Older Americans Month

Jeffrey S. Bragg
Secretary, Florida Department of Elder Affairs

Florida is known for many things – the temperate climate, beautiful beaches, a strong economy, and, of course, our population of older adults. We are proud to have more than 5.3 million elders who are a vital part of our state. The contributions they make to our communities are varied, deeply rooted, and include influential roles not just in their own families and neighborhoods but also in the state’s economy, politics, and the arts.

While the Department of Elder Affairs serves and celebrates older Floridians year-round, we like to place a special emphasis on recognizing their importance during May, which is nationally recognized as Older Americans Month (OAM). For 55 years, Older Americans Month has been observed to recognize older Americans and their contributions to our communities. Led by the U.S. Administration for Community Living’s Administration on Aging, every May offers an opportunity to learn about, support, and celebrate our older residents. This year’s theme, “Engage at Every Age,” emphasizes the importance of being active and involved – no matter your age or abilities. You are never too old or too young to participate in activities that can enrich your physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Staying actively involved can also improve the quality of life for older adults.

Florida’s seniors take full advantage of this as they participate in activities that promote wellness and social connection, sharing their wisdom and experiences with future generations while giving back to enrich their communities. Older Floridians are so many things; they are parents, grandparents, volunteers, mentors, students, leaders, workers, athletes, and so much more. They are invaluable to our state, and the Department of Elder Affairs will use Older Americans Month to celebrate them as we continue to promote staying engaged at every age.

CONSUMER LAW EVENTS COMING YOUR WAY IN MAY

Rick Burnham
Editor in Chief, Elder Update

Two dozen events designed to educate the public about key legal issues facing Florida’s senior population will be held in the coming weeks, according to officials from the Department of Elder Affairs. The events, sponsored by DOEA, will be held in May – in conjunction with both Older Americans Month and Elder Law Month – and will focus on threats to independence, specifically regarding shelter, adequate food, services, and public benefits, said Sarah Halsell, State Legal Services Developer for DOEA.

“Threats to independence are increasingly common and often come in the form of consumer frauds and scams targeted specifically to seniors,” she said. “Accordingly, we recognize the need for increased collaboration between the legal community and the aging network, and we realize the importance of educating seniors on the rights and protections available to them under the law.”

Specific times, dates, and locations were not available at press time but will be publicized through local media outlets in advance of the events. Halsell said 10 of the 11 Planning and Service Areas throughout the state will host at least one of the events, with each event focusing on one or more issues considered prevalent in the local community.

It is all part of an ongoing effort to identify and address the needs and vulnerabilities of seniors within the service area, she added.

“Oftentimes, legal needs are entwined with other issues that first come to the attention of the aging network,” she said. “As a result, effective coordination between the network and the legal services delivery system is critical.”
Get Ready for the 2018 Hurricane Season

Rick Burnham
Editor in Chief, Elder Update

The vast majority of Florida’s elder population—having spent countless seasons living here in our wonderful state—is fully aware of the potential dangers that lie ahead. In the coming weeks, they will begin to take whatever measures necessary to ensure their own safety and the safety of those around them.

Hurricane Season is no time to become complacent, and they know it.

Unfortunately, not everyone takes the task of disaster preparedness seriously. They do not heed the warnings of countless emergency officials to get ready and stay ready. Suggestions for increased readiness go in one ear and out the other. Danger is their middle name, and each summer they set out to prove it.

Don’t be this person. Don’t underestimate the monsters that lurk in the Atlantic and the Gulf this time of year.

We will, of course, publish our annual Disaster Preparedness Guide to assist in this regard. In it you will find a plethora of essential information on, not only hurricanes, but tornados, floods, wildfires, bitter cold, and much more. You can look for a handy-dandy checklist to be included in it, along with a lengthy list of emergency contacts to put on the fridge. The guide will be out during the first week of July.

Don’t wait until then to prepare yourself and your family though. Now would be an ideal time to formulate an emergency plan, if you do not already have one. If you need assistance, go to www.floridadisaster.org/family-plan. Be sure to include your pets. Once your plan is complete, make sure everyone in the family is familiar with it.

Also, find waterproof containers for all of your key insurance policies and other valuable documents. Take photos of your most valuable assets and make multiple copies—one for that waterproof container, another for a location outside your home. You might even put them on a USB drive or a CD.

You will need a three-to-five-day supply of water, along with an equal amount of nonperishable food. Battery-powered radios, flashlights, and extra batteries will certainly help, as will sleeping bags or extra blankets. Personal hygiene supplies, such as soap and toothpaste, will absolutely come in handy too.

Maintain an emergency kit for your car, complete with food, flares, jumper cables, maps, tools, a first-aid kit, and more. And don’t forget any necessary medications you take.

We will go over all this—and much, much more—in the next edition of Elder Update. If you need a quick refresher course before then, feel free to visit our website at elderaffairs.state.fl.us/doea/eu/2017/Disaster_Guide_%202017_english.pdf for last year’s issue. Both versions, in English and Spanish, can be accessed there.

By the time Arlene—the first storm of the 2018 season—starts spinning around in the Gulf or the Atlantic, you will be all set. Everyone here at the Department of Elder Affairs wishes you and yours a very enjoyable, and safe, summer season.

SUDOKU

There is only one valid solution to each Sudoku puzzle. When you start a game of Sudoku, some blocks will be pre-filled for you. You cannot change these numbers in the course of the game. Each column must contain all of the numbers 1 through 9, and no two numbers in the same column of a Sudoku puzzle can be the same. Each row must contain all of the numbers 1 through 9, and no two numbers in the same row of a Sudoku puzzle can be the same. Each block must contain all of the numbers 1 through 9, and no two numbers in the same block of a Sudoku puzzle can be the same. Good luck!

Solution found on page 18.

www.brainbashers.com
CREATING DEMENTIA-CARING COMMUNITIES: Advocacy, Awareness of Supportive Resources

Christine Didion, MSW
Bureau of Elder Rights
Florida Department of Elder Affairs

While June is a special time to bring recognition to Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias (ADRD) as it is named Alzheimer’s and Brain Awareness Month, the six communities participating in Florida’s Dementia Care and Cure Initiative (DCCI) continue to strive for year-round awareness of the disease.

A significant piece of DCCI is placing an emphasis on and advocating for the local community resources that exist to bring support and care to those diagnosed with a form of dementia and to their caregivers and families. These vital, community-based organizations offer a variety of services, whether it’s related to receiving a diagnosis, support groups, individual counseling, free or reduced-cost respite services, or caregiver education.

According to the Alzheimer’s Association, someone in the United States develops Alzheimer’s disease every 65 seconds. By 2050, it is expected that a new case of Alzheimer’s disease will develop every 33 seconds. The increasing and rapid incidence of Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias demonstrates the vital need to not only spread information regarding local support and care services to a mass audience on a frequent basis, but also to advocate for continued funding and expansion of services to meet the needs of those diagnosed with ADRD and their caregivers.

The DCCI Task Forces are all too aware of the impact the expanding disease has on community resources, as voluntary task force members are often representatives of agencies and organizations that provide support and care for individuals and families affected by ADRD. In fact, each community task force is led by a representative from the area’s local Memory Disorder Clinic and the area’s Aging and Disability Resource Center, both of which receive some funds from the Department of Elder Affairs. The 16 Memory Disorder Clinics throughout the state work to provide comprehensive diagnostic and referral services for persons with ADRD, while the 11 Aging and Disability Resource Centers administer long-term care programs and act as a general referral and resource center for statewide and local aging services.

Regardless of where DCCI awareness and education is provided or who it is provided to, participants are always afforded a breakdown of the local community resources. Some of the participating communities engage in projects specifically focused on bringing awareness to their supportive services. The Sarasota DCCI chapter is currently collaborating with Sarasota County’s Public Utilities and Water division to include within the utility bill a small handout that highlights the resources one can access for diagnostic and supportive services. These inserts will reach close to 80,000 homes in Sarasota County.

The Tallahassee DCCI chapter, in collaboration with the City of Tallahassee Utilities branch, accomplished a similar feat in 2016. In Jacksonville, the DCCI chapter seeks to make it easier to find support and resources by creating a single online webpage with a catalog of all the area’s organizations that work with individuals and families experiencing memory disorders.

In addition to sharing information about local resources, the Orlando DCCI chapter seeks to understand what it’s like to currently access services and, in general, what it is like to live in Orange County specifically from the perspective of individuals living with memory disorders. In a collaborative effort with task force members that represent a multitude of local Orange County organizations – including Orlando Health, Senior Resource Alliance, Florida Hospital, the University of Central Florida’s College of Social Work, and the Office on Aging of Orange County – the task force is hosting focus groups to examine the current strengths of Orange County as a dementia-caring community and what the area can further do to enhance access to services and quality of life for those with ADRD.

The network of DCCI communities seeks to not only bring awareness to their local supports and resources but also aims to learn about the accessibility of services and advocates for their continued improvement and expansion. Having easy access to a network of community-based supportive and caring resources can make all the difference to caregivers and those living with ADRD to support safe and fulfilling lives in their homes and communities.

SPECIAL THANKS

Elder Update staff is deeply grateful by the many generous donations given recently by our readers. Your generosity and kindness are truly appreciated, and your donations will be used to ensure the continued production of Elder Update.

Patricia Lanfear
Gary Roy
Stan Robertson
What You Can Do About the “Donut Hole” Dilemma

Dear Lance,

Last year I came close to falling into the “donut hole” with my Medicare Prescription Drug Plan. My doctor recently prescribed an additional expensive medication that will probably cause me to go into the “donut hole” this year. I have a limited income and am afraid that I will not be able to afford my medications once I am in the coverage gap. What can I do?

Very Concerned

Dear Very Concerned,

Your dilemma is a common one for Medicare beneficiaries who take one or more expensive medications.

In 2018 you will enter the donut hole – or coverage gap – when the retail value of your medications reaches $3,750. If the retail value of your medications is over $300 per month in 2018, you will fall into the donut hole. The good news? In 2018, your drug costs will be heavily discounted if and when you do enter this stage. You will pay only 35 percent of the retail cost of brand name drugs and 44 percent of generics.

SHINE counselors are often able to assist people in your situation by developing a plan to assist you. There are several ways you may be able to reduce your medication costs to avoid falling into the coverage gap and to save money if you do enter it.

LOW INCOME SUBSIDY: If you meet the income and asset requirements, this program, usually called Extra Help, can save you substantial costs on your medications. Offered through the Social Security Administration, Extra Help provides reduced or no-cost prescription drug plans, as well as low-cost prescriptions, and there is no “donut hole.” Medication co-payments are as low as $3.30 for generics and $8.25 for brand name medications. In 2018, individuals with monthly income less than $1,508 ($2,030 for couples) and financial resources of less than $13,820 ($27,060 for couples) are eligible.

Visit www.ssa.gov/prescriptionhelp to apply for this program online. You can also obtain an application at any Social Security office or from some SHINE offices.

DISCOUNT PRESCRIPTION CARDS: Many doctors’ offices and pharmacies have displays that contain drug discount cards. These can save significant costs compared to the usual retail price. Also, Florida residents can obtain a free card that entitles you to discounts on prescriptions at most pharmacies. It can also be used to get a discount on medications that are not covered by your prescription drug plan formulary. To print your own card, visit www.floridadiscountdrugcard.com or request a card by calling 1-866-341-8894. There is a $1.50 fee for printing and mailing.

PATIENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS: Many pharmaceutical manufacturers offer a program that provides free or reduced costs for your prescriptions if income and other requirements are met. SHINE counselors can research whether the medications you are on are ones for which the drug manufacturers provide financial assistance. If assistance is available, the SHINE counselor can provide you with the application(s) that you and your physician must complete.

Since it takes time to process your application for assistance, it is best to contact SHINE well before you are in the coverage gap. Your monthly statement from your drug plan tells you how close you are to the donut hole.

I strongly advise you to speak to a SHINE counselor for assistance.
Elder Affairs Celebrates 25 Years of SHINE Program

Anne Chansler
SHINE Statewide Program Director
Florida Department of Elder Affairs

In October 1992, the Department of Elder Affairs was awarded a grant from the Health Care Financing Administration (now known as the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, or CMS) to coordinate a statewide program that would provide free, comprehensive health insurance information, counseling, and assistance to Medicare beneficiaries and their caregivers. Born from this grant was the Florida SHINE (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders) Program, which began operating in 1993. Grant funding for the national SHIP Program is currently awarded by the Administration for Community Living (ACL).

SHINE, Florida’s State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP), relies heavily on more than 500 specially trained volunteers. They help Medicare beneficiaries, their families, and caregivers understand Medicare health care options. SHINE volunteers offer free, unbiased, and confidential information and counseling concerning Medicare. They also provide prescription assistance, long-term care planning and insurance, Medicaid information, and other health insurance-related topics. Through health insurance counseling sessions, identifying and reporting fraud and abuse, and providing educational presentations and trainings, the SHINE volunteers provide outstanding service to Florida seniors.

A significant accomplishment of the SHINE Program for the past 25 years has been educating and providing guidance to many of Florida’s Medicare beneficiaries — now numbering more than 4.1 million — through an almost entirely volunteer force. Available data notes that SHINE counselors provided nearly 49,000 hours of service in 2017. Additionally, SHINE counselors made more than 60,000 contacts with Medicare beneficiaries this past year through one-on-one counseling. In addition to this, SHINE volunteers attended 2,079 events and spent almost 11,000 hours on behalf of the program in 2017 to educate Florida’s Medicare beneficiaries about Medicare and the services SHINE provides.

The Department of Elder Affairs and SHINE Program staff thank their volunteers and supporters for their efforts, and wish the program a very happy birthday and another 25 years of success in ensuring that an ever-growing population of Medicare beneficiaries receives the help it needs.

SHINE Is on Facebook!

Laicy Haro
SHINE Program
Florida Department of Elder Affairs

The SHINE Program has expanded its outreach by integrating with social media. With more than 1,000 “Likes,” SHINE is sharing important Medicare information with the expansive Facebook community.

The public page content provides the community with critical health care information. This platform allows SHINE to highlight volunteers, partners, and, most importantly, clients through testimonials that give readers insight into SHINE’s impact in the community. Local AAA (Area Agency on Aging) and ADRC (Aging and Disability Resource Center) events are also promoted, welcoming all to learn about Medicare and the services SHINE provides to the community.

Facebook has also opened the door to new forms of communication that enable us to provide users with quick responses to their health care concerns. For specific counseling assistance, we will refer the user to their local AAA or ADRC to speak with one of the local experts.

We invite you to “Like” SHINE on Facebook and share our SHINE posts. Whether or not you have Medicare, or know someone who does, Facebook is a wonderful opportunity to share these resources with your own network of friends and family.

Please check out the SHINE page at www.facebook.com/Florida.SHIP. SHINE is a program of the Florida Department of Elder Affairs and is operated locally through 11 ADRCs. You may also hear it called Florida SHIP, which stands for State Health Insurance Assistance Program. In Florida, the national SHIP Program is the SHINE Program.

Specially trained volunteers help Medicare beneficiaries, their families, and caregivers understand their Medicare and other health care options. SHINE volunteers are trained to offer free, unbiased, and confidential information and counseling concerning Medicare.

To receive help from SHINE, individuals may schedule appointments at designated SHINE counseling sites, attend enrollment or information events in their local communities, or arrange to speak with a trained volunteer counselor by calling 1-800-96-ELDER (1-800-963-5337). For a listing of SHINE counseling sites and enrollment events, or to find out more about the SHINE Program, you may visit our website at www.floridashine.org.
My Tried and True Hurricane Preparations

Ruth D. Keller
Sebring, Florida

Preparing for a hurricane is a common experience if you live in Florida. I, personally, have lived through five in the last 15 years while none for the first 16 years since I moved to the Sunshine State 31 years ago.

When June 1 rolls around, we fill all 13 plastic milk jugs that I’ve saved from January to June with water. That way there will be enough water to bucket flush the toilets for a week. These I keep in the garage until November when hurricane season ends.

Then I make sure I have one week’s worth of canned goods in the pantry. I also locate a non-electric can opener and put it with the canned goods.

Next, I make sure I have three or four large ice tea pitchers filled to the brim with water for drinking in the kitchen. I also secure fresh fruit, enough to last a week or more. And, of course, I make sure I have a box of powdered milk so I can reconstitute it as needed.

We also have a battery-operated radio to get news reports. That is helpful since there is no TV without electricity. We buy two extra sets of batteries for it and all flashlights. We make sure all our hurricane lamps have working wicks and extra oil, along with five boxes of matches for use with the lamps and the gas stove.

The above are standard preparations (for any massive storm) that have come in handy for decades. They did aid us when we were without power for 20 days in September 2017. This time I could afford a consumer cell phone that was handy to let relatives know we had survived Irma. My niece had even sent me a solar phone charger which was really handy. I recommend one if you can afford it.

GOVERNOR SIGNS NEW LEGISLATION REQUIRING EMERGENCY GENERATORS

Governor Rick Scott signed two bills March 26 that make permanent the emergency rules requiring every nursing home and ALF in Florida to have emergency generators to keep residents safe.

Scott directed the Florida Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) and the Florida Department of Elder Affairs (DOEA) to issue the emergency rules immediately following the tragedy at the Rehabilitation Center at Hollywood Hills during Hurricane Irma last year. Florida is one of the first states in the nation to require emergency generators at nursing homes and ALFs.

“The tragedy at the Rehabilitation Center at Hollywood Hills made it clear more needed to be done to ensure the protection of vulnerable Floridians during emergencies like Hurricane Irma,” the governor said. “That is why I immediately ordered state agencies to issue emergency rules requiring each nursing home and ALF in Florida to have emergency generators on hand to keep residents safe. We fought aggressively to quickly implement this life-saving rule at facilities across the state, and I am proud to sign legislation today that makes this rule permanent. I appreciate the work of Senate President Joe Negron, House Speaker Richard Corcoran, and all the legislators who supported this important legislation. As we near the 2018 hurricane season, families can now know the facilities responsible for caring for their loved ones will have the resources needed to be fully prepared ahead of any potential storms.”

Others applauded the signing of the new bills, including DOEA Secretary Jeff Bragg and AHCA Secretary Justin Senior.

“When Florida families make the decision to place their loved one in a long-term care facility, they expect that they will be safe and well-cared for at all times,” said Bragg. “We thank Governor Scott for his leadership in fighting for these critical changes in the long-term care industry that will keep our vulnerable populations safe.”

"Gov. Scott has been clear since day one that the goal of this rule is to ensure a safe environment," Senior said. "Our Agency can now move forward with implementing this emergency power plan rule to ensure that nursing homes and assisted living facilities are prepared for the start of the upcoming hurricane season."
HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS AND RECOVERY: 
Hire a State-Licensed Contractor

After the series of dangerous storms in 2017, preparing for the upcoming hurricane season is critical. Homes and properties that sustained damage last year are the most vulnerable to impending storms. Overlooking or disregarding a needed repair can increase the risk of minor damage becoming sizable and costly. Now is the time to make calls and schedule renovations to ensure your home or property is storm ready.

The Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) reminds consumers that certain projects require a Florida state-licensed professional. Hiring a state-licensed professional offers personal and financial protection to consumers. State-licensed professionals are required to comply with building codes and can be covered by homeowners insurance.

Unfortunately, some individuals pose as licensed professionals to take advantage of consumers. Before hiring a contractor, ask for their license number and verify it by calling the DBPR Customer Contact Center at 850-487-1395 or visiting www.myfloridalicense.com. Per Florida Statute, contractors must have their license number on all advertising, including their business cards. Out-of-state contractors must be licensed by the state of Florida to legally perform services, too.

Before hiring a contractor, DBPR recommends obtaining several cost estimates to ensure you receive a fair assessment. Here are other tips to consider:

• Check references and reviews for each contractor or construction business you’re interested in hiring.
• Be cautious when signing a contract and paying for services. Don’t commit to a contract, make a payment, or provide personal or financial information to a contractor on the spot. Typical contracting scams are committed by individuals who pressure consumers into making a quick decision by greatly reducing the price.
• Get everything in writing, including a thorough description of work to be completed, the total cost of the repairs, and a completion date.

Be on the lookout for Hurricane Preparedness Tax Exemption days this summer, when all purchases of storm related items will be tax-free. The seven-day holiday – increased from three days last year – will give consumers a better opportunity to prepare for the upcoming hurricane season.

This summer, DBPR will partner with the Red Cross in an annual hurricane preparation event – “Build Your Bucket.” The event will be held June 2 from 9 a.m. to noon at the North Florida Fairgrounds in Tallahassee. Consumers are invited to visit vendor booths providing hurricane supplies and fill their buckets with free items.
Florida is a bird-watcher’s paradise, with a spectacular range of birdlife. Most of these species can be seen throughout the year, while some birds migrate through the state during certain seasons. Researchers and environmental organizations carefully track Florida's bird population because many birds are sentinel species whose numbers serve as a direct indicator of the health of the ecosystem that they inhabit.

Luckily, you don’t have to be a trained biologist to spot a rare bird or track the various resident and migratory birds in your area. Birding is an activity that people of all ages and abilities can enjoy. Dedicated birders go out into nature and track the birds they see as well as the bird songs they hear.

For birders who want to participate in groups, there are plenty of ways to get involved. Local, state, and nationwide birding communities like the National Audubon Society, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission’s Wings Over Florida program, and events at Florida State Parks and Trails offer birders the opportunity to share sightings, experiences, and advice. For those interested in sharing photographs of their feathered friends, photos taken within the boundaries of a Florida State Park or trail can be entered into one of Florida State Parks’ many seasonal photo contests, and are welcomed on Florida State Parks’ Facebook page (facebook.com/FLStateParks) and Twitter (@FLStateParks). Send your submissions to MarketingandProgramming@dep.state.fl.us.

Whether you’re an experienced birder searching for that elusive bird to cross off your checklist or a novice looking for a fun outdoor hobby, Florida’s 175 state parks and trails offer a vast array of prime locations. About 90 state parks and trails are also designated sites on the Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail – a 2,000-mile network of nearly 500 birding, wildlife viewing, and educational sites throughout the state. The Great Florida Birding and Wildlife Trail features detailed guide booklets, a mobile app for Android or iPhone users, and special signs on major roadways to identify sites. Guidebooks, site locations, a checklist of Florida birds, and other useful resources can be found at FloridaBirdingTrail.com.

Birding can be tailored to any individual’s needs. Birding can be social or solitary, strenuous or effortless, a short family outing or a week long adventure hike in the woods. Every person’s bird-watching style is up to them, but birding in Florida can provide an easy way to get outdoors, a much-needed boost for the local economies where many parks and trails are located, and a way to connect with others in enjoying Florida’s environment. To learn more about state parks and trails in your area that offer birding opportunities, visit floridastateparks.org/activity-list/Birding or call 850-245-2157.

Florida’s State Parks and Trails Are “For the Birds”

Holden Berry
Florida Department of Environmental Protection

Florida’s State Parks and Trails Are “For the Birds”

Sandhill Cranes
Osprey
Red Shouldered Hawk
Wood Stork
World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

Allison Bryant
Elder Rights Bureau
Florida Department of Elder Affairs

In a blog, Lance Robertson, Administrator and Assistant Secretary for Aging at the Administration for Community Living, writes, “Every year on June 15, we join forces with partners across the country and around the world to observe World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD). Created by the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA) and the World Health Organization (WHO) at the United Nations, WEAAD is an opportunity for communities around the world to raise awareness of elder abuse and neglect, and to renew our commitment to preserving the rights of older adults – including the basic human right to live with dignity, free from abuse and neglect.”

The Florida Department of Elder Affairs’ (DOEA) mission is “to help Florida’s elders remain healthy, safe, and independent.” Thus, the collaboration with Elder Options in Gainesville proved to be an exciting opportunity to provide education and outreach for the prevention of elder abuse, neglect, exploitation, and fraud. Other key collaborators include the Senior Advocacy Network (North Central Florida); ElderCare of Alachua County; and UF Health/Shands Homecare. This proves the importance of various organizations working together for the common good of the community.

The “Engage at Every Age” June 14 event will be held at the Gainesville Senior Center and will include speakers, vendors, door prizes, and lunch. We will open the event with an exciting “get out of your seat” moving Tai Chi session – where everyone can engage not just their minds, but their bodies as well. Staying both physically and socially active is important for all of us. It’s never too late to start!

The seniors who attend will receive invaluable information for themselves and to share with those who were not able to attend. Presenters will range from a local elder law attorney to Alachua County’s Sheriff Sadie Darnell. It was jam-packed with substantial practical resources that can be used in everyday life.

You can find out more about amazing events in recognition of WEAAD near you, as well as about free presentations and materials to prevent elder abuse by contacting your local elder abuse prevention coordinator. Just call the Elder Helpline at 1-800-96-ELDER (1-800-963-5337).

If you suspect elder abuse, neglect (including self-neglect), or exploitation, please contact the abuse hotline at 1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873). If there is an immediate threat of danger, please call 911.

The definition of empowerment is the process of becoming stronger and more confident, especially in controlling one’s life and claiming one’s rights. At DOEA, we are determined to empower all of Florida’s seniors with the knowledge necessary to protect themselves.

Education is the key to elder abuse prevention!

Iris Collier
Department of Financial Services,
Division of Consumer Services

Every day, we see or read news stories about the financial mishaps of seniors and how scammers prey on their emotions, trusting nature, and lack of financial and technological savviness. The MetLife’s Mature Institute completed a study, Broken Trust: Elders, Family and Finances, which found that financial exploitation is the most common form of elder abuse. One out of every five seniors age 65 and older has been the victim of financial exploitation. Additionally, only a small fraction of financial exploitation is reported – approximately one in 10,000 instances. Chief Financial Officer Jimmy Patronis’ Department of Financial Services, Division of Consumer Services is taking charge to ensure Florida’s most treasured population does not become one in five. The Department works daily to protect seniors from being taken advantage of and to root out the criminals who prey on our most vulnerable consumers.

During May, Older Americans Month, the Department of Financial Services will host a one-day, two-part event titled Are You One in Five?, highlighting the Department’s senior initiative Operation S.A.F.E (Stop Adult Financial Exploitation) and to discuss ways to combat this horrible crime. This event will bring together seniors and various senior service and non-profit organizations from the local, county, and statewide levels to share subject-matter expertise and resources with seniors, family, friends, caregivers, and service providers who are part of seniors’ daily lives. The resources shared will help arm attendees against unscrupulous scammers.

For additional information on Are You One in Five?, please visit www.MyFloridaCFO.com/OnGuard or www.MyFloridaCFO.com/SAFE. You may also call the Department’s toll-free Insurance Consumer Helpline at 1-877-MY-FL-CFO (693-5236).
Can Socially Assistive Robot Technology Benefit Older Adults?

Mindy Sollisch
Manager for Strategic Initiatives
Florida Department of Elder Affairs

As robots grow more intelligent, they are emerging as powerful tools and close companions. And as populations around the world age, robots are increasingly being developed to meet the needs of older adults. Robots can keep our floors clean and mow our lawns, and in the form of robotic limbs, can restore physical capabilities. Lesser known is the ability of robots to therapeutically socially interact.

Socially assistive robotics (SAR) is a new field of robotics that focuses on assisting users through social, rather than physical, interaction. SARs include service robots and companion robots. Service robots are tasked with aiding activities of daily living. Companion robots are associated with improving the psychological status and overall well-being of their users.

A group of researchers in London wanted to better understand the effectiveness of SAR technology. From March 2016 to September 2017, researchers reviewed previously conducted studies that looked at the use of SAR with older adults. Sixty-one publications were reviewed that described 33 studies and included 1,574 participants and 11 robots. The robots in the studies included the AIBO®. Paro, NAO, and the Nodding Kabochan. Some of the robots talk and sing, some move in response to their owner’s touch and spoken words, and some are soft and pleasant to cuddle. All study participants, except one, were over the age of 60. In the 24 studies that reported gender information, 71 percent of the participants were women. Most of the studies exclusively assessed participants with a dementia diagnosis. A large proportion of studies were conducted in Japan, the USA, and Australia. The most common setting in the studies was the nursing home. A majority of the studies used Paro, an artificial fur-covered robot that looks like a baby harp seal.

Each study was classified by how the technology was used into one of five categories. The 15 studies classified as affective therapy evaluated the effect SAR had on improving the general mood and well-being of older adults, and its ability to overcome episodes of mood disturbance. Nine of the 15 studies were conducted on participants diagnosed with dementia. Six studies were classified as cognitive training. In these studies, the ability of SAR to improve aspects of cognition, such as working memory or executive function, was evaluated. The seven studies classified as social facilitator studies assessed the utility of SAR as facilitators for improving sociability between subjects or between subjects and other people. The three studies classified as companionship studies assessed the utility of SAR in overcoming the feeling of loneliness and social isolation. None of these studies was conducted on individuals diagnosed with dementia. The two studies classified as physiological therapy investigated the effects of SAR on physiological changes, such as changes in blood pressure and heart rate.

Findings
Most of the studies (28 of 33) reported positively on the value of SAR in caring for older adults. Affective therapy studies demonstrated that SAR can be used to improve the overall sense of well-being of users and alleviate acute episodes of mood disturbance for individuals with and without dementia. Interactions conducted in a group setting were more effective than one-on-one interactions. The researchers surmised that while SAR can improve the mood of subjects, it did not seem to be much better than a soft toy. Cognitive training studies showed communication robots to be significantly more effective at improving cognitive outcome measures than soft toys, most clearly for individuals who were cognitively healthy. All social facilitator studies demonstrated improved sociability for subjects with and without dementia. When conducted in a group setting, SAR was shown to be more effective than a comparator, such as a soft toy. Companionship studies all showed positive findings, specifically reductions in loneliness. Two studies, however, were conducted in group settings, and the observed improved loneliness may have been due, in whole or in part, to the increased amount of sociability and not the robot. Physiological therapy studies all showed positive findings, such as short-term reductions in blood pressure and heart rate, following interactions with the robot, but the results were determined to be clinically inconclusive.

Implications
Approximately 23 percent of older adults in Florida live alone. Robots are one option available to improve cognition, sociability, and health, and possibly reduce feelings of loneliness. As studies continue to show that loneliness and isolation carries an increased mortality risk, continuing research into the effectiveness of SAR for older individuals living alone, or in facilities where pets are not permitted, seems warranted.

Limitations
The quantity and quality of studies measuring the effectiveness of SAR was limited and made generalizations difficult. Although many positive outcomes were reported, the researchers thought a large proportion of the studies had methodological issues that limit the utility of the results. In addition, because different robotic systems were used in the studies reviewed, it was difficult to establish the factors responsible for the results.

STATE BUSINESSES CREATED MORE THAN 25,000 PRIVATE-SECTOR JOBS IN FEBRUARY

OCALA – Governor Rick Scott announced March 23 that Florida businesses created more than 25,000 private-sector jobs in February. Since December 2010, Florida businesses have created nearly 1.5 million jobs. Florida’s annual job growth rate of 2.2 percent continues to exceed the nation’s rate of 1.8 percent. Florida’s annual job growth rate has exceeded the nation’s rate for 70 of the past 71 months. The only month that Florida did not exceed the nation was a result of Hurricane Irma.

Scott made the announcement at the ground-breaking ceremony for a new downtown development project, which will include a new Hilton Garden Inn, apartment complex, and restaurants. This project will also create more than 280 jobs for Ocala families and help bring more visitors to Central Florida.

“I am proud to announce that Florida businesses created more than 25,000 new jobs last month, which means thousands of more opportunities are available for Floridians,” the governor said. “Earlier this month, we concluded the 2018 legislative session by securing major initiatives that will help ensure this economic growth continues in Florida for years to come. This includes cutting taxes by nearly $550 million and ensuring Floridians have the opportunity to make it harder for politicians to raise taxes with a constitutional amendment on the November ballot. I am proud of the work we have done to encourage job growth, and we will not stop working until Florida is the best place in the nation to succeed.”

As of February, Florida’s unemployment rate remains low at 3.9 percent, a drop of 6.9 percentage points since December 2010. This drop is faster than the national decline of 5.2 percentage points. In the last year, 136,000 people entered Florida’s labor force, a growth of 1.4 percent, which is greater than the national labor force growth rate of 1.2 percent, and shows more Floridians are looking for and finding jobs across the state.

Cissy Proctor, Executive Director of the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, said, “We are proud that businesses are continuing to create jobs in Florida, and that our state’s unemployment rate remains low at 3.9 percent. The nearly 1.5 million jobs created under Governor Scott’s leadership demonstrate that the Sunshine State is the best place to live the American Dream.”


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Florida Governor Rick Scott signed the Securing Florida’s Future budget for Fiscal Year 2018-2019 March 16 in Naples.

**The Securing Florida’s Future Budget**

**Cuts Taxes for Florida Families and Job Creators**
The Securing Florida’s Future budget cuts taxes by nearly $550 million – bringing the total tax cut savings for Florida families since 2011 to more than $10 billion. In addition, an amendment will be placed on the November ballot which will give Floridians the opportunity to vote to amend the Florida Constitution – making it harder for politicians to raise taxes.

**Invests Record Funding for Education**
For the sixth straight year, this budget invests record funding for K-12 and state universities. Since Scott took office in 2011, investments in transportation infrastructure to keep up with Florida’s continued growth and booming economy. Since Scott took office in 2011, investments in transportation infrastructure have increased by nearly $3.3 billion – more than 48 percent.

**Caring for Florida’s Seniors**
The budget includes more than $2 million in new funding to serve frail individuals on the Alzheimer’s Disease Initiative waiting list and those at greatest risk for nursing home placement on the Community Care for the Elderly and Home Care for the Elderly waitlists.

**Keeps Florida Schools and Communities Safe**
The Securing Florida’s Future budget invests more than $400 million in funding to increase the safety and security of Florida’s schools and provide significantly more resources for mental health. Following the tragedy in Parkland where 17 died, Scott also signed the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act to keep students and communities safe. The budget also invests $34 million in pay raises for state law enforcement officers, firefighters, and juvenile detention and juvenile probation officers.

**Encourages Long-Term Economic Growth**
The Securing Florida’s Future budget provides critical funding, including $85 million for the Florida Job Growth Grant Fund, so Florida can keep fighting to be the best destination for businesses to succeed. Since 2010, Florida businesses have created nearly 1.5 million new jobs. The budget also builds on Florida’s six straight years of record breaking tourism and funds VISIT FLORIDA at $76 million to successfully market Florida to the world, supporting the 1.4 million tourism-related jobs in our state.

**Provides Record Funding for Florida Transportation**
The Securing Florida’s Future budget invests a record $10.1 billion in transportation infrastructure to keep up with Florida’s continued growth and booming economy. Since Scott took office in 2011, investments in transportation infrastructure have increased by nearly $3.3 billion – more than 48 percent.

**Protects Florida’s Environment**
The Securing Florida’s Future budget includes $4 billion to protect Florida’s environment and agriculture. Since 2011, investments to preserve and protect the state’s iconic beaches, pristine springs, and the Florida Everglades have increased by nearly $1 billion. The budget also provides $50 million to further expedite repairs to the federally-operated Herbert Hoover Dike – growing the state’s investment to $100 million.

**Combats the National Opioid Epidemic in Florida**
The Securing Florida’s Future budget invests more than $65 million to combat opioid abuse in Florida.

**Supports Hurricane Preparedness and Recovery**
The Securing Florida’s Future budget provides more than $1.7 billion in disaster assistance for state and local governments and federal funding to assist in meeting the educational needs of affected Florida students, as well as students displaced from Puerto Rico.
Gov. Rick Scott announced March 20 in Naples that Florida set another tourism record in 2017 by welcoming the highest number of visitors in any year in the state’s history with 116.5 million visitors. This represents a 3.6 percent increase over the 112.4 million visitors in 2016.

“Today, I am proud to announce that Florida has continued our record-breaking success by welcoming more than 116 million visitors in 2017,” Scott said. “Because of VISIT FLORIDA’s aggressive marketing efforts to make sure families across the world knew that Florida was open to visitors following Hurricane Irma, we are able to celebrate another record-breaking year for tourism. This is especially great news for the 1.4 million jobs that rely on our growing tourism industry. We will continue to market our state as the number one global destination for tourism.”

VISIT FLORIDA estimates that a record 116.5 million visitors traveled to Florida in 2017, an increase of 3.6 percent over last year. This number breaks down to 102.3 million domestic visitors, 10.7 million overseas visitors and 3.5 million Canadian visitors coming to the Sunshine State. Total enplanements at Florida’s 18 major airports in 2017 increased 4.1 percent over the same period the previous year, with 87.2 million passengers. The number of hotel rooms sold in Florida during 2017 grew by 4.6 percent compared to quarter four 2016. During the same period, Florida’s average daily room rate increased by 2.6 percent and occupancy by 3.2 percent.

Ken Lawson, President and CEO of VISIT FLORIDA, said his organization is continuing to aggressively market the Sunshine State to the rest of the country and the rest of the world.

“Florida welcomed a record 116.5 million visitors in 2017, which is great news for our state,” he said. “Because of the cutting-edge marketing programs at VISIT FLORIDA, particularly following Hurricane Irma, we were able to increase total visitation by 3.6 percent over last year, resulting in billions of dollars in revenue for the state.”

Florida set another record despite losing 1.8 million visitors due to Hurricane Irma, according to a recent report commissioned by VISIT FLORIDA. The impact report of Hurricane Irma shows that it cost the state 1.8 million visitors. An estimated 34.9 million out-of-state visitors came to Florida in the final four months of 2017. In the “no hurricane” model, Florida would have hosted 36.7 million visitors during that same time period. Additionally, Irma resulted in a loss of $1.5 billion in visitor spending, with $1.1 billion attributable to domestic visitors and $400 million for international visitors. Visitation was hit hardest in September, with visitation falling 13.5 percent relative to anticipated growth. However, losses were drastically reduced by October, and even more so in the following months. VISIT FLORIDA’s Post-Irma Marketing Campaign helped curb the effects of Irma on visitation, with an estimated 358 million impressions in the month following Irma.

VISIT FLORIDA estimates that a record 28.5 million visitors traveled to Florida in the fourth quarter of 2017, an increase of 5.5 percent over the same period last year. This Q4 number breaks down to 25.0 million domestic visitors, 2.8 million overseas visitors, and 705,000 Canadian visitors coming to the Sunshine State. Total enplanements at Florida’s 18 major airports in Q4 2017 increased 6.7 percent over the same period the previous year, with 21.7 million passengers. The number of hotel rooms sold in Florida during quarter four of 2017 grew by 8.1 percent compared to quarter four 2016. During the same period, Florida’s average daily room rate increased by 5.4 percent and occupancy by 7.0 percent.
MORE OF THE MOST COMMON HEALTH CONCERNS FOR ELDERS
AND HOW TO PREVENT THEM

Elisabeth Almekinder RN, BA, CDE
The Diabetes Council

EDITOR’S NOTE: The following, provided by the Diabetes Council, an online resource for people suffering from various forms of diabetes, is the second of a four-part series detailing with the most common health concerns for elders, and how to prevent or mitigate these concerns.

By the year 2050, the world’s aging population is projected to double. People everywhere are living longer, which brings new concerns for prevention of the chronic conditions that come with aging. That’s 12 percent more people over the age of 60 who will be living on our planet by then, a full 22 percent of the population. In numbers, it is 900 million seniors now, and 2 billion by 2050.

More than 90 percent of senior adults have at least one chronic health condition, and more than 75 percent of them have two or more chronic health conditions. For elders, some of the most common health concerns, including their prevalence, prevention, and treatment, are as follows:

DIABETES AND OTHER ENDOCRINE DISORDERS
Metabolic disorders and diabetes, menopause, and problems with thyroid function are all more common in the elderly population. Hormones levels change as we age. Insulin production can decrease, as beta cells give out after years of use. The metabolism of fat and cholesterol in the diet changes, leading to excessive weight gain, and difficulty with losing the weight gained.

Vitamin D and calcium levels, as well as other electrolyte and vitamin and mineral levels, can be disrupted in the elderly. Hormonal changes lead to problems with erectile dysfunction and vaginal dryness.

Prevalence
Over five million elderly people in the United States have diabetes. That’s a prevalence of more than 15 percent.

Prevention
Prevention of diabetes includes losing just five to seven percent of overall body weight if you are overweight, staying physically active, and maintaining a healthy diet. Thyroid and other hormonal issues may not be preventable, but are rather a normal part of the aging process.

Preventive Measures

CANCER
Cancer can occur just about anywhere in the body. It can spread to other parts of the body. Some types may be easy to treat, while others may not respond to treatment at all.

Prevalence
If you’re an elder, you have 10 times more chance of developing cancer, and you have 16 times more chances of dying from cancer. This includes cancers of all types – from prostate, to lung, to breast, to colon, to pancreatic, and more.

Prevention
Prevention of cancer includes following a healthy diet, maintaining a healthy weight while getting regular exercise, and avoiding smoking and irritants, including chemicals from the environment. Today, it’s not so easy to avoid everything that can cause cancer.

Getting necessary immunizations, such as Hepatitis B immunization, can prevent liver cancer. Vaccines for HPV, or Human Papilloma Virus, prevent many types of cervical cancers. Practicing safe sex, and never sharing needles for diabetes or any other reason, helps to prevent blood-borne infections.

Finally, see your health care provider regularly for cancer screenings and wellness checkups.

Treatment
Treatment of cancer can include removal of the tumor, chemotherapy, radiation, or oral medications.
Understanding, Minimizing Sundowner’s Syndrome

Marlo Sollitto
AgingCare.com

The long list of symptoms associated with Alzheimer’s disease and other forms of dementia often includes baffling mood and behavior changes. One particularly disruptive side effect of these conditions affects some patients at a certain time each day. Known as Sundowner’s syndrome or sundowning, it involves sadness, agitation, fear, delusions, and hallucinations that occur in dementia patients just before nightfall. This increased confusion around twilight can be distressing for both patients and caregivers alike.

Symptoms of Sundowning
When a senior is sundowning, they may “shadow” their caregivers or follow them around and closely observe or try to mimic everything they do. They might ask questions over and over or interrupt conversations. They may temporarily lose their ability to communicate coherently, and abstract thoughts may become especially difficult for them to comprehend. In severe cases, a patient with sundown syndrome may wander restlessly around their home or try to get outside to “escape” or get to an appointment that does not exist or an important location that they have not been to in years.

Other possible behaviors and emotions that may arise during an episode of sundowning include the following:

- Anger
- Agitation
- Anxiety
- Emotional outbursts
- Delusions
- Fear
- Depression
- Stubbornness
- Restlessness

Sundown syndrome typically begins later in the afternoon and can last well into the night. The exact timing and behaviors that sundowning entails vary greatly from patient to patient. Unfortunately, this side effect of dementia prevents many patients and their caregivers from getting adequate rest at night. Even worse is that sleep deprivation can cause these symptoms to worsen. Therefore, it is important to understand your loved one’s routines and moods as best you can in order to minimize these symptoms.

Causes of Sundowning
Doctors and researchers aren’t sure what causes sundowning, but the theory is that the simultaneous onset of symptoms and nightfall is not entirely a coincidence. Some medical professionals believe that the syndrome occurs due to an accumulation of all the sensory stimulation one receives over the course of the day. It builds up and becomes overwhelming and stressful, causing patients to act out. Others speculate that it is caused by hormonal imbalances that occur at night and affect a patient’s natural circadian rhythm. Another theory suggests that the onset of symptoms at night is simply due to fatigue, and others believe it has to do with anxiety caused by the inability to function well in the dark. Changes in lighting associated with this time of day can be very disorienting for a patient.

How to Handle Sundowner’s Syndrome
Because dementia patients are difficult, if not impossible to reason with, it is crucial for caregivers to try to stay patient throughout episodes of sundowning. Even if you do not directly express your concern or irritation, it is likely that your loved one will still be able to pick up on your mood and frustration. Reacting to their behaviors is sure to make matters worse. Instead, use the following tips to help minimize sundowning symptoms.

- Approach your loved one in a calm manner. Don’t yell, raise your voice, or touch them in an unexpected way.
- Avoid rationalizing, arguing, or asking for explanations to statements that don’t make sense.
- Draw the curtains so they cannot see the sky change from light to dark. Turn on inside lights to keep the environment well-lit and to minimize shadows and improve visibility.
- Provide a peaceful setting. Guide the person to an area away from noise, family activity, and other distractions. Try to prevent excessive commotion during the times they normally become more agitated.
- Plan more activities during the day. A person who rests most of the day is likely to be more awake at night. Discourage excessive napping, especially later in the day, and plan activities, such as walks, crafts, and visits, to keep your loved one awake and engaged.
- If your loved one needs something to keep them occupied in the evenings, plan simple and soothing activities. An upbeat movie or TV show or some pet therapy can have a calming effect. If they do not wish to participate, do not argue with them.
  - Have a routine. Maintaining a schedule helps orient patients and alleviates anxiety that may arise during twilight. Even simple tasks like washing up for dinner and putting on pajamas can be helpful indicators that the day is winding down.
  - Use music. Sometimes soothing music will help to calm and relax a person with Alzheimer’s or other related dementias.
  - Ensure their safety by installing locks and safety devices as necessary. Take precautions to provide a safe space for your loved one at night so that you can get some sleep, even if they need to stay awake and wander. This includes removing or securing potentially dangerous items in areas that they have access to.
  - Change your loved one’s sleeping arrangements. Allow them to sleep in a different bedroom, in a favorite chair, or wherever they are most comfortable.
  - Use a nightlight. Keep the room they are in partially lit once they are in bed to reduce agitation that occurs when surroundings are dark or unfamiliar. Changes in vision and perception that come with dementia can make poorly lit areas particularly frightening or disorienting.
  - If they are feeling paranoid or experiencing delusions or hallucinations, meet them in their version of reality and reassure them that everything is all right, and everyone is safe.
  - Monitor their diet. Restrict sweets and caffeine consumption to the morning hours and serve dinner early.
  - Seek medical advice. Physical ailments, such as incontinence, could be making it difficult for them to sleep. A urinary tract infection (UTI) can also contribute to confusion and agitation. Your doctor may also be able to prescribe a medication to help them relax at night and sleep better.
  - Be flexible. Alzheimer’s disease and other types of dementia do not present the same way in each person. For some patients, sundowning may occur first thing in the morning. Others may never present these symptoms. It’s up to caregivers to roll with the punches to the best of their abilities.
PARKINSON’S DISEASE
The Caregiver Perspective

Joy Barbee, BSN
West Florida Memory Disorder Clinic, and
Justin Powell
Marshall University

Parkinson’s disease, a neurodegenerative disease named after the English surgeon, geologist, and paleontologist James Parkinson, is a deeply complex and debilitating disease that families and patients cope with on a daily basis. For the patient and caregiver, the intricacies of the disease are a reality. The scope of this article cannot do justice to a comprehensive review of this disease. This is a brief overview of the causes, signs, and symptoms, but the focus of this article will be on the struggles confronting patients and caregivers.

Parkinson’s disease affects about 5 million people worldwide. In the United States, PD is estimated to affect one million people. As we age, our risk of PD increases – current estimates suggest that nine million people will be dealing with this disease by 2030. A male is 1.5 times more likely to develop PD than a female. There are still many ongoing studies to clarify the causes, but the focus of this article will be on the struggles confronting patients and caregivers.

Below is a list of some modifiable and non-modifiable risk factors:

- Excess body weight
- Exposure to hydrocarbon solvents, particularly trichloroethylene
- Farming or agricultural work
- High dietary intake of iron, especially in combination with high manganese intake
- Higher levels of education
- History of midlife migraine with aura
- History of traumatic brain injury
- Living in rural areas
- Living in urban or industrial areas with high release of copper, manganese, or lead
- Lower muscle strength in late adolescence
- Reduced levels of dietary and sunlight-derived vitamin D
- The use of well water

Parkinson’s disease works on the dopamine-producing neurons. Dopamine is produced by the substantia nigra, and serves as a chemical transmitter. PD depletes dopamine in the substantia nigra in the brain. This causes the symptoms we now associate with PD.

Each patient may experience a different course of this disease. Usually, patients develop a unilateral tremor. In addition, the patient may develop gait disorders and slowness of movement (bradykinesia). The limbs may become rigid. Postural instability may occur later in the disease often predisposing the patient to a higher risk of falling.

Some patients may present with atypical symptoms. Parkinson’s disease has multiple types and symptoms and is often a difficult disease for a clinician to diagnose. Symptoms gradually worsen, but for some, the progression may take years to fully be realized. PD may require many different medications to treat the disease and symptoms.

Side Effects From the Medications:
As with any disease state, the medications that are used to treat PD can come with side effects. Sinemet is a common medication to treat Parkinson’s disease. This drug can commonly cause dizziness or nausea. These symptoms may gradually disappear or decrease with time. Not all medication side effects appear during the initiation of therapy; some appear after several years. For example, extended use of Levodopa, which is one part of the combination of Sinemet, may result in uncontrollable movements called dyskinesia, where the person becomes frozen and cannot move until the next dose of medication is taken.

Another side effect in the more advanced stages and from larger doses of dopaminergic medications are visual hallucinations, which at times can be frightening. When patients are starting dopamine agonists, everyone should know that with this class of medication and higher doses of Sinemet, impulse behavioral problems may arise. The behaviors may vary, but can include excessive shopping, gambling, sex, or hoarding behaviors. A medication may need to be stopped, but do not stop the medication without the physician's involvement with these behavioral changes.

Motor symptoms that the patient may display include the following:

- Tremors
- Bradykinesia
- Rigidity
- Postural instability

High doses of medications may be required to manage the motor symptoms, but these same doses can cause hallucinations or paranoia. Antipsychotic medication such as quetiapine (Seroquel) may be helpful. Teams of clinicians may be able to help the family evaluate which PD medications are best for the patient’s quality of life.

Non-motor symptoms that the patient may display include the following:

- Apathy
- Autonomic dysfunction
- Cognitive dysfunction and dementia
- Depression and anxiety
- Dermatologic disturbances
- Fatigue
- Gastrointestinal dysfunction
- Olfactory dysfunction
- Psychosis and hallucinations
- Rhinorrhea
- Sleep disturbance

Lewy bodies (LB) were named after Frederick Lewy. While there is debate,
Protecting Against STDs Never Gets Old

Heather Kelleher
Florida Department of Health

As we age, our health needs change. But one thing that remains consistent is our need to be informed about and take precautions against sexually transmitted diseases, or STDs.

STDs are all too common and are transmitted from person to person through intimate contact, like sex. For the past three years, rates of chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis have all increased in the U.S. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), people over the age of 45 have seen an increase in infection rates since 2012, with no end to the trend in sight.

There are many factors that contribute to the rise in STDs in older Americans. Many seniors remain sexually active, but some may have never had access to comprehensive sex education to learn how to prevent contracting or spreading STDs, and they may not use precautions like condoms because pregnancy is no longer a risk.

Consistent use of latex or polyurethane condoms is highly effective in preventing the contraction or transmission of STDs. Condoms aren't just for birth control; they provide a protective barrier between you and your partner that keeps you both safe from infection.

Combined with having unprotected sex, older adults tend to have weaker immune systems than their adolescent counterparts, making them more prone to infection. This has other potential complications as well. Sometimes a person who contracts an STD may go awhile without displaying symptoms. Not only does this mean the person may unknowingly spread the disease to others before developing symptoms, but their body is still actively fighting the infection, weakening their immune system and leaving them vulnerable to other illnesses. If left untreated, STDs can result in severe health consequences.

Many STDs can be easily diagnosed and treated with antibiotics, but while testing for STDs and HIV/AIDS is fairly common practice for younger generations, an older person's doctor may not think to do so, and the patient may not know to ask to be tested. But getting tested to protect your health and the health of your partner is crucial at any age.

The Florida Department of Health, in conjunction with county health departments, partner clinics, and private clinicians, provides screening, counseling, treatment, and partner notification services to persons infected with or suspected of being infected with STDs. The health department in your county offers STD services at low or no cost. CDC offers a national search tool at gettested.cdc.gov to locate HIV, STD, or Hepatitis testing facilities near you.

Sex is a private issue that many people feel uncomfortable discussing, but having protected sex and being aware of your STD status is the best way to stop STD transmission and is an important part of protecting your overall health.

In a Parkinson's dementia patient, the movement disorder is diagnosed before the dementia symptoms occur. Frequently, patients exhibit behavioral issues such as hallucinations—often seeing animals and people that are not present, sleep disturbances, depression, movement disorders, and apathy.

Caregivers will need an interdisciplinary team of doctors, pharmacists, social workers, and case managers to assist with these patients’ many daily medical and financial needs.
Can you imagine a day without water? For more than 40 years, the vital role water plays in our daily lives has been highlighted during National Drinking Water Week, the first full week of May. Protect the Source is this year’s theme, and the Florida Public Service Commission (PSC) reminds you to appreciate your tap water and the need for infrastructure reinvestment to keep it flowing.

Each morning, we mindlessly turn our faucet to shower, brush our teeth, make coffee, etc. We depend on our drinking water supply all day, every day, without giving its source a thought. In Florida, the major source of ground water supply is the Floridan Aquifer, which underlies the entire state. We are fortunate to have this valuable water source in our backyard. Protecting the source and using water wisely will preserve this finite resource for future generations and can also make a difference to our household budgets.

The PSC regulates investor-owned water and/or wastewater companies in 37 Florida counties by overseeing the economics of their efforts to provide clean, safe, and reliable drinking water to their customers. While ensuring adequate utility service and setting reasonable rates, the Commission also helps customers see the value of water conservation to save money on their water bills and also to “protect the source.”

According to the PSC’s Drop-by-Drop brochure, by making simple but thoughtful changes in your daily routine you can save water and reduce your impact on the environment. More water-saving tips are on the PSC’s website, www.FloridaPSC.com, and here are some tips from the EPA:

**In Every Room**
- Repair leaky faucets, indoors and out.
- Consider replacing old equipment (like toilets, dishwashers, and laundry machines).

**In the Kitchen**
- When cooking, peel and clean vegetables in a large bowl of water instead of under running water.
- Fill your sink or basin when washing and rinsing dishes.
- Only run the dishwasher when it’s full.

- When buying a dishwasher, select one with a “light-wash” option.
- Only use the garbage disposal when necessary (composting is a great alternative).
- Install faucet aerators.

**In the Bathroom**
- Take short showers instead of baths.
- Turn off the water to brush teeth, shave, and soap up in the shower. Fill the sink to shave.
- Repair leaky toilets. Add 12 drops of food coloring into the tank, and if color appears in the bowl one hour later, your toilet is leaking.
- Install a toilet dam, faucet aerators, and low-flow showerheads.

**In the Laundry**
- Run full loads of laundry.
- When purchasing a new washing machine, buy a water-saving model that can be adjusted to the load size.
- Water will always be vital to our lives. So, in celebration of 2018 National Drinking Water Week, put these water-saving tips to work for you and “protect the source” of your precious tap water.

The American Water Works Association and its members designated the first full week in May as Drinking Water Week in 1988 as a unique opportunity for both water professionals and the communities they serve to join in recognizing the vital role water plays in our daily lives. For more information, visit www.awwa.org.
This Summer, Keep Cool and Save Energy

Thelma Crump
Florida Public Service Commission

Florida’s hot, humid summer weather is just around the corner. Although today air conditioning helps us keep cool, many seniors remember when air conditioning wasn’t an option. Capturing seniors’ memories of Life Before Air Conditioning, the Florida Public Service Commission (PSC) compiled a video available on its website (www.floridapsc.com) recalling ways seniors beat the heat and how air conditioning has changed their lives.

“My mother did not cook during the afternoon because it was so hot,” one senior remembered.

Using resourcefulness, the seniors interviewed said they sat in front of electric fans or used paper hand fans, ate popsicles, visited the public swimming pool, played in the sprinkler, sat under shade trees to catch a breeze, and slept on the screened porch.

While admittedly, they don’t yearn for the good ol’ days sans air conditioning, the seniors do miss neighbors visiting one another and being more inclined to help each other. Experienced in surviving many hot summers, these seniors also offer useful energy-saving suggestions, some still apt today. To access the video, go to www.floridapsc.com/consumers and click on Life Before Air Conditioning.

Here are some modern-day tips from the PSC to keep you cool and save energy:

- Change or clean your air conditioner filter regularly and use your ceiling fan for more comfort. Only turn it on, however, when you’re in the room because ceiling fans only cool people, not rooms. You’ll also want to clear your outside air conditioner unit of plants or brush, so it can run more efficiently.

- Don’t place lamps or television sets near your air-conditioning thermostat. Heat from these appliances is sensed by the thermostat and could cause the air conditioner to run longer than necessary.

- Take shorter showers and use water-saving shower heads to reduce hot water consumption.

- Turn off the lights in any room not in use.

- Open the windows instead of using the air conditioner or electric fan on cooler days and during cooler summer hours.

- Use your microwave to cook. It uses two-thirds less energy than your stove.

Contact the PSC at www.floridapsc.com, or call 1-800-342-3552 for more information on energy saving tips.

Experienced in surviving hot summers during the days before air conditioning, seniors have many useful energy-saving suggestions, like keeping your thermostat set at 78 degrees.
FLORIDA 55+ VOLLEYBALL TEAM TRAVELS THE COUNTRY, SPIKING THEIR OPPONENTS

Nick Gandy
Florida Sports Foundation

Every other year, members of the Ref Shop Volleyball team, made up of a majority of players from the Tampa Bay and Orlando area, mark their calendars for the National Senior Games.

Well, gentlemen, it’s time to mark those calendars for the 2018 Florida Senior Games to qualify for the 2019 National Senior Games, to be played in Albuquerque, N.M., in June 2019.

Medal winners in the last two National Senior Games, the Ref Shop team has a reputation to uphold. It won a bronze medal in the 2015 Games in Minneapolis and gold in 2017 in Birmingham, in the 55-59 age group.

The team is a consistent winner wherever it goes. It can be at the Long Center in Clearwater, the Huntsman Senior Games in Utah, a USA Volleyball Open National Championship Tournament in Dallas, or the biennial National Senior Games. All they do is win.

Playing in an over 50 division gives team manager Jamie Tichenour a different set of challenges than when he started putting together men’s volleyball teams for competition over 25 years ago.

“Younger guys want to play all the time,” he said. “Now we play to have as much success as we can as a team. Guys will volunteer to sit out. There’s no dissention. Everyone is on the same page, and there are no gripes about playing time”

Besides the mature makeup of the team, the roster includes quite a variety of players from several different walks of life.

Among the six on the court at any time, there might be a long-haul truck driver (Chuck Coulter), a YMCA director (Scott Goyer), a retired CIA agent (Craig Wolfe), the owner of Taco John’s restaurant in Bismarck, N.D. (Dale Gossett), an international-level volleyball coach and referee (Tito DeLeon), or a pawn shop owner (Tichenour).

With a team coming from many different areas, Tichenour has to make sure he has plenty of players to face the challenge of playing as many as nine matches in three days to end up on the medal stand in highly competitive tournament play.

“We can’t go into a big tournament that lasts all weekend with eight or nine guys,” he said. “It just doesn’t work on the third day. With a roster of 12 or 13 guys, everyone gets plenty of rest, and that’s key for us all to be fresh at the end.”

That’s the key to the team’s success, he says. “I’ve been organizing teams for 25-30 years and the challenge used to be financial. Now it’s playing a lot of matches to reach the finals over the course of three days.”

Not only are Tichenour and his teammates skilled volleyball players, now eligible for the Florida Senior Games, they’re plotting the course for future standouts in the sport.

He and his brother-in-law and fellow Ref Shop teammate, Julius Hasko, spent a recent week getting things ready for the USA Volleyball Big South Qualifier at the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta. It is the largest single-weekend volleyball tournament in the U.S., with more than 1,400 teams and more than 15,000 players in action.

Tichenour is involved in the tournament setup and Hasko is coaching an Orlando/Tampa Volleyball Academy team. Both of their sons are in Atlanta to ensure the tournament’s success.

The Orlando/Tampa Volleyball Academy is one of the largest volleyball clubs in the country, according to Hasko.

“We’re even planning on changing our name from Ref Shop to OTVA in the future,” Hasko said.

Whether the team is named the Ref Shop, with their past glories on the court, or OTVA and their future winning ways, this collection of bumpers, setters, and spikers will represent the State of Florida well, no matter where the location of the court.

Join the Ref Shop and thousands of other athletes age 50 and over at a Fall Florida Senior Games Qualifier or the 2018 Florida Senior Games in December in Clearwater. Here’s a listing of upcoming opportunities from September through December.
Remembering Dad This Father's Day

Rick Burnham
Editor in Chief, Elder Update

The first time I remember my dad saving my life was on a sunny summer day in 1967. We were out for a walk in the woods when he suddenly snatched me up like a sack of potatoes. This shocked me considerably and probably surprised the water moccasin at my feet as well.

A year or so later, he jumped fully clothed into a Nashville, Tenn., swimming pool and pulled me to safety. Moments before I had strode confidently to the end of the diving board, thinking “I can do this.” I couldn’t, so he had to.

Despite his repeated warnings, I rode my bike out into the road when I was 10 and narrowly missed getting hit by a car. After making sure I was okay, he took his belt off and, with the obligatory “This is going to hurt me more than it is going to hurt you,” blistered my rear end with it. My bike and I stayed on the sidewalk after that. Lifesaving.

At some point after that, Dad explained the importance of a healthy respect for and appreciation of law enforcement. An eerily similar conversation about girls came later. At least one of those conversations was lifesaving. Both, probably.

When I was 18, my dad delivered me to the Air Force recruiter’s office in Valdosta, Ga. He himself had served in the Navy in WWII, so he knew fully well the importance of a little discipline for a young knucklehead like I was. Changed my life and likely saved it as well, in one fell swoop.

At some point – somewhere between that day he dropped me off with the recruiter and the day 22 years later when I retired from the Air Force – Dad and I passed each other on the ladder of responsibility. He would now be the one in need, not me.

Unfortunately, the perils of getting older can make those of adolescence look like child’s play. Colon cancer, melanoma, and heart disease call for the attention of a professional or two. My older sister saw to it that he got the help he needed, and, one by one, Dad beat them all. When he passed away at age 88, he did so peacefully – sitting on a front porch with a drink in one hand and a smoke in the other.

Five Father’s Days have come and gone since, each one a bittersweet reminder of what we once had. Small town barber, former mayor, competent farmer, talented fisherman. A man known far and wide for his vivid imagination, rich sense of humor, and first name. “Yeah, I knew Barney,” they still say in my hometown of Jasper. “Used to cut my hair when I was a boy. Miss that old guy.”

Me too.

If your dad is still alive, sit down with him and talk about the old days, when he stood ready to do the important things dads are known for. Tell him while there is still time how much you appreciate it all, and remind him that you are but a phone call away.

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Construction Begins On Veterans' Nursing Home

PORT ST. LUCIE – Gov. Rick Scott and Senate President Joe Negron joined civic, community, and veteran leaders in the Port St. Lucie community of Tradition on March 20 for a groundbreaking ceremony for the new 120-bed Ardie R. Copas State Veterans’ Nursing Home.

“I was proud to attend today’s ground-breaking ceremony for the Ardie R. Copas State Veterans’ Nursing Home, which will provide our veterans and their families with the support and services they need and deserve,” Scott said. “As a Navy veteran myself, I have worked every day to make Florida the most military and veteran-friendly state in the nation. We must do everything we can to support our military and their families.”

Officials hope to complete the home in 20-24 months. Once opened, approximately 175 health care, food service, maintenance, and administrative staff will oversee the skilled nursing facility.

Information on hiring of staff and admission of residents will be released in the months leading to the opening.

The Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs operates six award-winning veterans’ nursing homes in Daytona Beach, Land O’ Lakes, Pembroke Pines, Panama City, Port Charlotte, and St. Augustine and one veterans’ assisted living facility in Lake City. (Courtesy, Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs)

Vets Stories Wanted

Rick Burnham
Editor in Chief, Elder Update

A few years ago, the Elder Update embarked on a plan to honor Florida’s senior veterans, beginning with a salute to those who served in World War II. Seemed a noble thing to do, considering their contributions to our great nation, and considering the heartbreaking attrition rate at which they were, and still are, leaving us.

The November/December 2014 edition of the Elder Update was very well received, so much so that we have done it three more times. Over the years we have included our heroes’ stories from the Korean conflict, the war in Vietnam, and, more recently, from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Each of those conflicts challenged our men and women in different ways, and they all brought out great stories of courage and sacrifice.

All told, we have presented the stories of 51 Floridians who put everything on the line for their country, and it certainly has been an honor and a pleasure to do so. Sadly, some of those folks are no longer with us. It is probably safe to assume that for one or two, the very last time their story was told in its entirety was on the pages of the Elder Update.

If that is the case, then our little journey has been well worth it.

So we will do this again in November/December, and we ask for your assistance in making it happen. If you are at least 60 years old, served in one of our branches of the military, and we have not previously told your story, we would like to hear from you.

You can send us a letter in the mail (Florida Department of Elder Affairs – Elder Update, 4040 Esplanade Way, Tallahassee, Fla. 32399-7000) or an email (eueditor@elderaffairs.org). You can even give me a call directly at (850) 414-2353. I would love to hear from you.

War experiences run the gamut, so do not fret if your personal contribution to the war effort did not involve hand-to-hand combat or superhuman feats of bravery. For every case of actual combat, there is someone typing up orders, turning wrenches on an airplane, applying bandages, and plenty more. If you are a family member of a veteran and would like to tell us about him or her, do not hesitate to do so. War is a team effort, in perhaps the truest sense of the phrase.

The old adage about pictures -- that they are worth a thousand words -- is certainly true, so include those as well. We prefer digital versions sent through email, but if the actual hard copy version is all you have, send it to us. We will scan it in and get it back to you.

We will need your stories no later than Sept. 15. As always, we appreciate your willingness to share, and we thank you for your service.
Access to information regarding elder services and activities is available through the Elder Helpline Information and Referral service within each Florida county. For the hearing or speech impaired, all Elder Helplines can be accessed through the Florida Relay by simply dialing 711 from anywhere in the state.

### Information & Referral

**1-800-96-ELDER (1-800-963-5337)**

#### Florida Area Agencies on Aging (Counties Served)

**Northwest Florida**

Area Agency on Aging, Inc.
5090 Commerce Park Circle
Pensacola, FL 32505
850-488-7101
(Escambia, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa and Walton Counties)

Area Agency on Aging for North Florida, Inc.
2414 Mahan Drive
Tallahassee, FL 32308
850-488-0055
(Bay, Calhoun, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty, Madison, Taylor, Wakulla and Washington Counties)

**Area Agency on Aging for Southwest Florida**

15201 N. Cleveland Avenue, Suite 1100
North Fort Myers, FL 33903
239-652-6900
(Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Glades, Hendry, Lee and Sarasota Counties)

**Elder Options**

100 SW 75th Street, #301
Gainesville, FL 32607
352-378-6649
(Alachua, Bradford, Citrus, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Hernando, Lafayette, Lake, Levy, Marion, Putnam, Sumter, Suwannee and Union Counties)

**ElderSource**

10688 Old St. Augustine Road
Jacksonville, FL 32257
904-391-6600
(Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, St. Johns and Volusia Counties)

**Area Agency on Aging of Pasco-Pinellas, Inc.**

9549 Koger Boulevard North
Gadsden Building, Suite 100
St. Petersburg, FL 33702
727-570-9696
(Pasco and Pinellas Counties)

**Senior Connection Center, Inc.**

8928 Brittany Way Tampa, FL 33619
813-740-3888
(Hardee, Highlands, Hillsborough, Manatee and Polk Counties)

**Senior Resource Alliance**

988 Woodcock Road, Suite 200
Orlando, FL 32803
407-514-1800
(Brevard, Orange, Osceola and Seminole Counties)

**Area Agency on Aging for Southwest Florida**

15201 N. Cleveland Avenue, Suite 1100
North Fort Myers, FL 33903
239-652-6900
(Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Glades, Hendry, Lee and Sarasota Counties)

**Your Aging and Disability Resource Center**

4400 North Congress Avenue
West Palm Beach, FL 33407
561-684-5885
(Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee, Palm Beach and St. Lucie Counties)

**Aging and Disability Resource Center of Broward County, Inc.**

5300 Hiatus Road
Sunrise, FL 33351
954-745-9677
(Broward County)

**Alliance for Aging, Inc.**

760 NW 107th Avenue, Suite 214
Miami, FL 33172
305-670-6500
(Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties)

### FLORIDA ELDER HELPLINE DIRECTORY

Please call the telephone number below in your area for information and referrals.

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<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Telephone Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alachua</td>
<td>205-262-2243</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baker</td>
<td>888-242-4464</td>
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<td>Bay</td>
<td>866-467-4624</td>
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<td>Bradford</td>
<td>800-262-2243</td>
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<td>Brevard</td>
<td>407-514-0019</td>
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<td>Broward</td>
<td>954-745-9777</td>
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<td>Calhoun</td>
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<td>Charlotte</td>
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<td>Hardee</td>
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<td>800-262-2243</td>
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<td>Lake</td>
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### Elder Helpline Can Assist Non-English Speakers

By calling the Elder Helpline, Florida’s elders can access information and referral services through a translation service. Telephone interpreters provide live, on-the-line assistance by translating from English into as many as 148 different languages.

If you need information about, or referral to, a service provider outside Florida, call the national Eldercare Locator Service at 1-800-677-1116. An information specialist will assist you Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. – 11 p.m. Eastern time. For people with Telecommunication Devices for the Deaf (TDDs), all Elder Helplines, as well as the Eldercare Locator Service, can be accessed through Florida Relay Service at 1-800-955-8771.

Are you worried that an elder relative or friend may be the victim of abuse? You can report known or suspected cases of abuse by calling Florida’s Abuse Hotline at 1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873).
In April 1963, President John F. Kennedy sat down with members of the National Council of Senior Citizens to discuss an annual tribute to those Americans age 65 and older. Older Americans Month was born.

Over the five decades since, every U.S. president has signed a proclamation in recognition of this select group of Americans. Older Americans Month is celebrated each May across the country through ceremonies, events, fairs, and other such activities.

Back in 1963, when it was called Senior Citizens Month, only 17 million Americans had reached their 65th birthday. Most of the tributes went to those seniors who had served their country in uniform.

Fast forward 50 plus years: the number has grown to nearly 50 million, and recognition is handed out in a variety of directions, far beyond just the military.

Here in Florida, where a higher percentage of elders live than any other place in America, people age 60 and older are involved in virtually every corner of our society. Of the 5.3 million seniors living in the Sunshine State, nearly two million of them were working midway through 2017. Another 892,373 volunteer their time freely, resulting in $4 billion value for the state.

Simply put, Florida would not be Florida without its senior population.

We certainly recognize that here at the Department of Elder Affairs, where every month is Older Americans Month. That’s why we list as our official mission “to help Florida’s elders remain healthy, safe, and independent.” And that’s why our stated vision reads as “All Floridians aging with dignity, purpose, and independence.”

A quartet of goals is directed to meeting those challenges.

First, we strive to ensure that any Floridian in need of long-term care services receives a timely and appropriate assessment of need by applying a fair, objective, and transparent priority-scoring methodology. Next, we aim to protect our most vulnerable Floridians and their families by establishing the Office of Public and Professional Guardians. Third, we promote compassion and awareness for Floridians affected by dementia by expanding the Dementia Care and Cure Initiative across the state. Finally, we ensure effective adherence to all federal and state statutory and regulatory requirements by maximizing the number of elders served and meeting or exceeding required deadlines.

Getting all that done would certainly be a challenge without the wonderful support we get from the State Capitol Complex here in Tallahassee. Gov. Rick Scott, himself a senior, has been an unwavering advocate of our programs since taking office. In fact, thanks to the governor and our legislators, funding for the Alzheimer’s Disease Initiative and other community-based services have increased dramatically over that time.

As a result, a continuum of services is available to meet the needs of individuals and families affected by Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Disorders. That includes counseling, consumable medical supplies, and respite for caregiver relief, as well as diagnosis, education, training research, treatment, and referral.

More details on these goals, programs, and more can be found in our annual Summary of Programs and Services, available at elderaffairs.state.fl.us/doea/sops.php.

We hope you enjoy Older Americans Month in the same spirit that President Kennedy and others had in mind when they created the observance in 1963. But rest assured when May is over, your welfare and that of your family will remain our first priority here at the Florida Department of Elder Affairs.