

A Partnership in Care for Those with Memory Loss and Their Care Partners

Joanne Maher, Director of Social Services, Alzheimer's Association, Western and Central Washington State Chapter

Are you caring for someone with memory loss and live in King County?

If so, consider exploring a partnership in care offered by the Alzheimer's Association and ElderHealth Northwest, funded through the **King County Dementia Partnerships Project (DPP)**.

The project was created in response to the impact of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias on individuals, their family members, businesses and the health care system. Seventy percent of those with Alzheimer's disease live at home, largely due to the support they receive from family and friends.



The Numbers Speak for Themselves

In Washington State alone, 110,000 individuals have Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia, and 204,000 family members, friends and neighbors provided unpaid care. These numbers are expected to double by the year 2025.

Relieving Caregiver Stress, Providing Respite

Caring for a person with dementia, while usually done willingly and having its rewards, is challenging. National surveys report that more than 40% of such caregivers report a high or very high level of emotional distress.

Caregiver stress, particularly related to the behavioral symptoms of the person with dementia, is often associated with placement in a nursing home. It is also linked with slow wound healing, decreased immune function, hypertension, and coronary heart disease in caregivers.

The goal of DPP was not to create a new, stand-alone dementia system but instead to develop responsive dementia-capable services that could be integrated into the larger system of support for both the individual with dementia and those that care for them.

The Partnership offers two broad and complementary components:

- **Care Consultation** through the Alzheimer's Association, and
- **Memory Care and Wellness Services** through ElderHealth (which you read about in the March 2010 *Senior Digest*).

Family Care Consultation Benefits Persons with Memory Loss and Their Care Partners

The Alzheimer's Association Care Consultation is *free of charge*, offered through visits in your home or our offices, and includes:

- Family and care partner support consultation
- Assessment of care needs
- Education and ongoing support
- Individualized care plans
- Coordination of services
- Community resources - information and referral

ElderHealth's Memory Care and Wellness Services is an enhanced adult day program, providing specialized services in a safe, social and therapeutic environment. The ElderHealth's Memory Care and Wellness Services as part of the DPP are offered at their Ravenna and Columbia City locations and are tailored to the needs of persons with moderate-to-severe dementia. Services include a fitness program, and health assessment and planning, in addition to the family caregiver support provided by the Alzheimer's Association. *For more information on ElderHealth's services, see article reprint below.*

To learn about enrollment in this project, call:

- The Alzheimer's Association at (206) 363-5500 and ask for **Helpline**
- Visit our website at www.alzwa.org for resources and information
- ElderHealth Northwest at (206) 528-5315 – services are provided on an sliding scale and may be free of charge

We're on the MOVE to end Alzheimer's.

Memory Walk 2010. Each year our Chapter sponsors four Memory Walks across Western Washington. Our programs and services are offered **free of charge** to individuals and families affected by Alzheimer's and related dementias, funded in large part by generous donations. These four Memory Walks are our largest awareness building and fundraising events of the year. Please consider forming a Memory Walk team today. Each Memory Walk is a celebration, family- and dog-friendly, and filled with hope and purpose. The **Pacific Northwest (Seattle) Memory Walk** will be held at Seattle Center on **September 11, 2010**. Visit our website at www.alzwa.org for more information.

Memory Care and Wellness Services Expands to Second Location

Senior Digest March 2010 <http://www.poststat.net/pwp008/pub.49/issue.1293/article.5356/>

Helps Persons with Memory Loss and Family Caregivers

As a professional with a career spanning over 30 years at ElderHealth Northwest, Executive Director Nora Gibson is finely-tuned to the needs of her own aging parents. After noticing a decline in the physical strength and short term memory of her 83 year-old mother, Nora Gibson helped her enroll in ElderHealth's Memory Care and Wellness Services.



Funded through the King County Dementia Partnerships Project (DPP), Memory Care and Wellness Services is an enhanced adult day program which provides specialized services in a safe, social and therapeutic environment. Services are tailored to the needs of persons with moderate-to-severe dementia.

"The program is perfect for my mother," Nora says. "The professionally supervised exercises cover a range of balance, strength training and aerobic exercises, and other activities focus on cognitive stimulation. She loves having lunch with people who have rapidly become new friends. She has so much fun that she raved about the program to her physician, who is recommending it to other doctors in the practice. Plus, my dad gets a break and she has much to talk about when she returns home."

Originally based at a South Seattle location, the program recently expanded to a second site in North Seattle. Both locations are enrolling new participants, with most attending the program two or three times a week.

Family Care Consultation Helps Persons with Memory Loss and Family Caregivers

The Alzheimer's Association is another member of the DPP partnership and offers care consultations to strengthen the family's ability to manage the challenges of caring for a person with dementia. Trained professionals assess family and individual care needs, screen for safety, develop individualized care plans, and coordinate services. Consultations are available in the home or at the Alzheimer's Association office.

Services Are Great Benefit to Caregivers and Loved Ones

Diane Kaczmarcyk, an occupational therapist at ElderHealth, has worked with the partnership for several years and notes that persons with dementia and their caregivers derive great benefit. She says, "Beyond getting the resources they need, it can also be the first time that caregivers can get any TLC. With the time they have

available while their loved one is at Memory Care and Wellness Services, they can take care of themselves. And the exercises we use in the program help persons with memory loss retain physical function, which is a huge help to a full-time caregiver."

Memory Care and Wellness Services incorporates an independent evaluation of the program's effectiveness, conducted by the University of Washington's Northwest Research Group on Aging and led by Dr. Rebecca Logsdon.

Families may learn about enrollment in this project by calling:

- Memory Care & Wellness Services, ElderHealth Northwest
(206) 528-5315
- Care Consultation, Alzheimer's Association
(206) 363-5500
- Dementia Partnerships Project
Carlos Pulido, Aging and Disability Services
(206) 615-0802

Family members may also learn about other community-based options if they are unable to participate in the partnership's services.