



The Nevada Care Connection *Information Portal* encourages project communication and networking, reports on developments, and celebrates success.



The Resource Directory
is available at
www.NevadaCareConnection.org

Silver Sky Assisted Living Residence

A new 90-unit assisted living residential facility for low-income seniors is scheduled to open its doors May, 2006. The facility is located on 5-acres near Summerlin Parkway in Las Vegas close to grocery stores, hospitals, a library and other amenities / services.

Silver Sky is an innovative housing collaboration between Affirmative Investments (Boston, MA), Affordable Housing Resource Council, Nevada HAND, Nevada Model Assisted Living Advisory Committee, State of Nevada's Housing Division in the Department of Business and Industry, City of Las Vegas, UNR Cooperative Extension, Assemblywoman Barbara Buckley, and AARP. Aside from the collaboration, what made this project so unique nationally, was the creative way the project was developed. Senator Harry Reid introduced federal legislation for the transfer of public land which was approved and signed into law by President Bush in 2002 authorizing the

transfer. Financing was secured utilizing private and public sector funds from the low-income housing tax credit program, the low-income housing trust fund, Medicaid service reimbursements, City of Las Vegas HOME funds, and grants from the Federal Home Loan Bank of San Francisco, and Harrah's Entertainment. Monthly rent for a one bedroom unit is \$424 while a two bedroom unit rents for \$530.



Regional Grantee Meeting

June 6, 2006
9:30 a.m. — 2:30 p.m.
Washoe County Central Conference
Room, 1001 E. Ninth Street, Bldg C
Reno, Nevada

Inside this issue:

Silver Sky Assisted Living Residence	1
Veterans Pension Benefit Pilot Study ; Nevada 211; Wellness A to Z; Medicare Part D Update	2-3
Project Partner Announcements	4

Editor's Note: The Sanford Center for Aging / Cooperative Extension will publish Information Portal each quarter during FY 2006. We welcome your feedback and ideas for future issues. Please direct questions or comments to the SCA at 775-784-4774.

Special thanks to Dan Clarke, Claudia Collins, Lisa Dinwiddie, Kathy Jacobs, Paula King, Carol Sala, Cherina Sankey, Patricia Scott, LuAnne Steininger, and Dee Williams who contributed to this edition of Information Portal.

Veterans Pension Benefit Pilot Study

In the late 1990's, Mary Ellen McCarthy, Esq. conducted a demonstration project in rural Nevada for the Administration on Aging (AoA). A key finding of the research was that, "95% of homebound and institutionalized older adults who were eligible for financial assistance from the VA, including money to assist with out-of-pocket costs for medical care, were not aware of their eligibility for VA assistance." **Seventeen years later**, the Sanford Center for Aging at the University of Nevada, Reno, the Washoe County Senior Law Project, and Washoe County Senior Services found that 50% of eligible homebound Veterans (or their survivors) receiving meals through the Washoe County Senior Services nutrition program were also **not aware** of the needs-based pension benefits for which they were entitled.

VA pension benefits are available to low-income Veterans (or their survivors). The Veteran must be permanently and totally disabled, or age

65 and older, served for 90 days or more (active military service) with at least one day served during a period of war, and discharged for reasons other than dishonorable. Pension benefit payments are made to qualified Veterans to bring their total income up to a level set by Congress. For instance, a single Veteran's annual income cannot exceed \$10,579 and a single surviving spouse's annual income cannot exceed \$7,094.

Out-of-pocket medical expenses can be used to reduce income if they exceed 5% of the Maximum Annual Pension Rate (MAPR). That means \$528 for a single Veteran, and \$354 for a single surviving spouse. Applicants are also allowed to reduce their income for premium paid for Medicare Part B.

Given that a very small percentage of Nevada Veterans, their dependents (or their survivors) receive non-service connected pension benefits, the pilot study was designed to determine how many low-income wartime Veterans, their dependents and / or survivors

of Veterans residing in Washoe County and receiving a homebound meal were aware of needs-based pension benefits available from the VA; identify those who may qualify; and assist them with applying for VA pension benefits if they met the VA criteria.

Overall, 78% of the surveyed participants were unaware that a non-service connected pension benefit existed and 89% of those surveyed had not received benefit information from the Department of Veterans Affairs during the preceding 12-months. Researchers were able to secure VA Pension Benefits for 12 participants. The monthly benefits for the participants ranged from \$12 to \$824. For more information regarding the pilot study please contact Lawrence J. Weiss, Ph.D. at (775) 784-4774 or Despina Hatton, Esq. at (775) 328-2592. Pension benefit information is also available on-line at <http://www.vba.va.gov> or by calling 1-800-827-1000.

Nevada 211 Goes Live

In collaboration with the United Way of Southern Nevada, United Way of Northern Nevada and the Sierra, the Crisis Call Center, HELP of Southern Nevada, and other 2-1-1 coalition members, the State of Nevada launched Nevada 2-1-1 on February 13, 2006. Nevada 2-1-1 provides a toll-free, easily remembered and accessible telephone number for Nevadans to call when they are in need of health and human services information. Operators are trained to respond to numerous types of inquiries: basic human services, physical and mental health resources, employment support services, support for seniors and persons with disabilities,

programs for children/youth/families, volunteer opportunities and donations, and support for community crisis or disaster recovery.

Nevada 2-1-1 was initially launched in the Carson City, Las Vegas, Laughlin, and Reno / Tahoe / Sparks areas. The service now includes Ely, Hawthorne, Winnemucca, Pahrump and Mesquite. More locations will be brought on as funding allows. Cellular 2-1-1 is available to Sprint/Nextel and Cingular Wireless Customers. Nevada 2-1-1 operates from 8:00 a.m. to Midnight, Monday - Friday. Hearing and/or speech impaired

individuals can access 2-1-1 by calling 7-1-1. Translational services are also available. According to Kathy Jacobs, Executive Director, Crisis Call Center, "the busiest time of the day is from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. After 8:00 p.m., the calls tend to taper off."

Of the estimated 6,000 calls coming in to 2-1-1, over 50 percent of the telephone calls have come from Nevada's seniors. Elders are calling 2-1-1 on a variety of issues from elder abuse, neglect and exploitation (and other legal issues) to inquiries for personal care assistance, help with care of the home and property, to medical

Continued on Page 3

Wellness A to Z

We begin this new wellness column with the letter "A."

A is for Attitude

Attitude is the single most important factor in almost everything you do. This quote from Charles Swindoll is a good reminder, "The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude in life. Attitude to me, is more important than the past, than education, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness or skill. Attitude will make or break a company....The remarkable thing is, we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past....we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have; and that is our attitude. I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it."

B is for Breathe

Stop right now and notice your breathing pattern. Is it fast and shallow? Now, take a full

deep breath. Breathe in deeply through the nose and exhale slowly through the mouth. Do this again and make an audible noise as you exhale. Take one more full deep breath and notice how you feel. Are you more relaxed? Are you less stressed? Are you more focused? Your breath is a relaxation tool freely available to you. Practice this breath anytime, especially at stoplights.

Red = Stop

Yellow = Notice

Green = Breathe

Enjoy the gift of life.

C is for Change

Wet babies may be the only ones who like change. Change can be scary yet it is an inescapable fact of life. Some changes are natural, like aging through the life cycle, others are sudden and catastrophic and still others involve conscious choice. When change is introduced at the organizational level, it must be managed by teams. If teams are not working, change will not work. Change requires a high level of trust in others and an even higher level of trust in the self. The payoff in managing change successfully encourages

organizations and people to grow and learn. Are you ready to embrace the gift of change?

Residential Tax Rebate for Nevada Seniors

Governor Guinn announced the availability of a 2005 residential tax rebate for eligible Nevada seniors. Individuals interested in applying must do so by April 30, 2006. For more information, please contact Nevada Division for Aging Services at (775) 687-4826 or toll free at 1-866-212-7600.

Nevada 2-1-1 Goes Live

(continued from Page 2)

and mental health needs. Operators are currently using Community Link and Nevada Care Connection (www.NevadaCareConnection.org) resource directories to provide information and referrals to seniors and their caregivers. Eventually, the Nevada 2-1-1 Coalition (comprised of numerous health and human service agencies and nonprofit and private businesses) will be identifying satellite centers throughout Nevada who meet certain criteria and sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). For more information regarding Nevada 2-1-1 please contact Kathy Jacobs at (775) 784-8085, KathyJ@crisiscallcenter.org; or Terrie Stanfill at (702) 369-4357 x 239, tstanfill@helpsonv.org; or John Miller at (702) 892-2368, johnm@uwaysn.org; or visit the Nevada 2-1-1 website at <http://www.nevada211.org/>.

27 Million Medicare Beneficiaries Enrolled in Medicare Part D

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recently announced that 27 million Medicare beneficiaries in the United States have enrolled in the prescription drug coverage plan, Medicare Part D. 1.9 million individuals were added since mid-February to a tune of 380,000 per week. As of March 18, 2006, 206,487 Medicare beneficiaries in Nevada have

been enrolled in the various plans . 85,224 or 41% of Nevada's beneficiaries have signed up for the Medicare Advantage with Prescription Drugs plan. The enrollment deadline is May 15. SHIP counselors are available statewide to answer questions. For more information please call a local senior center or 1-800-307-4444.



Project Partner Announcements

Amargosa Valley Senior Center— Amargosa Days will be held April 29 and 30th. The senior center will be hosting a bake sale at the event and participating in the boat races.

Beatty Senior Center — Is pleased to announce that the local high school's ProStart Club will be catering a picnic in late April or May for the center's volunteers. The high school students involved in ProStart are those interested in the field of catering, chef, and the food service industry.

Central Christian Church — Dee Williams, Program Director for Encouragement Ministries will be taking over for Mike Shelton on the NVCC project. Ms. Williams has been with Central Christian Church since 1999 working in a variety of capacities. More recently, Ms. Williams was the Director of Visitation Ministries. She can be reached at (702) 440-8417.

Clark County Senior Advocate Program — Mike Aupperle and Edward McGlynn have joined the Senior Advocate program on a part-time basis. Both employees have completed the Medicare 101 training and will be working with seniors to answer their questions about Medicare Part D.

The Senior Advocate Office has four senior fairs scheduled:

April 20: West Flamingo Senior Center; **May 8:** Culinary Union; **May 18:** Cora Coleman Senior Center; and **June 8:** Cambridge Recreation Center. For more information, please contact Cherina Sankey at (702) 455-7066.

Cornerstone Care Consultants — Formerly Cornerstone Health Management is now under the sole direction of Lisa Dinwiddie, RN, MS, Owner. Cornerstone has stepped up NVCC promotion by advertising in the Elko Daily Free Press and the Elko Chamber of Commerce newsletter. Initiatives are also under way to increase local resources in the www.NevadaCareConnection.org directory.

Division for Aging Services — Congratulations to Marcia Cuccaro, Resource Development Unit Manager who retired in March after 30 years of dedicated service.

Sanford Center for Aging / Cooperative Extension (University of Nevada, Reno) — Welcomes LuAnne Steininger, SCA Wellness Coordinator to the NVCC team who assisted with an aggressive training calendar. Ms. Steininger brings to the position almost 20 years experience working with seniors. She will also be contributing a *Wellness from A to Z* column in the quarterly *Information Portal* newsletter.



The University of Nevada Cooperative Extension has moved their offices. UNCE is now located at 8050 S. Maryland Parkway, #100, Las Vegas, Nevada, 89123. Telephone: (702) 257-5531; Fax: (702) 222-3100.

Through April 4th, 15 NVCC *Instructor Training Manual* orientations have been completed representing 394 contact hours.

Two trainings remain at Home Health Services of Nevada in Las Vegas and Pahrump.

For more information regarding trainings or CEUs, please contact the Sanford Center for Aging at (775) 784-4774.

The Continuum — Is offering a Caregiver's Hands-on Workshop on April, 20th from 5:30—8:30 p.m. at The Continuum, 3700 Grant Drive, Suite A, Reno. The workshop is for family, friends, and paid caregivers who are providing or are planning to provide direct care for a senior. For more information, please contact Diane Ross at (775) 829-4700.

Tonopah Senior Center— Linda Grant was recently hired as the new senior center site manager.

United Seniors, Inc.— Is pleased to announce that a new volunteer has joined their senior center. Terry Thomas is from Preston, Idaho and has been coming to the Moapa Valley for the past several years. She is also an RSVP volunteer.

Washoe County Senior Services — Is offering a Senior Health Fair in celebration of Older Americans Month. The health fair is scheduled for May 25th, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Washoe County Senior Center, 1155 E. Ninth Street, Reno. This year's theme is Independence + Dignity + Choice = Healthy Aging.

Total Washoe County Senior Connections kiosk visits plus City of Reno tourism kiosk visits for seniors through February, 2006 was 7,195.