

Connecticut Care Planning Council



September 2013 Newsletter

Volume 5, Issue 8

Featured Board Member: Henry C Weatherby

CT Care Planning Council Advisory Board Members:



Weatherby & Associates, PC
Counselors at Law
Helping Families Preserve and Protect Assets and Values

[Henry C Weatherby](#)



[Henry C Weatherby Jr.](#)



[Brian Turly](#)

In This Issue

[Healthy Living and Successful Aging](#)

[Helping Your Older Parents Stay Happy and Healthy](#)

[If you answer "yes" to any of these questions,
Weatherby & Associates, PC can help](#)

The [Connecticut Care Planning Council](#) (CTCPC) lists companies and individual providers on our website who help families deal with the crisis and burden of long term care.

One purpose of the CTCPC is to educate the public on the need for care planning *before* a crisis occurs. A second purpose is to provide, in one place, all of the available government and private services for eldercare.

Finally, our ultimate mission is to offer a trusted listing service that the public will recognize and turn to for expert help in dealing with the challenges of long term care.

Call us at 860-769-6938

or click [here](#) to send an e-mail



[Elaine Pavasaris](#)



[John Carmon](#)



[Brian Cosker](#)



[Paul Tarasuk](#)



HEBREW HEALTH CARE
for health, for life

Upcoming Seminars

Don't Go Broke in
a Nursing Home

September 11,



Weatherby & Associates, PC
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Healthy Living and Successful Aging

The United States is experiencing a remarkable increase in the number of people who live to an old age. Our older population (people 65 years or older) numbered nearly 40 million in 2009 (latest year of available data). These folks represent one in every eight Americans, or 13% of the population. By 2030, it is projected that the U.S will be home to more than 72 million people age 65 and older.

This astonishing increase is largely a result of medical and health care advancements that simply allow people to live longer. Currently, the average life expectancy of an American is about 80 years old (nearly double that of our ancestors).

Health is Wealth

Living a long life is a goal most of us have in common. Ensuring that we spend the latter years of our life feeling healthy and happy should be an important part of that goal.

Health is indeed wealth, especially as we age. Embracing a healthy lifestyle and making health our number one priority will bring invaluable wealth to us as we age.

Although growing older is inevitable, there are many things we can do to avoid feeling older. Medical breakthroughs have and will extend our longevity, but how we decide to live our senior years will be crucial. Managing our physical health, maintaining relationships, following safety tips, and making adequate preparations to fund our retirement and long term care can help us make the most of our so-called 'golden years.'

Below are suggestions for healthy living that will help each of us age successfully.

Stay Connected and Productive

2013

2:00 PM

Farmington, CT

Please call Haley
at 860-769-6938
to register!

Don't Go Broke in
a Nursing Home

**September 12,
2013**

2:00 PM

AND

6:00 PM

Farmington, CT

Please call Haley
at 860-769-6938
to register!

Don't Go Broke in
a Nursing Home

October 23, 2013

5:15 PM

Rocky Hill, CT

Please call Haley
at 860-769-6938
to register!

**Offers & Info:
Veterans Aid &**

One of the most important things you can do to stay healthy and happy as you age is to maintain your sense of purpose by staying productive and connected to people and things that are important to you. Spend quality time with at least one person (a family member, friend or neighbor) every day. Seek out those who uplift and challenge you. Avoid secluding yourself.

You can also fill your days rendering service to others who are not as fortunate as you. Giving time for a cause beyond yourself brings with it a sense of purpose you can't achieve anywhere else. Your wealth of wisdom and experience will continue to grow as you reach out to others.

Activities that can help you remain connected and productive include: gardening, cooking, knitting, volunteering at a library or hospital, helping neighbors, visiting museums, traveling, playing cards or games, joining a senior center, starting a book club, taking a class, attending church, or learning and using a social media like Facebook.

Finally, challenge yourself mentally. Reading books or newspapers, doing crossword puzzles, drawing or painting, writing, studying, or learning to play a musical instrument are effective and fun ways to keep your mind sharp.

Collect and Write Family Histories

Those who pursue the gathering and writing of personal and family histories are always rewarded. As one of the older people in your extended family, you likely hold memories of people, places, and events that might be lost forever upon your passing. In this case, you are the family history. Don't let it be lost to future generations. Take the time to preserve your heritage by writing these memories down.

Exercise Regularly

Exercise is a significant part of good health at every age. Unfortunately, many older adults do not get enough physical activity and exercise. Staying active can improve vitality, help maintain strength and flexibility, expand mental function, decrease risk for health problems, and may even help relieve chronic pain.

Find an activity you enjoy then ease into it at a pace and consistency your body can handle. Try to include a variety of endurance, strength, stretching, and balance exercises in your

Attendance Benefits

Contact Us:
34 Jerome Avenue,
Suite 310
Bloomfield, CT 06002

(860)769-6938

Forward-to-a-Friend

routine. Exercise choices may include yoga, walking, swimming, biking, gardening, and exercises classes designed for seniors. The key to successful exercising is variety.

Be sure to talk to your health care provider before beginning an exercise program.

Prepare Financially

For some, successful aging equates to financial responsibility, making sure that they have the right [Medicare health plan](#), [long term care insurance](#) coverage and enough money to cover the costs of health care in retirement.

As soon as you have a job and a steady income, begin to plan frugally for retirement and the decades which follow. Planning early will help you to avoid unnecessary debt and live more comfortably during your final years. Use caution in cosigning financial notes (even with family members) when retirement income might be jeopardized. As you near retirement, be even more cautious about "get-rich" schemes, mortgaging homes, or investing in uncertain ventures. In all financial aspects, proceed cautiously so that the planning of a lifetime is not disrupted by one or more poor financial decisions.

The [National Care Planning Council](#) provides lists of eldercare planning services to help the public prepare for the years following retirement. The list includes [care management services](#), [financial advisers](#), [elder attorneys](#), [reverse mortgage specialists](#), [advocates for veterans](#), [home care services](#), and other types of [eldercare providers](#).

Have a Healthy Diet and Lifestyle

Don't smoke, eat right, and practice good hygiene. We've all heard these tips before, but we repeat them so often because they are crucial to maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Eating right should include consuming nutrition-packed meals every day. Extra weight from poor diet choices increases your risk for heart disease, diabetes and high blood pressure.

Staying healthy also has the very practical impact of reducing out-of-pocket health care costs. A healthy person spends far less time at the pharmacy, the doctor's office, and even the hospital.

Prevent Injuries from Falling

Falling is one of the most common causes of injury among seniors. Simple [home modifications](#), the use of [assistive devices](#), wearing sensible footwear, and removing hazards can reduce the risk of falling and the injuries that come with it.

Visit Your Doctor Regularly

About 80 percent of seniors are living with a chronic condition. Many chronic conditions, like diabetes and heart disease, can often be prevented.

Visit your health care provider regularly and follow their recommendations for screening and preventative measures. Screenings are particularly helpful as they serve as an early warning system. Much of the illness and disability associated with aging can be prevented (or slowed down) when you have the benefit of early detection. Regular dental, vision and hearing checkups should also be taken into consideration.

One of the most common conditions affecting older men is enlargement of the prostate gland, or benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH). Among aging women, a loss of bone density (osteoporosis) is a particular concern.

Many people age 70 and older seek the care of a [geriatric physician](#), also called a geriatrician. Geriatric physicians are medical doctors who specialize in the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of disease and disability in older adults.

Summary

Growing older is inevitable, but there are many things we can do to avoid feeling older. Medical breakthroughs have and will extend our longevity, but how we decide to live as we age is crucial. Managing our physical health, maintaining relationships, being productive, taking safety precautions, visiting our health care providers often, and making adequate preparations to fund our retirement and long term care can help us make the most of our senior years.

Helping Your Older Parents Stay

Happy and Healthy

If you're fortunate enough to have one or both parents still living, you may have noticed a role reversal taking place in your relationship. Remember the days when Mom shuttled you to the doctor whenever you were sick? Now, it may be you who's driving her to her medical appointments. Perhaps you've become even more involved in managing her healthcare needs – serving as her healthcare proxy, moving her into your home to care for her, or even having to select a [nursing home](#) for her to live in.

Whatever the case, it's natural to feel challenged – and, yes, intimidated – in the role you've undertaken. But if you stay positive and proactive, you'll be in a great position to advocate for your parents' optimal care. And, really, what better way is there to say "Thank You" for all they've done for you over the years?

The following six recommendations will help you understand what may be happening to your parents as they age – and what you can do to help.

1. Stay vigilant to sudden changes.

Typically, sudden changes arise from sudden problems. Your elderly father who becomes confused one week but was alert and oriented the week before, or becomes unsteady walking and starts falling, is likely experiencing an acute problem – an infection, medication side effect, or perhaps, a heart attack or stroke.

If you pay attention to your parent's baseline health and behavior, you'll be alert to sudden, and subtle, fluctuations. Being attuned to what's "normal" for your parent is critical in advocating for his care. By informing his physician of these changes, you help ensure that he receives a proper diagnosis and timely treatment – especially important in acute conditions.

2. Investigate the source of gradual decline.

Several years ago, I met an elderly woman living in a [nursing home](#). Her family, assuming she had dementia, had moved her there after she had gradually stopped speaking.

After performing a brief procedure on her, I asked how she was doing. "I'm OK," she replied.

A miracle? Not exactly. I'd removed bullet-sized pieces of wax from her ears. She'd stopped speaking because her ears were too plugged to hear.

A host of conditions can cause gradual decline. Before jumping to the conclusion – as many people do – that Alzheimer's disease is the culprit, recognize that your parent may be experiencing an altogether different problem: a vitamin B12 deficiency, an underactive thyroid, Parkinson's disease or depression, to name a few.

When discussing your parent's decline with her physician, make sure the two of you consider all the possibilities. To prepare for the appointment, make notes detailing how her decline has manifested itself – loss of appetite, a failing short-term memory and so forth – and how long you've noticed these changes. That way, you won't leave anything out. To help you, I've created a free checklist that either you or your parent can complete at seniorselfassessment.com – make sure you print or email the "Test Result Details" at the bottom of the page to analyze your responses and give you advice based on your answers.

3. Know thy parent's medicine cabinet.

Familiarize yourself with the medications your parent takes: what each one is for and how often he takes them. Make sure you notify *each* doctor your parent visits of all *the* medicine he takes, including over-the-counter products. Ask what side effects you might observe from each medication and whether it's potentially dangerous if your parent takes them together. You also want to tell the doctor whether your parent drinks alcohol or caffeinated drinks and whether he smokes, as these substances can affect some medications' efficacy and safety. To recognize which medications might cause the symptoms your parent experiences, check out drugscanmakeyousick.com.

4. Discourage ageist attitudes.

Simply put, [ageism](#) is prejudice against the elderly. It exists in many forms but can be particularly damaging to an older person's self-esteem when it assumes that all of her woes are age-related. Here are a couple of ways of expressing [ageism](#) to an elderly parent:

"What do you expect at *your* age?"
"You're not getting any younger."

If you're ever tempted to utter something similar, remind yourself that by chalking up everything that ails her to her age, you sell your parent short. If she's depressed, it may have nothing to do with the fact that she's 80 and everything to do with a biological predisposition to depression. And remember that right-knee pain in a 90 year-old can't be just from age if there's no problem with her left knee. (More about Dr. Stall and a more in-depth article on the attitude of society towards medical care for the elderly can be found at http://www.longtermcarelink.net/eldercare/medical_care_issues.htm.)

5. Address not just symptoms—but emotions, too.

There is disease and then there is “dis-ease” – that is, a lack of ease, security or well-being. “Dis-ease” can manifest itself as myriad emotions in an elderly person: fear, grief, boredom, embarrassment and sadness among them. The fact is, these emotions can be every bit as debilitating as disease.

Take the case of a parent who's incontinent. Too embarrassed to socialize, she cuts herself off from friends. Without companionship, she becomes lonely. Instead of allowing her to become a hermit, discuss with her doctor how to address the incontinence. Together, you can consider different solutions that will ease her embarrassment and reinvigorate her social life.

6. Strive to maximize your parent's quality of life.

No matter our age, we all want to enjoy life to the fullest and have the capability to do the things we want to. Improving the enjoyment of life and a patient's functional ability are the cardinal goals of geriatric care. But you don't need a medical diploma on your wall to help your parent achieve either of those goals.

Being there to solve a problem or provide company are tremendously worthwhile services you can provide – no expertise required. Remember, as your parent gets older, his quality of life becomes more important to him than how much longer he lives. And he doesn't necessarily need medications or surgery to ensure that he's living the latter part of his life to the fullest.

If he enjoys books but has difficulty reading regular-sized type, check out sight-saving titles at the library. If he's grieving the loss of his best buddy, introduce him to new acquaintances at the senior center. If he's living in a nursing home, bring your

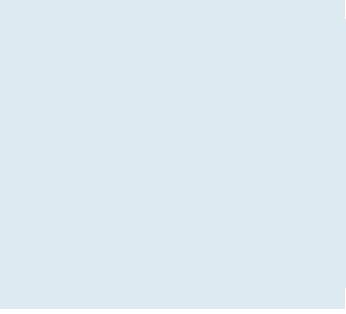
kids there to share a meal with him.

Sometimes, it's the small gestures that have the most profound impact. As the child of an elderly parent, you are uniquely positioned to deliver these life-changing gifts.

If you answer "yes" to any of these questions, Weatherby & Associates, PC can help

- Has the elder been diagnosed with a mentally or physically debilitating disorder such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, ALS, stroke or a decline in functional capacity?
- Is the elder isolated due to the recent death of a spouse, or have family that either lives too far away or is too busy to provide adequate care?
- Is the elder to be discharged into a care facility or currently receiving in-home care?
- Does the elder have a variety of healthcare providers and need coordination and advocacy for quality care?
- Does the elder have a variety of healthcare providers and need coordination and advocacy for quality care?
- Does the elder have a spouse whose financial needs must be considered in light of the elder's medical condition?

Wisdom from the Web



**"You are as young as your faith, as old as your
doubt; as young as your self-confidence, as old as
your fear; as young as your hope, as old as your
despair." ~Douglas MacArthur**