

# Caregiver E-Visit

May 2017

## Medical Care Decisions

The alarm rang this morning just as Richard was finally getting to sleep. Richard, a 78-year-old gentleman, cares for his wife Mary, who has Parkinson's Disease, dementia, diabetes, and heart disease. Richard has been sleeping poorly lately. He has many concerns weighing on his thoughts, and sometimes he wakes up with pains in his belly.

Richard sits up and goes over today's schedule in his mind: help Mary bathe and dress; give her breakfast (make sure that all her medications are given at just the right time, before or after eating); help her get into the car; and have her at the clinic for lab tests and a routine check-up by 8:30 a.m. After that, there will be medications to pick up from the pharmacy, including any new prescriptions the physician might add. After lunch, they will head to Milwaukee for a check-up with Mary's cardiologist.

Richard's grandson invited him

to play a little golf today, but that plan will have to wait - again!

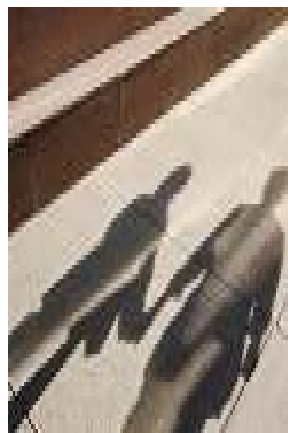
Last week Mary fell at home and was taken to the Emergency Dept. Six hours and

multiple tests later, she and Richard returned home exhausted. Good news: no broken bones found.

Bad news: Mary was very weak and stiff after missing a dose of medication. Hospital staff said she would be OK taking it later, but it was Richard who struggled to help her into the house without another fall. His back still feels uncomfortable from the ordeal.



Continued page 2



**For more information or if you wish to make comments on this E-Visit, contact Marilyn Joyce 262-833-8764 or email [marilyn.joyce@racinecounty.com](mailto:marilyn.joyce@racinecounty.com)**

### Inside Story Headline

Today was another health care odyssey. After supper and evening chores, Richard falls into bed thinking, “There must be a better way.”

At a Caregiver Support Group someone had said that one of the most important medical team members is the family caregiver. Other attendees suggested:

- making a list of concerns to address with a medical professional
- taking someone else along to be an extra listener and note-taker.
- Some caregivers reported that they had helpful conversations with other medical professionals, too e.g. pharmacist, nurse practitioner, physical therapist, or social worker.

Richard thinks back to discussions he and Mary have had over the years regarding what’s most important in life. He asks himself, “Would she want to be whisked off to a hospital or would she want to leave this Earthly life surrounded by the touch and sound of her family? Are we both spending too much energy and time on a medical merry-go-round here? He decides to ask his daughter to accompany him to Mary’s primary physician to discuss how her medical care can be simplified while maintaining her quality of life and preserving his own health.

Now that he has made a plan, Richard feels that he can sleep better tonight.

Next month we’ll look at changes that may be made in certain situations. Meanwhile, if you feel stress in the pit of your belly, don’t let it just sit there like a swallowed bowling ball - talk with someone! Remember that you are an important part of your loved one’s care team, and you can insist that your concerns be addressed satisfactorily.



## I'm no techie but...

Here are a couple of tips from helpful caregivers:

- Stationary cameras with matching smartphone apps can be purchased reasonably at electronic stores and online. A camera can be placed in a spot where you can check on your care receiver's safety from another location. Caregivers report that this greatly adds to their peace of mind, whether they are running an errand, attending a support group, or
- just having a brief respite in another room.
- TV remotes can be frustrating to someone who has memory problems or impaired dexterity, as well as their family. Several caregivers have found "kids' remotes" to be helpful. They feature simplified choices as well as large buttons.



## Stepping On Class

Sealed Air  
YMCA

Wednesdays  
starting June  
7<sup>th</sup> 1-3 p.m.

Contact  
Elizabeth for  
More info

**262-833-8762**

## Caregiver Training Opportunities

*The Alzheimer's Association has a number of programs coming to our area including:*

### Understanding Dementia

An Educational Program for Family Caregivers  
Three Sessions - May 16th, 23rd, and 30th  
10:00 am to Noon  
Racine Gateway Technical College  
901 Pershing Dr Racine

Presented by Jennifer Harders

Community Outreach  
Coordinator

To register Contact  
Deborah Klement  
**800-272-3900**

See the flyer on the ADRC website or go to the Alzheimer's Association Website at <http://www.alz.org/sewi/>

Check out their other opportunities as well.



AGING AND  
DISABILITY  
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## Support Groups for Family Caregivers

For caregivers who are over 60 or are caring for someone over 60 and caregivers (of any age) for people who have dementia. Contact: Marilyn Joyce, 833-8764, or [marilyn.joyce@racinecounty.com](mailto:marilyn.joyce@racinecounty.com)

Sometimes we are able to make reminder calls to former attendees about an upcoming Support Group. However, this is not always possible. These groups nearly always happen at the scheduled time and place. If you haven't gotten a call, and you have doubts, please call 262-833-8764 or 262-833-8777. See you there!!

### General Caregiver Groups

#### First Friday

12 Noon-1:00 pm

Caregiver Connection

Telephone Group

Call 833-8762 for call-in

Information

**May 5 June 2 July 7**

#### Second Tuesday

1:30-3:00 pm

Yorkville United Methodist  
Church

17645 Old Yorkville Rd

(Just off of Highway 20, 3 miles  
West of I-94)

**May 9 June 13 July 11**

#### Second Saturday

10:30 am- 12:00 Noon

Atonement Lutheran Church

2915 Wright Ave, Racine

**May 13 June 10 July 8**

#### Third Wednesday

1:30-3:00 pm

Burlington Senior Center

209 N. Main St, Burlington

Eppers Room

**May 17 June 21 July 19**

### Alzheimer's Association Support Groups:

*For families dealing with any  
type of dementia*

#### First Thursday

10:30 am - 12 Noon

Bethania Lutheran Church

4120 Wright Ave, Racine

(Park and enter in the back of the  
building)

**May 4 June 1 July 6**

#### Second Thursday

6:00 – 7:30 PM

Bethania Lutheran Church

4120 Wright Ave, Racine

(Park and enter in the back of  
building)

**May 11 June 8 July 13**

