

AGING HORIZONS



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AGING PERSPECTIVES:

November is National Family Caregivers Month



What is Family Caregiving?

As life expectancies increase, medical treatments advance, and increasing numbers of people live with chronic illness and disabilities, more and more of us find ourselves caring for a loved one at home. Whether you're taking care of an aging parent, a spouse with a disability, or looking after a child with a physical or mental illness, providing care for a family member in need is an act of kindness, love, and loyalty. Day after day, you gift your loved one with your care and attention, improving their quality of life, even if they're unable to express their gratitude.

Regardless of your particular circumstances, being a family caregiver is a challenging role and likely one that you haven't been trained to undertake. And like many family caregivers, you probably never anticipated this situation. However, you don't have to be a nursing expert, a superhero, or a saint in order to be a good family caregiver. With the right help and support, you can be an effective, loving caregiver without having to sacrifice

yourself in the process. And that can make family caregiving a more rewarding experience—for both you and your loved one. These tips can help you get the support you need while caring for someone you love in way that can benefit both of you.

New to Family Caregiving?

Learn as much as you can about your family member's illness or disability and how to care for it. The more you know, the less anxiety you'll feel about your new role and the more effective you'll be.

Seek out other caregivers. It helps to know you're not alone. It's comforting to give and receive support from others who understand exactly what you're going through.

Trust your instincts. Remember, you know your family member best. Don't ignore what doctors and specialists tell you, but listen to your gut, too.

Encourage your loved one's independence. Caregiving does not mean doing everything for your loved one. Be open to technologies and strategies that allow your family member to remain as independent as possible.

Know your limits. Be realistic about how much of your time and yourself you can give. Set clear limits, and communicate those limits to doctors, family members, and other people involved. www.caregiveractionnetwork.org





Celebrated every November, National Family Caregivers Month (NFCM) is a time to recognize and honor family caregivers across the country. It offers an opportunity to raise awareness of caregiving issues, educate communities, and increase support for caregivers.

The national observance is spearheaded by Caregiver Action Network (CAN), a nonprofit that provides free education, peer support, and resources to family caregivers. CAN announced the 2020 theme, #CaregivingInCrisis, highlighting new realities that family caregivers and their loved ones face during these uncertain times.

ACL Efforts in Support of Caregivers

Families are the primary source of support for older adults and people with disabilities in the U.S.

Many caregivers work and also provide care, experiencing conflicts between competing responsibilities. Research indicates caregiving also takes a significant emotional, physical, and financial toll. With nearly half of all caregivers over age 50, many are vulnerable to a decline in their own health. Studies show that coordinated support services can reduce caregiver depression, anxiety, and stress, and enable them to provide care longer, which avoids or delays the need for costly institutional care.

<https://acl.gov/news-and-events/downloads-and-multimedia/NFCM>

- **#RAISEcaregiving** (ACL's official tag for RAISE activities)
- **#CaregivingInCrisis** (CAN's 2020 observance)
- **#NFCMonth** (Annual observance hashtag)
- **#FamilyCaregiver** (A larger conversation on family caregiving)
- **#Caregivers** (Broadest conversation around caregiving)



10 TIPS FOR FAMILY CAREGIVERS



Seek support from other caregivers. You are not alone!



Take care of your own health so that you can be strong enough to take care of your loved one.



Accept offers of help and suggest specific things people can do to help you.



Learn how to communicate effectively with doctors.

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Be open to new technologies that can help you care for your loved one.



Watch out for signs of depression and don't delay getting professional help when you need it.



Caregiving is hard work so take respite breaks often.

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Organize medical information so it's up to date and easy to find.



Make sure legal documents are in order.



Give yourself credit for doing the best you can in one of the toughest jobs there is!

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CaregiverAction.org

Caregiver Issues & Strategies

Whether you're trying to work out a care plan for your aging parents with your siblings or searching online for the latest app to assist you with your ill spouse's medication reminders, Family Caregiver Alliance's resources on *Caregiving Issues and Strategies* offer a wealth of information. This section provides you with practical care strategies, stress relief, available community resources, how to handle family issues, as well as hands-on care.



- [Advanced Illness](#)
- [Apps, Digital Tools & More](#)
- [Assessment](#)
- [Assisted Living](#)
- [Assistive Technology](#)
- [Behavior Management Strategies](#)
- [Caregiver Health](#)
- [Caregiver Wisdom](#)
- [Clinical Studies & Research](#)
- [Diversity & Cultural Issues](#)
- [Health care](#)
- [Home and Community Based Services \(HCBS\)](#)
- [Home Away From Home: Relocating Your Parents](#)
- [In-Home Help](#)
- [Legal Issues](#)
- [Legislation: Healthcare, Insurance](#)
- [LGBTQ](#)
- [Long Term Care \(LTC\)](#)
- [Long-Distance Caregiving](#)
- [Palliative/Supportive Care](#)
- [Respite for Caregivers](#)
- [Talking to Doctors](#)
- [Veterans](#)
- [Vision Loss](#)
- [Work and Eldercare](#)
- [Working with Siblings](#)
- [Young Children and Teens](#)

<https://www.caregiver.org/caregiving-issues-and-strategies>

Its National Family Caregivers Month – Reach Out!



*It's OK to need it,
it's OK to want it, and it's OK to get it!*
www.respite.mt.gov

RESPITE CARE - GET A BOOST!

Planned or Emergency Temporary Care



Some of The Best Apps for Caregivers



If you have a smartphone, you probably know what apps are — but did you know *they can actually help to make caregiving more manageable*? A smartphone is like having a mini-computer with you at all times — and the best caregiving apps help manage the many aspects of care that barrage and overwhelm most caregivers on any given day. Caregiving apps can help you maintain and update important information, get appointment and medication reminders, keep a log of activities, coordinate various caregivers, jot down notes from doctors or other care providers, and stay in touch with and pass on updates and photos to family and friends. The world of caregiving apps is growing, and it needs to. Caregivers need every tool at hand to manage all that caregiving throws at you.

CaringBridge

CaringBridge is just that — a bridge that allows you and your loved ones to stay in touch. It's a perfect app for a family that rallies around a loved one in need of care, and for those who are facing surgeries, rehabilitation, and procedures that go along with conditions such as cancer, heart disease, or diabetes. The app offers a space for multiple caregivers and family members to share pertinent information, such as updates, encouragement, and arranging care. There's a guest book offering a place for journal entries, medical updates, photos, stories, and tributes. This is a wonderful addition to caregiver apps and unique in that it creates a place for more than managing a loved one's care — you can uplift, stay in the loop and help each other through a difficult time.

What's Great About CaringBridge: CaringBridge specializes in keeping loved ones connected. By focusing on this important goal, the app's designers have created a product that not only passes along information but is also a holding place for good thoughts, encouragement, and photos as well as medical and caregiving updates. These features make CaringBridge a uniquely thoughtful and comprehensive tool.

Lotsa Helping Hands

Lotsa Helping Hands is a caregiving app that helps you create a community of care around your loved one. You can invite family, friends, volunteers, and care aides to join and then manage everything from sitters and errands to appointments and family gatherings using an interactive calendar. There's also a section of the app called "Helping Hands," which serves as a message board and a well-wishes wall where caregivers, family, and friends can leave messages of encouragement for the person receiving care or for someone else in the care circle. This app lets you choose a coordinator and a community member page where you can update contact information, birthdates, and list the best times to call. These features make Lotsa Helping Hands a good resource for creating a vibrant care community.

What's Great About Lotsa Helping Hands: Lotsa Helping Hands has much to offer caregivers and their loved ones. The webpage offers real support, stories from other caregivers, a newsletter, and additional features that complement the app.

Caring Village

The **Caring Village** app is designed specifically for family caregivers to help them easily coordinate and keep track of their loved one's care. Caring Village CEO and Co-founder Mike Behrman says he was inspired to launch the app after he and his wife became caregivers for his mother-in-law, who has dementia. "We realized that the most important thing we needed to do was communicate effectively with other family members, her care professionals and neighbors," he said in a news release.

The app is meant to enable family caregivers to do just that via a secure messaging system where users can create "villages" among friends and relatives to help coordinate the specifics of a loved one's care. Caring Village users can create customizable care plans for their loved ones plus personalized to-do lists. The app's features also include a centralized calendar, document storage, a place to list medications, and a wellness journal that allows you to share entries with the rest of your "village."

What's Great About Caring Village: Reviewers say the app is easy to use and gives them peace of mind about staying on top of their loved one's care plan. As AARP's Anne Marie Kilgallon was quoted as saying in a Tech Crunch article earlier this year, "[Caring Village is] all about the connection between family, care givers and care recipients."

CareZone

CareZone is another great, free care-based app. You can keep all of your loved one's pertinent information on the secured app and invite family and friends to view and participate in his or her care. It has a place for notes and observations, a task list, medication logging (including pharmacy numbers, dosing, prescribing physicians, etc.), a place to upload photos — and you can even send a voice message to up to 100 recipients. That's one impressive app!

What's Great About CareZone: For a free app, this covers most of your informational bases. It's excellent for storing and sharing information – and for knowing that it's secure. CareZone isn't just a caregiving app; family members of all ages can use it.



eCare21

eCare21 provides round-the-clock patient monitoring through wireless and wearable devices such as a smartwatch or FitBit. You can track the wearer's glucose, heart rate, activity, medication, weight, calorie intake, and sleep. You, your loved one, other family members, and doctors can access this useful information no matter where they live or work.

eCare will be most helpful for caregivers as they manage their loved one's schedules and meet their health needs, but it may take several apps or websites to tackle more complex caregiving challenges such as pain management, medication interaction, financial and end-of-life issues.

What's Great About eCare21: eCare21's latest technology allows you to monitor your loved one's care needs without being intrusive. It's ideal for a working or long-distance caregiver and by providing vital health data, which means better and quicker response. Forbes offered a favorable review of eCare21 stating, "The patients' doctors, loved ones

and caregivers can keep an eye on them and provide proactive care, even from hundreds of miles away.”

Medisafe

Any caregiver knows the frustrations and concerns involved in medication management. You have to remember when the medication should be taken, whether or not to take it with food, avoiding double dosage, any side effects to watch out for, and make sure to track the medication for benefits or drawbacks.

Medisafe Meds & Pill Reminder can help alleviate some of these concerns with reminders, helpful and practical information, and connecting caregivers, seniors, and the medical community together to provide cohesive care. While some users noted frustrations with loading several medications at various time intervals, it should also be noted that MediSafe receives high marks for customer support. Each online review concern is addressed by the app’s support team.

What’s Great About Medisafe: Medisafe is unique in that it’s not only a medication reminder but also educates people about their condition and the medicines they’re taking. Medisafe can help to remind, track progress, and will even find coupons and other incentives. Medisafe is designed for users of any age, for caregivers involved in medication monitoring, and is also beneficial for physicians who want to connect with their patients through the Medisafe app. Medisafe has been featured on CNBC and in Reader’s Digest.

<https://www.caring.com/caregivers/best-caregiving-apps#overview-of-the-best-apps-for-caregivers>



Pandemics are Stressful - Take care of your mental health

You may experience increased anxiety during this pandemic. Fear and anxiety can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions.



Get immediate help in a crisis

- Call 911
- [Disaster Distress Helpline](tel:1-800-985-5990) 1-800-985-5990 (press 2 for Spanish), or text TalkWithUs for English or Hablanos for Spanish to 66746. Spanish speakers from Puerto Rico can text Hablanos to 1-787-339-2663.
- [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](tel:1-800-273-8255) 1-800-273-TALK (8255) for English, 1-888-628-9454 for Spanish, or [Lifeline Crisis Chat](#)
- [National Domestic Violence Hotline](tel:1-800-799-7233) 1-800-799-7233 or text LOVEIS to 22522
- [National Child Abuse Hotline](tel:1-800-4ACHILD) 1-800-4ACHILD (1-800-422-4453) or text 1-800-422-4453
- [National Sexual Assault Hotline](tel:1-800-656-4673) 1-800-656-HOPE (4673) or [Online Chat](#)
- [The Eldercare Locator](tel:1-800-677-1116) 1-800-677-1116 [TTY Instructions](#)
- [Veteran's Crisis Line](tel:1-800-273-8255) 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or [Crisis Chat](#) or text: 8388255

Find a health care provider or treatment for substance use disorder and mental health

- [SAMHSA's National Helpline](tel:1-800-662-4357) 1-800-662-HELP (4357) and TTY 1-800-487-4889
- [Treatment Services Locator Website](#)
- [Interactive Map of Selected Federally Qualified Health Centers](#)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html>



LIEAP and Energy Share Can Help

Cold weather is here, and heating bills can pile up fast. Do you know someone who is worried about how they're going to pay those bills? If so, call one of the numbers below to see what's available for help, either for your friend or for you. In Montana, it's about neighbors helping neighbors. That can be as simple as going with a friend to complete an application. Call now to find the office nearest you that handles both LIEAP and Energy Share applications:

Montana LIEAP office at 1-833-317-1080

Energy Share of Montana at 1-888-779-7589

You can also find info at www.energysharemt.com or

<https://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/energyassistance>.



Yes, Your Heat CAN Be Turned Off in The Winter!

Many people think the utility company cannot shut a person off in the winter. However, under certain circumstances that can happen. There are special rules in the wintertime though. From November 1 to April 1 a regulated utility may not shut off gas, underground propane, or electric service without prior approval from the Public Service Commission (PSC – the state agency that regulates some utility companies such as Northwestern Energy, Energy West and Montana-Dakota Utilities). The PSC does not approve winter shutoffs if the customer is unable to pay (as demonstrated by being a recipient of a public assistance program) or if a member of the customer's household is either at least 62 years old or handicapped.

Remember, **it is the customer's responsibility to inform the utility** if one or more of these circumstances exist in the household. For more information visit the website of the Public Service Commission, <http://psc.mt.gov/consumers/energy/pdf/UtilityRules03012001.pdf> or call them at 406-444-6199 or 1-800-646-6150. Additionally, electric cooperatives and propane vendors are **not** regulated by the PSC; each one has their own rules so be sure to check with your energy provider on what those are.



Communication Can Be Life-Changing

“I can actually communicate with my family now!” “You are a lifesaver!”

Ask any staff at the MTAP office, and I bet they will tell you that the most gratifying part of their job is when these words are expressed by a client they have just assisted, and can now communicate by phone with their family, friends, doctors, and quite frankly just about anyone!

The **Montana Telecommunications Access Program, or MTAP**, for short, is a statewide program, located within the Department of Public Health and Human Services. It was established through legislation passed during the 1989 state legislative session, in response to the Americans with Disabilities Act mandate, requiring that governments provide equal access to telecommunications services for those with disabilities. The goal of MTAP is to improve the quality of life for deaf, hard of hearing, speech and mobility impaired residents of Montana by providing them with specialized telecommunications equipment.

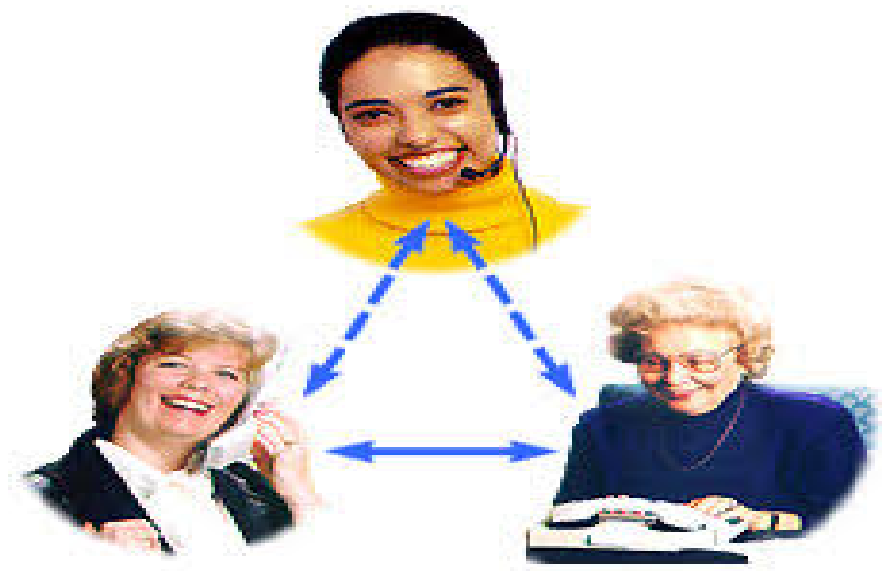
The program administers and oversees relay operations for Montana as well as an equipment distribution program. Relay Services are available (by dialing 711) 24 hours per day, seven days per week, providing a communications link between those who use a communications device and those who use a standard voice telephone. MTAP attempts to keep up with the latest of technologies and distributes equipment to clients to best fit their needs. MTAP would like you to know that even though home visits are currently restricted, due to Covid-19, MTAP is still providing their services remotely, accepting applications, mailing out phones, and assisting with set-up and troubleshooting. MTAP recognizes the importance of phone communication, especially in times of isolation, and wants to make sure Montanan’s are aware of this free service.

MTAP currently has 1,436 active clients in numerous cities and towns across the state who are using their equipment. The most frequently requested piece of equipment is the simple, amplified phone, making calls louder and easier to hear. MTAP also provides captioning phones, “hands-free” speaker phones, TTY’s, loud ringers, artificial larynx’s, and for those who meet the specific criteria, MTAP provides mobile devices.

MTAP serves all Montanans ages five years and over with varying disabilities. Phones are offered free of charge to Montanans who qualify under the program's income guidelines. For a single person, this is around \$31,000, and increases by about \$11,000 for each additional individual in the family.

For people who don't qualify for a free phone, MTAP can still help provide options to help those who want to order equipment on their own.

To learn more about the program or receive an application, contact MTAP at 800-833-8503, email to relay@mt.gov, or complete the application online at www.montanarelay.mt.gov. You can also find them on Facebook.com/Montana relay



2021 ANNUAL ENROLLMENT PERIOD DATES

Dates and deadlines you need to know



OCT. 15, 2020

ANNUAL ENROLLMENT PERIOD BEGINS

This is the first day you can enroll for 2021 health coverage.



DEC. 7, 2020

ANNUAL ENROLLMENT PERIOD ENDS

This is the last day you can enroll for 2021 health coverage.



JAN. 1, 2021

FIRST DATE COVERAGE CAN START

Even if you enroll in December 2020, your new Medicare plan won't go into effect until Jan. 1, 2021.

Don't Miss Medicare Annual Open Enrollment;
it's the best time to get your best deal!

SHIP counselors are available to assist Medicare beneficiaries and their families year-round. For free, confidential, objective Medicare assistance, call your local SHIP Counselor to schedule an appointment!

1 800-551-3191



LOCAL HELP FOR PEOPLE WITH MEDICARE

Aging Horizons TV Show

The Weekly TV Show that Addresses Tomorrows Aging Issues, Today



“If you are asking about it, we are talking about it”

Watch for us on the following Stations:

Sundays at 10:30AM on the following channels: 

KWYB – ABC Butte/Bozeman

KFBB – ABC Great Falls

KHBB – ABC Helena

KTMF – ABC Missoula/Kalispell

We will **STILL** be on SWX and NBC in Billings– Saturday at 9:00 on SWX and Sunday at 9:30AM on NBC (KULR8).

You can **ALSO** watch AGING HORIZONS on YOUTUBE!



[youtube.com/montanaDPHHS](https://www.youtube.com/montanaDPHHS)