Health Mentors Newsletter

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Dear Health Mentors,

I hope you are all enjoying a happy and healthy start to 2010. As we head into this Spring, our students are looking forward to meeting with you again and to addressing important issues related to chronic conditions and disabilities and to person-centered care, including Wellness Planning (for the first year students) and Medication Review (for the second year students). Please see page 2 for a more detailed description of each of these upcoming visits.

We hope that you will continue to enjoy your experience as a Health Mentor this Spring, and we thank you for your ongoing participation in this important educational program. Best wishes for a great 2010!

Sincerely, Laurie Collins, MD

Health Mentor Voice

"I have been a health mentor for a few years now. I love interacting with the students from different backgrounds. It is a really nice program and we learn a lot about one another. The programs allows me to attend other outings other than just with my church and family."

Alberta Felder, Health Mentor

"Being a Health Mentor for me is quite rewarding in that I feel that I am giving something to the future. These students will be dealing with even more seniors as the nation ages. Perhaps, in some small way I can instill in a young mind some experience that one day may be useful in dealing with some other senior somewhere."

Vincent Novelli, Health Mentor

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What are Health Mentor Students Doing?:

Year One

Module #2: Preparing a Wellness Plan

For this visit, students will actively evaluate your health and wellness. Students will ask you questions regarding many aspects of wellness (physical, spiritual, nutritional, social, environmental, etc) and will work with you to develop a Wellness Plan for making or continuing positive changes for a more balanced life.

Year Two

Module #4: Appropriate Use of Drugs, Herbals, and Vitamins

For this visit, students will ask you about any changes in your health over the last year, including improvements and/or setbacks, and will also discuss how and why you are taking each of your medications and over-the-counter supplements. By discussing your medications in detail with you, students will gain a better sense of the real-life challenges (financial, logistic, cultural, etc) of taking a prescribed medication regimen.

Staying Safe: Tips for safe Medication Use

By: Bob Sorokanich Second Year Medical

Prescription and non-prescription medications ca be an integral part of modern medicine. However, many of today's drugs can have serious consequences if used improperly. Safe medication use can maximize your benefits and minimize your side effects. Here are some tips on how you and your health care provider can work together to keep you safe.

Write down your medications, including name, dose, how often you take it, and what it is for. The AARP recommends that you make 3 copies: one to carry with you, one for a loved one, and one to keep at home. Use the medication card at the opposite side of the this page as a guide.

Tell your doctor and pharmacist **everything you take** – prescriptions,

over-the-counter medications, vitamins, and dietary or herbal supplements. Your health care providers need to know everything you take in order to keep you safe.

Ask your doctor or pharmacist about **drug interactions**. Many prescription and over the-counter drugs can interfere with

<u>Medications</u>			
Medications Name	Dose	Time Taken	

their reach.

side effects. Your doctor or pharmacist can help you avoid interactions by changing when or how often you take certain drugs.

Whenever you get a new medication, read the entire label. Many medications have particular requirements or when you take them (morning, evening, bedtime) and whether you take them with food, water, or on an empty stomach.

Know the potential side effects

of your medications. All prescription and non prescription drugs can have side effects. Knowing what to expect will help you recognize side effects if they occur. Many times, a change in dose can eliminate side effects while still providing therapy.

Consider using a **pill box**. These have a place for each day's pills, which helps you avoid forgetting your medications. Some pill boxes even have multiple spots for each day, helping you organize your pills according to when you take them – morning, noon, night, or bedtime.

Know why you are taking each medication. Certain drugs can be used to treat more than one condition, so it's important that you know what each medication is targeting. Watch expiration dates and throw out all expired medications. Prescription and non-prescription drugs alike contain a delicate balance of active ingredients, and out-of-date medications can lose potency or even go bad.

Use caution with over-the-counter (OTC) medications. While they are available without a prescription, OTC drugs still contain powerful medicines. According to the

National Council on Patient Information and Education, many OTC medications contain the same active ingredients, and combining OTCs can lead to an accidental overdose.

Keep your medications in a safe place. The FDA recommends all medicine be stored in a cool, dry place. If there are children or pets around, keep your medications far out of

Don't hesitate to ask your doctor or pharmacist any questions. The best way to be safe is to be informed. Remember, your health care professionals are here to help you.

Resources for Healthy and Safe Living

By: Grace Fried
First Year Medical Student
& Kanani Titchen
Second Year Medical Student

Earlier this winter, the second year
Jefferson health care students visited our
Health Mentors to conduct home safety
assessments. We felt that some follow-up
would be beneficial all around — allowing
our mentors to tap into the resources they
need and allowing us, the students, to be of
some tangible help to you who give so
generously of your time. Here are some of
the ideas and low cost or free resources we
compiled as a follow-up to our assignment to
help improve home safety and general health
for senior and for those living with a chronic
condition or disability:

Create a Birthday or Holiday wishlist for your friends and family.

We all have received lovely but unneeded items as gifts; wouldn't it be great if our family and friends knew exactly what we needed when they were shopping for gifts for the holidays or for our birthdays? Post your wishlist to your fridge or e-mail it out so that friends and family have an easier time showing how they appreciate you!

Create a common wishlist in your senior living home, and post it in a public space. One man's trash is another man's treasure. Who knows what gems you may have lying around that someone else needs?

Resources PCAcares:

Philadelphia Corporation for the Aging healthcare, living assistance, housing, transportation, social services, nutrition/meals, finances, insurance, etc. see http://www.pcacares.org for a full listing or call 215-765-9040.

Senior Housing Assistance Repair Program (SHARP)

Completes minor repairs and modifications for homeowners age 60 and older. Includes bathroom modifications; installing wrought iron railings; fixing doors; steps, locks, and leaking faucets; installing smoke alarms; and repairing or replacing stair railings. To apply, call the PCA Helpline at 215-765-9040.

Free Eye Exams:

from The Foundation of the American College of Ophthalmology

http://www.eyecareamerica.org/eyecare/care/Eligibility:

- •Senior Care (Age 65 and over) 1-800-222-EYES
- •Diabetes Eye Care Program 1-800-272-EYES
- •US citizens, without other health insurance, call for more details.

List of Senior Centers by County:

• http://www.paseniorcenters.org/communitycounty/index.htm

Utilities Assistance:

 http://www.puc.state.pa.us/general/ consumer ed/energy asst progs.aspx

Free and Reduced Price Dental Clinics in Philadelphia:

- www.padental.org Click on "Free and Reduced Price Dental Clinics" on the left side navigation bar
- Emergency Assistance for Seniors in Winter (Food, shelter, medicine, fuel) www.keepseniorswarm.org

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