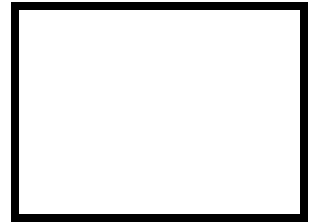


### **President Obama Nominates Kathy Greenlee for Assistant Secretary for Aging, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**

On May 4, 2009 President Obama nominated Kathy Greenlee as Assistant Secretary for Aging. Ms. Greenlee serves as Secretary of Aging for the state of Kansas, a position she has held since January 2006. As the Secretary for Aging, she has led a cabinet-level agency with 192 full-time staff members and a total budget of \$495 million. Her department oversees the state's Older Americans Act programs, the distribution of Medicaid long-term care payments and regulation of nursing home licensure and survey processes.

From 2004-2006, Greenlee served as State Long-Term Care Ombudsman in Kansas, and prior to that, was the state's Assistant Secretary of Aging. From 1999-2002, Greenlee served as general counsel at the Kansas Insurance Department. During her tenure there, she led the team of regulators who evaluated the proposed sale of Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Kansas, and oversaw the Senior Health Insurance Counseling for Kansas program.

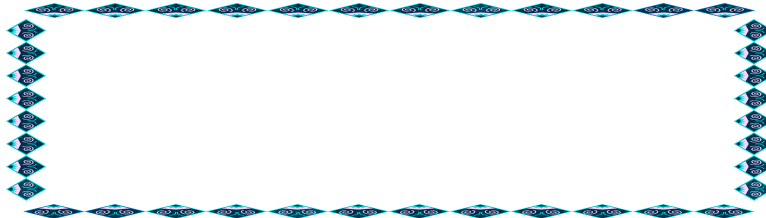
Department of Human Services  
Southeast Human Service Center  
Sandy Arends, Region V Aging Services  
2624 9th Avenue Southwest  
Fargo, North Dakota 58103-2350



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