

Happy New Year!

by Gregg Schomaker

Here is to a happy and healthy 2010, to all of the consumers we serve across the great State of Alaska!

Consumer Direct is excited and looking forward to a new year of assisting you in maintaining your quality of life with consumer-directed services. Before we look forward to the New Year lets reflect on some of our experiences from 2009.

We all prepared for a major eruption from Mount Redoubt that never lived up to the hype. One thing it did teach us is the fact that we need to be ready for emergencies living here in Alaska. This includes making sure we have an effective Back-up Plan in place in case your scheduled caregiver is late, or you are on your own for an extended period of time.

Another aspect of being prepared



is maintaining an emergency response kit in your home so you have essential items at your disposal if needed.

In July, the State of Alaska Senior and Disability Services (SDS) was placed under a moratorium by the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) pending a review to ensure that there is a

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Be Prepared For Disasters

Just a reminder to be prepared for a disaster **BEFORE** one occurs.

At home: Prepare to be isolated and without power for at least three to five days. Keep two week's worth of needed medications on hand.

Stock up on extra canned goods, dried foods, drinks, first-aid supplies and a manual can opener. Keep two gallons of water (per person) on hand for drinking and washing.

Keep a portable radio, flashlights, and extra batteries on hand. Keep some extra cash in a fireproof safe or money box.

Your vehicles: Keep gas tanks filled, your cell phone adapter, a GPS and adapter for it in the glove box. Dress warmly, wear your seat belts.

Keep an emergency kit with everything needed to survive a winter night; firstaid kit, blankets, food, flashlight, lighter, matches, sterno cans and refillable water bottles.

Include a toolbox with tools, a small shovel, road flares, tire chains and rock salt or kitty litter if you get stuck..

Remember, if your residence is destroyed in a fire or earthquake, your car or RV may become your temporary home.

Emergency Contacts: family members should know who to contact in case they are separated from each other in a disaster, such as relatives in another state.

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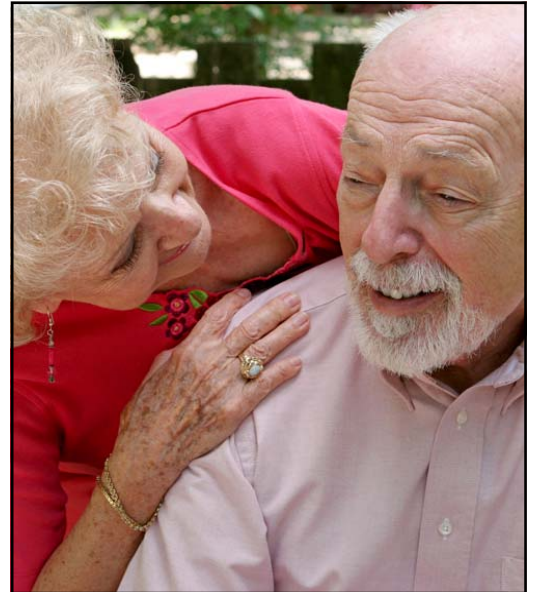
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Alzheimer's

Conquering Communication Challenges

It can be very difficult to know how to communicate effectively with a parent or relative who has Alzheimer's disease. Here's some advice from experts quoted in the Harvard Health Letter:

- **Don't shout.** Hearing is not the problem. Speak in a calm tone of voice.
- **Include the person in conversation.** People in the early stages of the disease complain that others talk about them as if they aren't there.
- **Use simple words.** Avoid too many pronouns: He, she. Use names instead.
- **Use leading statements rather than open-ended questions.** Ask if he would like a cup of coffee, for example, instead of asking what he would like to drink.
- **Make eye contact, touch, and be conscious of body language.** Nonverbal cues become increasingly important as the disease progresses.
- **Say things that express positive emotions.** As you leave, for example, say you enjoyed the visit so much.
- **Make the most of the last word.** Sufferers often latch on to the last word in a statement, probably because it's the easiest to remember. Ask which he wants to wear, red or blue. He will say "blue." It makes him feel as though he has decided for himself.
- **Don't make him wait.** A shortened attention span can make waiting even a few minutes a trying time. Often problems with grooming or eating are the result of waiting for a caregiver to get organized, not the activity itself.



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viable, well managed, long term care system in Alaska. Under the moratorium, new enrollees for Personal Care Services and Waiver programs were put on hold.

This resulted in undue stress on families and individuals who were in the process of getting the necessary care that they needed to remain in their homes. In late August the moratorium was lifted by CMS and Senior and Disability Services is still working with CMS on the corrective action plan to maintain the standards which CMS requires.

Because the corrective action plan was designed by SDS, they will be looking for feedback from consumers who utilize those services. Consumer Direct will be scheduling three Consumer Advisory Group meetings throughout 2010 to give updates on the status of the corrective action plan, and to provide a forum for our consumers to voice opinions on those proposed changes.

Please contact us if you are interested in joining the Consumer Advisory Group!

We would love to have you join!

In December, we held our first voluntary training course for caregivers by offering a Stress Relief class in the Anchorage office. The training was conducted by Heidi Davis, Vice President, out of our Montana office. In 2010 we plan on scheduling four voluntary trainings with guest speakers for caregivers.

Please keep an eye out for notices throughout the year. For now the trainings will be held in the Anchorage office, but this could be offered at the other offices, depending on interest. You will be paid the training wage for attending a session.

Thank you again for choosing Consumer Direct. We wish you the best in 2010!

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Wanted: Nominees for Caregiver of the Quarter!

Do you have an exceptional caregiver? Do you know a great caregiver? If so, we'd like to reward their excellence. Let us know about these generous people by nominating them for the Consumer Direct "Caregiver of the Quarter." Each quarter Consumer Direct will honor two special caregivers with this award and a \$25 gift certificate. At the end of the year we will also honor one of these quarterly winners as "Caregiver of the Year". Fax, mail, or phone in nominations to the Consumer Direct office.



Advisory Committee Volunteers Needed

Members attend meetings, comment on quality of services and give input about Consumer Direct's service, processes, and procedures. If you are interested, please let your Program Coordinator know. We guarantee some fun during the meeting and believe, that by participating, you will help shape the future of Alaska's home care.

Changes in Address, Phone # or Deposits?

Please, remember to contact our office as soon as possible if your mailing address or phone number has changed.

Assistants: Pay checks are picked up or mailed on Friday. If we do not have a new address at that time delivery will be delayed! If you have direct deposit and change banks or account numbers let us know immediately!

Safety in the Home

House Fire and Burn Prevention

Smoke alarms can be life savers ... if they are working!

- ◆ Install one outside of each sleeping area. If you can, connect all alarms so they will go off at the same time. Test smoke alarms once a month and replace them every 10 years.
- ◆ Design a fire escape plan that has at least two ways out of every room. Practice the plan with your family.
- ◆ When the smoke alarm sounds, get out of the house and stay out!

Hot foods are common causes of burns.

- ◆ Keep hot foods and liquids away from counter edges. Watch for kids before you carry a hot dish to the table.
- ◆ Keep pan handles pointed away from the floor to avoid spilling their hot contents on someone.

Scalds from hot bath water can cause severe burns.

- ◆ Set the water heater thermostat at 120 degrees or less.
- ◆ Always test the water temperature with your wrist, elbow or back of your hand before bathing.

Cooking is the leading cause of fires, often because a person leaves the room.

- ◆ Turn fast-cooking foods off when answering the door or telephone and when you have to go to another room for a time.
- ◆ When simmering, boiling, baking or roasting food, check it regularly. Don't leave, set a timer.

The heat is on!

- ◆ Use a fireplace screen or keep the door closed on a wood stove to keep sparks inside. Have the chimney cleaned and the central heating system inspected.
- ◆ Turn portable space heaters off when you will go to bed or spend time in another room. Be sure there are no curtains, paper, furniture or other combustibles within three feet of the heater.





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Four Easy Steps For Getting Paid on Time

1. Timesheets are due in your local office by midnight on Monday. Any timesheets that are turned in after midnight on Monday will be marked "late" and may not make payroll in time.
2. Always check tasks against the sample provided by Consumer Direct Personal Care. Make sure all tasks on your timesheet are authorized on your consumers service plan.
3. If you don't have direct deposit this would be a good time to sign up. With direct deposit your money is deposited straight into your bank account. If you have a pay issue it is easier to resolve. It does not have to be a checking account, it can also be a savings account.
4. When you are sending someone to pick up your check we need to have written permission from you. The person picking up your check will need to show proof of ID when they come in.

