



MARCH 2008 ISSUE

# Newsletter

FEBRUARY 20, 2008

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Caregivers often have to deal with feelings of isolation, loneliness, boredom and helplessness. All of these can lead to caregiving burnout, depression and just feeling pretty lousy. How Caregiver's take care of themselves is the focus of this month's newsletter. Share this issue with your friends and family—especially those who are Caregivers and encourage them to become a part of a Caregiver's Support Group.

The State Legislature has been working on several bills that could affect Caregivers and those being cared for.

SB 2152 deals with establishing a task force to study the feasibility of combining services to the elderly that are currently scattered among various public agencies by establishing a Dept. on Aging.

SB 2043 Appropriates funds to the University of Hawaii center on aging research and education faculty positions and program expenses.

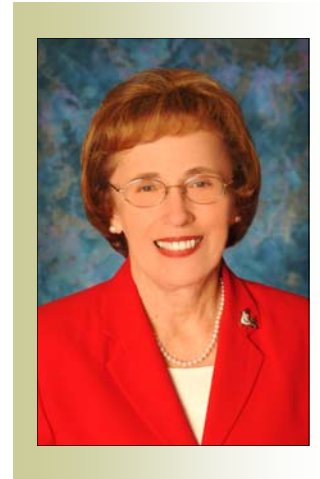
SB 2830 extends the Joint Commission on Aging and expands its mandates to include more caregiving-related issues.

HB 2000/SB 2052 - Relating to Health Insurance. Requires that hearing aid devices be included in mandatory insurance coverage for Medicaid and private health insurance

For a more complete list of bills that you might want to study please visit <http://www.hawaiicare.org/forums/index.php?code=legislation>.

Our upcoming Caregiver's meeting in March will feature a physical therapist who will be sharing with us some tips on taking care of ourselves and how to properly work with the person for whom we provide care. You won't want to miss this presentation or the time of talk story we always include.

Aloha,



Marilyn B. Lee

**Next Meeting**  
**March 13th**  
**7-9 PM**

**Speaker—Faye Bronstein—Rehab Hospital Physical Therapist**

**Wahiawa General Hospital Long Term Facility—2nd floor**

## Advisory Council

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## THE VALUE OF CAREGIVING

On March 5, Gary Powell, one of our Directors, presented a talk at the Humana luncheon at Aged to Perfection. The talk, part of a series of talks for caregiver's and clients at ATP, focused on the Value of Family Caregivers. Gary did not

concentrate on the economic value that Family Caregiver's bring (estimated by some at more than 1 billion dollars annually) but rather talked about the emotional value and family values that are often overlooked during the day-to-day stress and

work of caregiving.

Gary shared 5 values that Family Caregiver's can benefit from in caregiving situations.

1. Caregiver's promote civilization.
2. Caregiver's provide continuity.
3. Caregiver's allow aging with dignity.

4. Caregiver's experience
5. Caregiver's validate the worth of the individual.

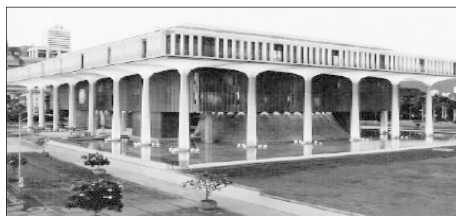
There are many other values that Caregiver's both bring and receive and realizing that caregiving is more than an obligation, a job, or commitment, can help the Caregiver to frame the inevitable stress and exhaustion of caregiving in more positive terms and allow the care recipient to see their situations as having value instead of thinking of themselves as burdens.

## CAREGIVER HEALTH



Caregiving can be stressful and may contribute to serious illness and depression. Studies show that 16 percent of caregivers report that their health has worsened since taking on the caregiver role, and about half of caregivers who care for someone with Alzheimer's disease develop psychological distress. In addition, caregiving can result in new financial burdens, with 40 percent of caregivers incurring new financial expenses for care related products, services, and activities. It is estimated that 26 percent of caregivers spend up to 10 percent of their monthly income on caregiving activities.

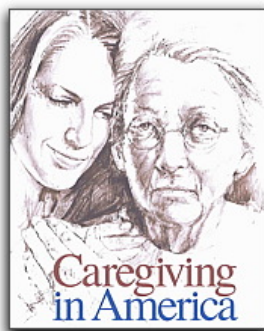
The AMA has initiated an effort to address the burden of caregiving through the development of Web-based materials and information. We invite physicians, other health care professionals, and



## CAREGIVER AWARENESS DAY

The Hawaii Family Caregiver Coalition is participating in the **Caregiver Awareness Day at the Hawaii State Capitol on March 14th**. This all-day event promotes issues that face Caregivers and works to make the law makers more aware of their importance. COCSG is a founding member of the Coalition and works actively with the Coalition on year-round activities. If you would like more information or would like to be involved with the Coalition, talk with one of Directors or visit the Coalition website at [www.hawaiicare.org](http://www.hawaiicare.org).

those involved in caregiving to find out more information about caregiving by visiting the our [Caregiver Health Assessment section](#). You will find background information on caregiving and dementia, a caregiver self-assessment tool, and useful caregiver resources. Take the quiz on page 3 and score your own caregiving health. You may want to take this with you to your own next appointment with your physician.



## THE MMSE—CAN YOU REMEMBER THAT?

The MMSE (Mini Mental State Exam) is a frequently used tool to determine the cognitive level of an individual. Doctors, Psychologists, Insurance examiners and other professional use this exam to help them determine whether or not an individual is suffering from a decline in cognitive ability. There are 5 main categories beginning with Orientation.

1. **Orientation**—identifying current dates, seasons, time etc. And recognizing location (home, office, town, State etc.)
2. **Registration**— being able to identify objects and remember them.
3. **Attention and Calculation**—being able to follow a Series 7 evaluation (a series of subtracting 7s. i.e. “if you take away 7 from 100 what do you have? If you take away 7 from that...”) another test here is spelling the word “world” backwards.
4. **Recall**— typically the examiner will ask to remember the 3 objects identified under registration (#2)
5. **Language**— being able to name objects like a pencil or watch. Being able repeat a simple statement. Being able to follow a multi-stage command (fold this paper in-half and put it on the floor) being able to write a simple sen-

# Caregiver self-assessment questionnaire

Caregivers are often so concerned with caring for their relative's needs that they lose sight of their own well-being. Please take just a moment to answer the following questions. Once you have answered the questions, turn the page to do a self-evaluation.

During the past week or so, I have ...

- |   |        |
|---|--------|
| 1. Had trouble keeping my mind on what I was doing.....   | Yes No |
| 2. Felt that I couldn't leave my relative alone.....  | Yes No |
| 3. Had difficulty making decisions.....   | Yes No |
| 4. Felt completely overwhelmed.....   | Yes No |
| 5. Felt useful and needed.....  | Yes No |
| 6. Felt lonely.....   | Yes No |
| 7. Been upset that my relative has changed so much from his/her former self.....  | Yes No |
| 8. Felt a loss of privacy and/or personal time.....   | Yes No |
| 9. Been edgy or irritable.....  | Yes No |
| 10. Had sleep disturbed because of caring for my relative.....  | Yes No |
| 11. Had a crying spell(s).....  | Yes No |
| 12. Felt strained between work and family responsibilities.....   | Yes No |
| 13. Had back pain.....  | Yes No |
| 14. Felt ill ( <i>headaches, stomach problems or common cold</i> ).....   | Yes No |
| 15. Been satisfied with the support my family has given me.....   | Yes No |
| 16. Found my relative's living situation to be inconvenient or a barrier to care.....   | Yes No |
| 17. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being "not stressful" to 10 being "extremely stressful," please rate your current level of stress.                        | _____  |
| 18. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being "very healthy" to 10 being "very ill," please rate your current health compared to what it was this time last year. | _____  |

## Self-evaluation

To determine the score:

- Reverse score questions 5 and 15.  
*(For example, a "No" response should be counted as "Yes" and a "Yes" response should be counted as "No.")*
- Total the number of "yes" responses.

To interpret the score

Chances are that you are experiencing a high degree of distress:

- If you answered "Yes" to either or both questions 4 and 11; or
- If your total "Yes" score = 10 or more; or
- If your score on question 17 is 6 or higher; or
- If your score on question 18 is 6 or higher

Next steps

- Consider seeing a doctor for a check-up for yourself
- Consider having some relief from caregiving (Discuss with the doctor or a social worker the resources available in your community.)
- Consider joining a support group

## Valuable resources for caregivers

Eldercare Locator  
*(a national directory of community services)*  
(800) 677-1116  
[www.eldercare.gov](http://www.eldercare.gov)

Family Caregiver Alliance  
(415) 434-3388  
[www.caregiver.org](http://www.caregiver.org)

Medicare Hotline  
(800) 633-4227  
[www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov)

National Alliance for Caregiving  
(301) 718-8444  
[www.caregiving.org](http://www.caregiving.org)

National Family Caregivers Association  
(800) 896-3650  
[www.nfcares.org](http://www.nfcares.org)

National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities  
(800) 695-0285  
[www.nichcy.org](http://www.nichcy.org)



Visit ARCHIVE for past meeting notes  
[www.wypress.com/care](http://www.wypress.com/care)

Central Oahu Caregivers' Support Group  
PO Box 893711  
Mililani, HI 96789

Pass this along to \_\_\_\_\_

COCGS does not endorse any of these organizations.  
This information is provided for your resource use only.

## ON-LINE RESOURCES FOR CAREGIVERS

### Arthritis Assistance

<http://allaboutarthritis.com>

Information about types of arthritis, pain management, treatment options, FAQs and personal tools.

### Care Giving Community

<http://www.eldersearch.com>

Support for caregivers and information available in your areas. A good site for problem solving and geriatric care.

### Benefits for Seniors

<http://www.benefitcheckup.org>

Service that identifies federal and state assistance for your particular situation.

### Senior Store

<http://www.seniorstore.com>

On-line store includes: clothing, books, video, music and nostalgia. Also featured, household items, gift baskets and more. A unique shopping site.

### Senior Housing Net

<http://www.seniorhousing.net>

A comprehensive guide to retirement communities, assisted living residences, Alzheimer's facilities and nursing homes nationwide.

### Transitions, Inc.

<http://www.asktransitions.com/index.html>

Elder Care consulting - tips and tools, family resources services.

### Administration on Aging

<http://www.aoa.dhhs.gov/aoa/webres/craig.htm>

A directory of web sites on aging.

### The Gerontology Foundation

<http://www.healthandage.com>

Interactive center between the public and the professionals.

### Access America for Seniors

<http://www.seniors.gov>

News magazine reporting on the issues of aging.

### Administration on Aging

<http://www.aoa.gov>

Sites on Adult Day Services, Ageism, Assisted Living and much more.

### Indiana Association for Home Care, Inc.

[http://www.ind-homecare.org/pages/independent\\_living.html](http://www.ind-homecare.org/pages/independent_living.html)

A Guide to Independent Living.

### Administration on Aging

<http://www.aoa.dhhs.gov/elderpage.html>

Extensive information for Older Persons and their families.

### Dr. Koop

<http://www.drkoop.com>

Former Surgeon General provides a medical community on line.

### American Association of Retired Persons

<http://www.aarp.org>

Advice from the nationally-known agency.

### Seniors Site

<http://www.seniors-site.com/index.html>

Message boards for illness, pets, drugs, housing and more.

### Life Extension Foundation

<http://www.lef.org>

Information on medical discoveries and research.

### Meals on Wheels

<http://www.projectmeal.org>

Information on the Meals on Wheels closest to your area.

### Homecare Online

<http://www.nahc.org>

Extensive guide to home care and hospices, advice on how to choose an agency.

### Elder Care Resource

[EldercareHawaii.com](http://EldercareHawaii.com)

Web based information portal— Tries to coordinate timely information and act as a central site for Hawaii-based Care groups.

### Senior Resources

<http://www.seniorresource.com>

Resources by state, retirement, finance, insurance and care.

### National Alliance for Care Giving

<http://www.caregiving.org>

### Care Guide

<http://www.careguide.net>

Personal care giving resource for directories, articles, newsletters, tools and more.

### Age Page

<http://www.agepage.com>

Caregiver's resource guide and lots of information.

### Senior Options

<http://www.senioroptions.com>

Free guide to senior services including living facilities, care centers, home health services, and hospices everywhere in the USA. Listed by state and city.

### Estronaut

[http://www.estronaut.com/a/elderly\\_mental\\_health.htm](http://www.estronaut.com/a/elderly_mental_health.htm)

Mental health concerns in the elderly.

### Web MD

<http://www.webmd.com>

The online doctor is IN.

**Catholic Charities Hawaii—Community Services for Hawaii.**

<http://www.CatholicCharitiesHawaii.org>