

# Meeting the Challenges

Quarterly

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## Kindness Power Tools

BY SHELLEY HOURSTON

**I propose** that listening is a “kindness power tool.” Consider how you feel about the people in your life who are good listeners. How can you tell that they are good listeners? How does it make you feel when they listen to you?

I’ve been trying to recall my first memory of kindness. Early memories from age three or four are fuzzy and tend to swirl together for most of us. After reflecting for a few weeks, though, I realize that it was my grandpa who taught me about kindness.

From the time I was four until I began school at six, I spent nearly every day with him. He and my grandma lived nearby on a neighbouring farm and, although he was “retired,” he pattered about the barns and the fields all day with his Collie. When I joined the family, we became a trio—

grandpa and the dog, silent companions with me chattering along behind them.

Grandpa was a man of very few words. In fact, I’m not sure that I can even remember his voice—except for his slow “hmmm...” and a nod at just the right moment to let you know that he was paying attention. And he would laugh at things I said, but not in a mean way. When I think about those days of weeding gardens, building things in the workshop or milking the cow, I remember grandpa listening to my stream of questions with patience and amusement. Although he didn’t talk a lot,

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**DISCLAIMER:**

Articles prepared by or presented in *Meeting the Challenges* are for general information purposes only.

The information is not intended to be medical advice. If you suspect that you have a physical, medical or psychological problem, you should always seek care from a qualified professional.

**Before taking any action that may impact you personally, consult with your own physician, attorney, investment counselor, or other professional advisor.**

***Meeting the Challenges***

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he communicated his interest and genuine concern. I didn't recognize this as the gift it was until years later when I understood the emptiness of a conversation in which I was not heard.

Listening is something too often taken for granted. We underestimate the power of listening in learning, creativity, persuasion, and communication. In the whirlwind of life today, we fail to realize the value of offering our uninterrupted attention to another.

I propose that listening is a "kindness power tool." Consider how you feel about the people in your life who are good listeners. How can you tell that they are good listeners? How does it make you feel when they listen to you? In my experience, something magical happens when someone listens carefully and asks questions to clarify their understanding. A good listener helps us understand ourselves.

Good listening skills require practice and attention. It's easy to let our minds drift, especially if we're listening to a familiar story or issue. Here are some suggestions from experts for "active" or effective listening:

- **Pay attention:** face the

speaker, observe their body language, keep your mind on the speaker and what they are saying, and don't think about what to say next or solutions to offer the speaker.

- **Let the speaker know that you're listening:** use facial expressions and gestures, nod and encourage the speaker by saying "yes" or "un huh."

- **Give feedback to clarify:** you might say, "What I hear you saying is ..." or "It sounds like ..." Summarize what you understand the speaker to be saying from time to time, ask questions like, "What do you mean when you say ..."

- **Reserve judgment:** wait Until you have heard all that the speaker has to offer before forming an opinion or counter-argument.

- **Be respectful:** active listening is a technique to understand another person's perspective. Learning about the speaker's point of view will not be enhanced by verbally attacking or interrupting them.

Read more about active listening skills at: "Active Listening: Hear What People Are Really Saying." Mind Tools website. <http://tinyurl.com/4vz682>.

Contact Shelley at: [info@payitforwardbc.org](mailto:info@payitforwardbc.org) or 604-875-0188 with your "kindness power tools," first memories of kindness or for information about how to join Pay It Forward BC, BCCPD's kindness movement.

## **Untreated Glaucoma Will Take Your Sight**

**G**laucoma is the second most common cause of legal blindness, according to the American Academy of Ophthalmology.

Our eyes are filled with fluid that keeps them healthy and that must be able to drain, as more is produced, to maintain proper pressure in the eye. Excess pressure results in damage to the optic nerve and blindness.

There are 2 types of Glaucoma. One type affects people over the age of 35 and is a more common problem for people of African-American descent. In this type, fluid does not drain properly, but pressure builds slowly and often severe damage has resulted before the disease is discovered. Regular tests are necessary to identify this type early enough to prevent eye damage.

The second type results from the narrowing and blockage of the drain and happens suddenly. The symptoms include severe pain and nausea, redness of the eye and blurred vision.

Glaucoma can not be prevented but is controllable with treatment.

[SOURCE: knowabouthealth.com]

## **Greetings from Our Friends.....**

**Y**ou and the Independent Living Partnership have many friends, and it is our pleasure to pass along their concerns and good wishes. They care about our world.

**AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety** [www.aaafoundation.org](http://www.aaafoundation.org)  
*Dedicated to saving lives and reducing injuries on the roads.*

**AllprintUSA.com** 877-685-6397 [allprintusa.com](http://allprintusa.com)  
5754 Tilton Ave./42nd St., Riverside, CA 92509  
*For all your printing needs, local and national.*

**Automobile Club of Southern California** [www.calif.aaa.com](http://www.calif.aaa.com)  
Hemet Office: 951-652-6202 Riverside Office: 951-684-4250

**Beverly Foundation** [beverlyfoundation.org](http://beverlyfoundation.org)  
*Fostering new ideas and options to enhance mobility and transportation for today's and tomorrow's older population.*

**CareMore - It's what we do.** 800-499-2793 [www.caremore.com](http://www.caremore.com)  
*Focused and innovative healthcare approaches to the complex problems of aging.*

**Comprehensive Insurance Services**  
800-558-4949 [thecomprehensiveinsurance.com](http://thecomprehensiveinsurance.com)  
*Specializing in insurance for BUSINESSES and NONPROFITS.*

**Garnett-Powers & Associates Insurance "Benefit Specialists"**  
877-559-9922 [garnett-powers.com](http://garnett-powers.com)  
*Group and individual Medical Plans, and Medicare Supplement Plans.*

**George F. Dickerman** 951-788-2156 [elder-law-advocate.com](http://elder-law-advocate.com)  
*We protect, and advocate for, the elderly and their loved ones.*

**Hutton Foundation** [www.huttonfoundation.org](http://www.huttonfoundation.org)  
*Strives to provide organizational sustainability to community based non-profits.*

**Inter Valley Health Plan** 888-715-1351 [sem.ivhp.com](http://sem.ivhp.com)  
*Nonprofit serves Medicare members in Riverside and San Bernardino counties.*

**Lois Tomlinson, CPA** 951-243-7909  
*Accounting / Bookkeeping—specializing in nonprofits.*

**Premier Service Bank** [www.premierservicebank.com](http://www.premierservicebank.com)  
*Community bank based in Riverside offers deposit and commercial lending services.*

**Riverside County Office on Aging** 1-800-510-2020 [rcaging.org](http://rcaging.org)  
*Maximizing strength in aging through leadership, advocacy, education and supportive service.*

**Riverside County Transportation Commission** [rctc.org](http://rctc.org)  
*Transportation planning, programs and projects in Riverside County.*

**Smith Marion and Company** 951-461-2045 [www.smcocpa.com](http://www.smcocpa.com)  
*CPA services, including accounting, tax preparation, consulting, and audit services.*

## Can I Recover from the Effects of a Stroke?

**Y**es. Perhaps the biggest obstacle to successfully regaining the personal independence that your stroke has damaged is maintaining a positive attitude.

Many things that previously were common place and taken for granted must be relearned. There are often physical, mental and emotional challenges to be met. It takes resolve and courage and the ability to accept that things are just different after suffering a stroke.

An excellent resource to assist with stroke recovery is the National Stroke Association. A large number of NSA Fact Sheets, available for download in either pdf or word format, have very useful information for caregivers and people in recovery:

[www.stroke.org](http://www.stroke.org). If you do not have a computer or access to the internet, call 1-800-787-6537.

*“It was when I found out  
I could make mistakes  
that I knew  
I was on to something.”*

—Ornette Coleman,  
jazz musician and  
composer

One of the fact sheets is about “Coping with Emotions”. According to the fact sheet, depression and anxiety are very usual challenges for stroke victims. NSA recommends that the way to cope with depression is to “make the most of rehabilitation therapy”, while counseling and medicine may be necessary to relieve anxiety and help the stroke victim really get the most out of their rehab.

A common medical issue among stroke survivors is called PBA (Pseudobulbar Affect). A person with PBA will laugh and cry at inappropriate times. It can make a person cry uncontrollably at times. Sometimes antidepressant drugs are prescribed and may help. But NSA has some suggestions of things to be done that may help with PBA:

- Be open about it. Warn people that you cannot always control your emotions. Explain that the emotions you show on the outside don't always reflect how you feel on the inside.
- Distract yourself. If you feel an outburst coming on, focus on something boring or unrelated. Try counting the number of items on a shelf.

- Note the posture you take when crying. When you think you are about to cry, change your posture.
- Breathe in and out slowly until you are in control.
- Relax your forehead, shoulders and other muscles that tense up when crying.

Other very helpful NSA Fact Sheets include:

- Ability to Go Places
  - Bladder & Bowel Function
  - Thinking and Cognition
  - Healthy Eating
  - Managing Fatigue
  - Managing Life at Home
  - Dealing with Pain
- and more.

National Stroke Association has designed a publication that provides valuable information about recovery. It is called “HOPE: The Stroke Recovery Guide”. The chapters can be downloaded at no cost from [www.stroke.org](http://www.stroke.org). Or, you can call and order a bound copy for just \$5.

Stroke survivors can also receive a free subscription to NSA's monthly magazine “Stroke Smart”. NSA says it “is filled with inspirational real-life stories of survivors and their life-long recovery from stroke.”

Call today at 1-800-787-6537.

## Recognizing Depression

by Cathy Wong, Doctoral Candidate in Gerontology at the University of Massachusetts, Boston

**D**epression is the most common mental health condition among older adults aged 65 years and better. It is estimated that 6 to 6.5 million older Americans have depression, and only 10% of these older Americans receive appropriate treatment.

There are various reasons why depression is often not recognized and left untreated. One reason is the mistaken idea that depression is a normal part of growing older, which contributes to us not seeking help.

### Stroke symptoms include:

- SUDDEN numbness or weakness of face, arm or leg - especially on one side of the body.
- SUDDEN confusion, trouble speaking or understanding.
- SUDDEN trouble seeing in one or both eyes.
- SUDDEN trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination.
- SUDDEN severe headache with no known cause.

**Call 9-1-1 immediately if you have any of these symptoms**

Many people assume that depression is a natural reaction to major life events that commonly occur in our later years. For example, major life events that may occur as we grow older are: physical disability, adjustment to retirement, losing a spouse, or living alone.

If you are experiencing difficulties with any of these major life events, it should be known that sadness is a normal and temporary reaction as you are coping and adjusting with these major life events. However, prolonged depression needs to be professionally treated. If you are experiencing 5 or more of the symptoms listed below for a period of 2 weeks or longer and these symptoms are causing significant disruption in every day functioning, then it is recommended that you seek appropriate help. Symptoms of depression include:

- sadness and depressed mood most of the day, nearly every day
- fatigue or loss of energy nearly every day
- loss of motivation and decline in interest in activities

- feelings of worthlessness or inappropriate guilt
- insomnia or hypersomnia
- lack of concentration
- significant weight loss or weight gain
- thoughts of suicide or death

You may want to tell a family member or friends, as they can assist you with seeking appropriate help.

It is important to tell your professional health care provider (doctor, registered nurse, case manager). Your doctor may not recognize your depression. So it is important for you to tell and talk with your doctor about symptoms you are experiencing and options for treatment.

Many people do not seek treatment for depression because of the stigma associated with having a mental health condition, seeing a mental health care provider and participating in counseling or therapy. However, treatment is important for preventing depression from getting worse. Also, treatment for depression can help you return to your normal self in hopes of a more fulfilling and happier life.

## **Assistive Technology and Its Importance in Today's World**

Imagine a world without assistive technology (commonly known as AT) for persons with disabilities.

- Without a TDD (telecommunications device for the deaf), a person who is deaf or hard of hearing would be unable to communicate over the telephone.
- Without AT there would be no home or environmental adaptations such as grab bars and wheelchair ramps.
- Without Braille books, visually impaired persons would be unable to read.
- Simple AT gadgets such as zipper pulls, electric can openers, touch lamps, pencil cushions and easy package openers help many people to complete activities of daily living with more ease.
- Without assistive technology through the voice synthesizer that speaks what he types, Stephen Hawking, physicist and cosmologist, would be unable to share his brilliant observations with the world.

Assistive technology is the general term for any device, gadget or equipment that assists persons with disabilities (who can be any age) to be able to perform day-to-day activities with more ease.

Recent technological advances have greatly enhanced the field of assistive technology; yet AT devices can be as simple as a magnifier with a light on it or a jar opener that helps someone more easily grip a jar and twist off its lid.

There is assistive technology that enables heard-of-hearing and speech-impaired individuals to be on conference calls through a special equipment video phone. For persons who have difficulty remembering, there is a "picture phone" with small photos of friends next to their stored telephone numbers to assist in remembering what number should be called.

For the disabled student, there are devices that help translate textbooks. If driving skills are intact but there are mobility issues that limit ability to get in and out of the car, a swivel cushion can help. In the home or work office, speech recognition software or touch screens open up the world of the internet to persons with disabilities.

Why use assistive technology? AT promotes independent functioning and supports users in living

more fulfilled lives. AT provides individuals with the ability to help modify their home, work or school environment so they can participate more fully in every-day activities. AT can help make the environment safer by reducing the risk of accidents. AT can also increase the chance of persons living in their own homes longer, with the assistance they need, so they don't have to become dependent on a caregiver or move to an assisted living facility or nursing home. AT gives consumers the power, flexibility and freedom to use the tools that best fit their individual needs in order to improve their quality of life.

Many, varied assistive technology devices and equipment are available to persons with disabilities. For more information, contact Cecilia Burch at the AT Project at ILP: [ceciliaburch@ilpcorp.org](mailto:ceciliaburch@ilpcorp.org), phone 951.653.0740 x. 22. Or go to the Tools for Independence website: <http://toolsforindependence.org/> where you can find the latest issue of the Tools for Independence newsletter highlighting AT equipment and a Resource Center for finding AT devices.

## **Medi-Cal Mandatory Enrollment Affects Over 75,000 Riverside and San Bernardino County Residents**

**T**he state of California is now changing the way people receive their medical care.

Many seniors and persons with disabilities in California (approximately 380,000 people) who have Medi-Cal ONLY will have to join a Medi-Cal managed care plan if they live in one of the 16 counties targeted. The Mandatory Enrollment began June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011 and will continue through May 2012.

Seniors and people with disabilities in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties on Medi-Cal ONLY, with no Share of Cost, will have to enroll into a health plan before their birth month. Notices will be sent out 3 months prior to the birth month with information regarding the change. Two months prior to the birth month people will also receive directories from the two health plans in the area: Molina and IEHP.

People will have to go through the directories to see which plan has all of their doctors, specialists, hospitals, and clinics contracted.

If neither plan has the individual's doctors or specialists in their network, the

enrollee will need to complete an "exception waiver form". The exception waiver form will be found in the informational packet that is sent out two months prior to the birth month. The waiver form allows an individual to receive care through Medi-Cal Fee for Services or Medi-Cal without a health plan.

If a person does not make a decision prior to their birth month, the state will automatically enroll them in one of the two plans: IEHP or Molina.

Not everyone will be affected by this change. You do not have to enroll in a managed care plan if at least one of the following applies to you:

1. You have Medicare as well as Medi-Cal.
2. You receive services from the California Children's Services (CCS) program.
3. You receive foster care or adoption assistance benefits.
4. You are enrolled in a private health care plan.
5. You are in a long-term care facility such as a nursing home or intermediate care facility.
6. You have a share of cost for Medi-Cal.

7. You are being treated for a complex medical condition.

For more information about this change or to enroll in a health plan, you can call Health Care Options at: 1-800-430-4263. You can also call IEHP at 1-866-294-4347 or Molina at 1-888-665-4621.

***The Bus is  
Always On the Way  
to Pick Us Up!***

**Riverside Transit Agency**  
*Serving Western Riverside County*  
Customer Information Center:  
**951-565-5002**

**Corona Cruiser**  
*Serving City of Corona*  
Customer Information:  
**951-734-9418**

**Pass Transit**  
*Serving the San Geronio Pass*  
Beaumont: **951-769-8530**  
Banning: **951-922-3243**

**SunLine Transit Agency**  
*Serving the Coachella Valley*  
Customer Information Center:  
**800-347-8628**

**Palo Verde Transit**  
*Serving Blythe and surrounding area*  
Customer Information Center:  
**760-922-1140**

**Free, Unbiased ...Health Insurance Counseling — Call HICAP @ 1-800-434-0222**

## CarFit Coordinator Training Planned for Desert

**S**taying mobile as long as possible is important for older adults to maintain a high quality of life. Checking to see that a driver and their vehicle fit and comfort work well together can be an important tool to help increase safety and mobility.

The Auto Club of Southern California has been training and offering the CarFit program since 2005. To date, several organizations have been trained and are active in the program throughout Southern California.

In May the Independent Living Partnership, in collaboration with the Riverside County Office on Aging, conducted a CarFit Event Coordinator Training and public program in Riverside.

In an effort to continue to expand the program throughout all areas of Southern California, we are seeking organizations in the Palm Springs/Palm Desert area that work with the senior population that may be interested in the CarFit program.

The Auto Club of Southern California is interested in hosting a **FREE** CarFit Event Coordinator training in **Palm Springs/Palm Desert** area in early 2012. This

two day training is provided at no cost to agencies. An Auto Club trained Car-Fit Professional Instructor teaches participants how to host a CarFit event and how to train CarFit technicians to work the events. The CarFit Event Coordinator Training is ideal for any organization looking to enhance services to senior population through a low cost community program. In addition to expanding community resources and increasing safety among older drivers, trained CarFit Event Coordinators may also be eligible to apply for a \$500 mini-grant to assist with materials for CarFit events once they have become trained.

CarFit is a community education program developed in collaboration with AARP, AAA, and the American Occupational Therapy Association. The goals of this community-based program are to:

- Help older drivers improve the “fit” of their vehicles for safety and comfort.
- Promote conversations among older adults and families about driving safety and the continued need for mobility options.
- Link adults with relevant, local resources that can help ensure they drive

safely longer.

To learn more about the program, visit:  
[www.car-fit.org](http://www.car-fit.org).

If you or your agency are interested in hosting a CarFit Event Coordinator training at your facility or attending a training in the **Palm Spring/Palm Desert** or learning more about the program contact Anita Lorz at (714)885-2311 or by email at [Lorz.Anita@aaa-calif.com](mailto:Lorz.Anita@aaa-calif.com).

### California's Low-Cost Auto Insurance

**T**his State program provides income eligible, good drivers with affordable auto liability insurance that satisfies financial responsibility laws.

For both Riverside and San Bernardino counties, the annual premium is \$264. You may qualify if you have a good driving record, have been continuously licensed for three years, own a vehicle that is valued at \$20,000 or less and meet income eligibility requirements (1 person household, \$27,225 max/ 2 person household, \$36,775 max).

**To find out if you qualify, call 1-866-602-8861**

**Call TRIP at 1-800-510-2020 to apply for TRIP Escort-Driver Volunteer assistance**



## What Makes a Great Volunteer Driver?

by Users of the TRIP Program in Riverside County

Last month, TRIP riders were asked to nominate volunteer drivers to receive this year's Beverly Foundation "TRIP Volunteer Driver of the Year" award. Nominations included the reasons why their volunteer should be honored.

Every entry described a volunteer who was already a winner, but only two would be selected to receive this year's award.

The most often mentioned endearing trait of nominated volunteers was that their drivers were "dependable and reliable", followed immediately by "accommodating and attentive".

Next, many said an important reason that their volunteer should be honored was because they were "kind, thoughtful, and warm".

Being a "good driver" presumably is pretty important, but maybe is taken for granted and was not mentioned frequently in the nomination process.

Many of the nominations included inspiring stories about the volunteers and about why and how being on the TRIP Program was important:

*"When my son was terminally ill, she would take me*

*to the hospital, until the end."*

*"There have been times where the miles did not matter and we would roam and shop or eat and enjoy the day."*

*"My volunteer is a partner that shares my joy and gives me comfort when the day is not going as I would like."*

*"We have great rapport—we are never at a loss for something to talk about."*

*"She listens to me and makes me laugh."*

*"She truly and unconditionally cares for me and is a dear, true, good friend."*

*"She brings me food from her family meals and considers me family and makes me feel loved."*

It was difficult to select the winners, and we were so impressed by everyone who was nominated, but this year's Beverly Foundation TRIP Volunteer Drivers of the Year are Rachel Mendez, and Mary Louise Mushegan.

Congratulations to these honorees and all the wonderful TRIP volunteers who really do make a huge difference everyday!

## THE ASSISTED TRANSPORTATION OPTION

You may qualify for special TRIP assistance to help you recruit your own volunteer escort-driver.

Call 1-800-510-2020 and tell the HelpLink Services Specialist that you need help with transportation.

You will be asked a few questions and, if appropriate, will be referred to TRIP. Once referred, you will be required to complete an application, and if you are determined to be eligible for TRIP assistance, you will receive monthly cash mileage reimbursements for your volunteer.



The volunteer escort-driver TRIP program is supported by Measure A tax funds through the Riverside County Transportation Commission, Older Americans Act funds through the Riverside County Office on Aging, a Regional Access Project Foundation Grant, and local funds from the City of Blythe.

**CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS FROM INDIVIDUALS AND BUSINESSES ARE NEEDED!!**

## **People on Medicare Be Aware, Open Enrollment Dates Have Changed**

by Ronald H. Bolding, President and CEO, Inter Valley Health Plan

**O**ctober 15 marks the beginning of the Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Period – an often confusing and overwhelming time for many people on Medicare.

At that time, people on Medicare only have a specific period of time, October 15, 2011 to December 7, 2011, to change their Medicare plan, which will be effective beginning January 1, 2012. It is important to note that Medicare eligibles will no longer be

able to enroll up to December 31. Be careful - there are late enrollment penalties if one does not sign up during the designated Open Enrollment Period.

If they fail to do so, they will be rolled into their current plan for a full year until the enrollment period starts again the following fall 2012. Not changing plans could be an expensive mistake for some Medicare beneficiaries as the costs are expected to increase.

Choosing the right Medicare healthcare plan partner is very important. It is crucial that people on Medicare really take the time to understand the changes in their coverage and read their annual notification of change. Reaching out to their health plan provider can be extremely beneficial, as it gives Medicare beneficiaries a chance to ask questions and address any concerns they may have.

If you are new to the Medicare process or if you are looking to find a new plan, here are seven simple steps about how to get the coverage you need that fills your health demands and fits your budget:

- 1. Look for a Medicare Advantage Plan.** Medicare Advantage plans can often be the most economical plan to use. They are required to offer coverage that meets or exceeds the standards set by the original Medicare program. A good Medicare Advantage Plan takes the worry out of Medicare coverage so you won't have any unpleasant surprises later on.
- 2. Find a healthcare insurance company who really**

### **Where to Get More Information**

**Decisions about your health care coverage affect so many areas of your life. From your physical well-being to your peace of mind to your pocketbook. So request more information and learn something you didn't know.**

**If you are Internet savvy, checkout the Medicare YouTube channel. Visit [www.YouTube.com/cmsfhsgov](http://www.YouTube.com/cmsfhsgov) to view videos covering a variety of health care topics.**

**For general questions about Medicare and its coverage, call 800-MEDICARE (800-633-4227) or visit [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov). For the hearing impaired: TTY 877-486-2048.**

**For a replacement Medicare card or to check on eligibility, contact Social Security at 800-772-1213 or visit [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov). For the hearing impaired: TTY 800-325-0778.**

(Continued from page 10)

**cares about you.** Remember, “big” is not necessarily better. Consider a smaller, local company that cares about you and the community. Make sure you can reach the people when you have a question.

- 3. Make sure you know what it really costs.** Be sure to look at the total out-of-pocket cost for your copayments and deductibles to see if it fits your budget. Make sure you know what it really costs.
- 4. Look at the prescription coverage.** Prescriptions can be the “hidden” costs of some Medicare Advantage Plans. So before applying for any plan, make sure you know any coverage limits and what your out-of-pocket costs will be. Ask to see the formulary to make sure it covers as many prescriptions as possible, including popular brand names, and the drugs you take are on this list.
- 5. Don't forget to consider important extra services.** Preventive care, dental and vision coverage, as well as alternative care treatments (i.e., chiropractic) is usually more important than most people realize. These are the services that can keep you healthy and active and help reduce your overall healthcare expenses.
- 6. Review the network of doctors in the plan.** Your plan should have a wide choice of approved doctors to choose from. You will want to be comfortable with your primary care doctor, and if you are not satisfied with your initial selection, health plans should give you flexibility to change at a moment's notice.
- 7. Pay special attention to maximum out of pocket costs.** You shouldn't have to make a decision between getting life-saving treatment and going bankrupt.

Whether you are a person on Medicare or have a parent on Medicare, these simple steps will help you find the very best and most affordable health plan available to contribute to a long, healthy life with no surprises.

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Ronald H. Bolding is the president and CEO of Inter Valley Health Plan, a not-for-profit, federally qualified, Medicare Advantage Organization providing health insurance products for more than 16,500 Medicare seniors throughout Los Angeles, Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. Through The Vitality Series, the company promotes a “lifestyle of health and vitality” for members and the senior community at-large.

## **How to Prepare for DMV Testing**

**O**nce we reach the age of 70, we are required to appear personally at a DMV office for license renewal. Vision and knowledge tests are administered, but a behind-the-wheel driving test may also be required.

Prior to going for license renewal, it is advisable to arrange for a vision test by an eye doctor. Studying the DMV Driver Handbook is essential to refresh our memories and catch-up with new laws. Simply drop by a DMV office and pick-up the latest version of the handbook, or access it online at:

[dmv.ca.gov/pubs/pubs.htm](http://dmv.ca.gov/pubs/pubs.htm)

Proper nutrition and exercise are also important for maintaining safe-driving skills. A diet high in fruits and vegetables can assist in maintaining eye health and improving reaction time. If you are not already doing so, begin a regular exercise program now to improve flexibility and strength.

**Check with your doctor before beginning any exercise program!**

*“Don't cry because it's over.  
Smile because it happened.”*

– Dr. Seuss

## **What Are the Causes of Isolation? And What to Do?**

**M**any of us live alone, but “isolation” is a special circumstance that is dangerous to our well-being and our continued ability to live independently.

Isolation happens when a person has limited social interaction, or does not actively engage in maintaining friendships and relationships.

Studies show that people who spend time with friends, volunteer, are church members, are active in clubs and other activities, and so forth, are less likely to experience mental illness, such as depression, are less likely to develop health problems and are more likely to practice good health habits and take care of themselves than people who are isolated.

Some people become isolated because they have nestled themselves into a cocoon. Sometimes this is a reaction to the death of a spouse who has been the person’s main or only friend. Sometimes people withdraw from friends and family for fear of bothering them. The way back from the isolation that can result from not participating is to participate—to reach out to other people,

to get out of the house and to begin again to participate in community activities.

For many isolation results from the decline of eyesight, emerging disability and driving impairments, the onset of disease and the loss of financial resources. For these people, getting out and doing things may be much more of a challenge.

What if a person can’t drive anymore, doesn’t have family or friends to help, and isn’t able to use public transportation alternatives? The remedy remains the same—make friends, do things, become engaged in community activities.

Living alone is fine, but not being able to get out to medical appointments, to stores, or for other needed purposes can mean being trapped, without options, and feeling helpless. These circumstances may then cause depression, despair, and declining health status.

Fortunately, an increasing number of communities around the country are now providing some form of volunteer driver program to help people who are isolated and alone to travel for their basic needs and to connect with their communities once more.

In Riverside County, the Independent Living Partnership operates the TRIP Program, which has been recognized as one of the most effective and efficient volunteer driver programs anywhere.

To apply for TRIP, residents throughout the County can call the Riverside County Office on Aging and Aging and Disability Resource Connection at 1-800-520-2020.

The Independent Living Partnership is now helping other communities around the country start and operate similar programs. To find out if a TRIP program is now in your area, or if another volunteer driver service exists, contact the aging and disability services office in your city or county.

Volunteer Driver Programs, TRIP and others, are the only answer to providing usable and friendly transportation for many and for combating the isolation of many people. But they do cost money to operate.

We encourage you to help support this life-saving service in your community, as an individual or a business, please donate. To make a tax deductible donation to TRIP, please send a check to TRIP, 6235 River Crest Dr., Ste C, Riverside CA 92507.

**Donations to the Independent Living Partnership and the TRIP Program are tax deductible!!**

## Have You Been Told to “Strengthen Your Core”?

**T**urns out this could be one of the most important things we can do as we age to protect and improve our mobility.

According to an article from Harvard Medical School, the motions we make as we move, walk, do chores, do just about anything, “either originate in our core, or pass through our core”.

Core muscles are located in our pelvis, lower back, hips and abdomen. They are the muscles that “hold us together”.

Strong core muscles:

- Help improve balance and stability, important in reducing the risk of falls
- Will help reduce and prevent low back pain: physical therapy is often intended to help strengthen and tone core muscles.
- Give us the capability to lift things, to twist and maneuver around our home.
- Core muscle tone is necessary to allow us to vacuum, dust, stand and reach.
- Core muscles are important in all of our daily activities, including bathing and dressing, even sitting in a chair.

- Surprisingly, core muscles also can impact our ability to use our computers!

The Mayo Clinic suggests some easy exercises to strengthen core muscles that just about everyone can do.

### **Check with your physician before beginning any exercise plan.**

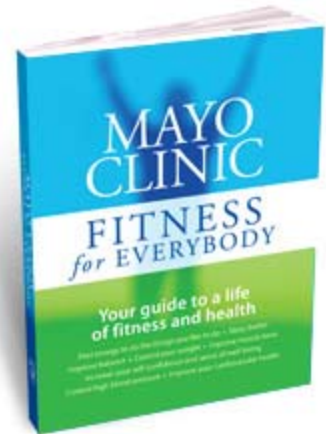
#### Abdominal crunches

- Lie on your back and place your feet on a wall so that your knees and hips are bent at 90-degree angles. Tighten your abdominal muscles.
- Raise your head and shoulders off the floor. To avoid straining your neck, cross your arms on your chest rather than locking them behind your head. Hold for three deep breaths.
- Return to the start position and repeat.

For more information, go to: [www.mayoclinic.com/health/core-strength/SM00047](http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/core-strength/SM00047)

You can also purchase the Mayo Clinic Fitness for Everybody book at: [bookstore.mayoclinic.com](http://bookstore.mayoclinic.com) or call the bookstore at: 1-800-291-1128. It costs \$26.95 plus shipping & han-

dling and applicable sales tax.



NOTE: The Mayo Clinic is a non-profit and all proceeds from sales go to support the Mayo Clinic mission “to inspire hope and contribute to health and well-being by providing the best care to every patient through integrated clinical practice, education and research.”

[SOURCES: [health.harvard.edu](http://health.harvard.edu); [mayoclinic.com](http://mayoclinic.com)]

***“There’s no easy way out.  
If there were,  
I would have bought it.  
And believe me,  
it would be one of  
my favorite things!”***

—Oprah Winfrey

## ¿Puedo Recuperarme de los Efectos de un Derrame Cerebral?

**T**al vez el mayor obstáculo para tener una recuperación exitosa de independencia personal que su derrame cerebral le ha dañado es mantener una actitud positiva.

Muchas cosas que antes eran comunes tienen que ser aprendidas de nuevo. Hay a menudo problemas físicos, mentales y emocionales que debe de atender. Se necesita mucha determinación y coraje y la habilidad de aceptar que las cosas son diferentes después de sufrir un derrame cerebral.

Un excelente recurso para ayudar a la recuperación de un derrame cerebral es la Asociación Nacional del Derrame Cerebral. Un gran número de páginas informativas de la NSA están disponibles y tienen información muy útil para las personas a cargo de cuidar a las víctimas de un derrame cerebral y ayuda para las víctimas también es disponible en: [www.stroke.org](http://www.stroke.org) Si usted no tiene acceso a una computadora con internet, llame al 1-800-787-6537.

Una de las páginas de datos se trata de "Controlar las Emociones." De acuerdo con la página, la depresión y la ansiedad son los proble-

mas más comunes de las víctimas de un derrame cerebral. NSA recomienda que la manera de lidiar con la depresión es "sacar el mayor provecho de la terapia de rehabilitación," mientras que consejería y medicamento pueden ser necesarios para aliviar la ansiedad y ayudar a la víctima a realmente beneficiarse de la rehabilitación.

Un problema médico común entre los sobrevivientes de un derrame cerebral se llama PBA (efecto seudobulbular). Una persona con PBA puede llorar o reír en momentos inadecuados. Puede causar a la persona a llorar desconsoladamente en ocasiones. A veces, medicamentos antidepresivos son prescritos y pueden ayudar. Sin embargo, la NSA tiene algunas sugerencias de cosas que pueden ayudar con PBA:

- Comunique su condición. Dejele saber a la gente que no siempre puede controlar sus emociones. Explique que las emociones que muestra en el exterior no siempre reflejan lo que siente en su interior.

- Distraigase. Si usted siente una carga de emoción que se acerca, enfóquese en algo aburrido o no relacionado con la emoción que

siente. Trate de contar el número de artículos en un estante como distracción.

- Tenga en cuenta la postura que tiene cuando llora. Cuando usted piensa que está a punto de llorar, cambie de postura.
- Respire profundo hasta que usted esté en control de su emoción. Relaje la frente, hombros, y otros músculos que sienta tensos cuando llora.

Otros datos muy útiles incluyen:

- La capacidad de ir a diferentes lugares
- La función de vejiga y función intestinal
- Comer sano
- Como tratar la fatiga
- Como tratar el dolor y mucho más.

La Asociación Nacional de Derrame Cerebral ha diseñado una publicación que proporciona información valiosa acerca de la recuperación. Se llama "Hope: La Guía de Recuperación del Derrame Cerebral." Los capítulos se pueden bajar a su computadora sin costo alguno en [www.stroke.org](http://www.stroke.org). O puede llamar y pedir una copia por solo \$5.00.

Sobrevivientes de un



Derrame Cerebral también pueden recibir una suscripción gratuita a la revista mensual de la NSA "Stroke Smart." NSA dice que "esta llena de inspiración y de historias reales de sobrevivientes y sus recuperaciones."

Llame hoy al:  
1-800-787-6537

### Los síntomas de un derrame cerebral son:

- Entumecimiento o debilidad repentina de la cara, brazo o pierna— especialmente en un solo lado del cuerpo
  - Confusión repentina, dificultad para hablar o entender
  - Dificultad repentina para ver con uno o ambos ojos
  - Dificultad repentina para caminar, mareos, pérdida de equilibrio o coordinación.
- Dolor de cabeza fuerte y repentino sin causa conocida

**Llame al 9-1-1  
inmediatamente si tiene  
alguno de estos síntomas**

**CELEBRANDO 20 AÑOS DE  
SERVICIO EN LA COMUNIDAD**



## El Reconocimiento De La Depresión

La depresión es la enfermedad mental más común entre los adultos mayores de los 65 años. Se estima que entre 6 a 6.5 millones de estadounidenses padecen de depresión, y sólo el 10% de estadounidenses de edad avanzada reciben el tratamiento adecuado.

Hay varias razones por qué la depresión no es tratada. Una de las razones es la idea equivocada de que la depresión es una parte normal del envejecimiento.

Mucha gente asume que la depresión es una reacción natural a los eventos importantes de la vida que ocurren comúnmente en nuestros últimos años. Por ejemplo, la discapacidad física, el ajuste de la jubilación, la pérdida de un cónyuge, o vivir solos.

Si tiene dificultades con alguno de estos eventos importantes de la vida, hay que saber que la tristeza es una reacción normal y temporal. Sin embargo, la prolongada depresión debe ser tratada profesionalmente. Si usted está experimentando cinco o más de los siguientes síntomas durante un período de 2 semanas o más y si estos síntomas están causando perturbaciones en sus funciona-

mientos cotidianos, entonces es recomendable que busque ayuda apropiada. Los síntomas de la depresión incluyen: la tristeza y estado de ánimo depresivo, constante fatiga o pérdida de energía, pérdida de motivación y disminución de interés en sus actividades, sentimientos de inutilidad o culpa inapropiada, insomnio o hipersomnia, pérdida significativa de peso o aumento de peso, pensamientos de suicidio o muerte

Es importante decirle a su proveedor de salud. Su médico puede no reconocer la depresión. Por lo tanto, es importante que hable con su médico sobre los síntomas que está experimentando y opciones de tratamiento.

Muchas personas no buscan tratamiento para la depresión a causa del estigma asociado con tener un problema de salud mental. Sin embargo, el tratamiento es importante puede ayudarle a volver a su estado normal, con la esperanza de una vida más plena y feliz.

**"La depresión no es más  
que la ira sin entusiasmo"**

—Steven Wright

published since 1989 by the **non-profit 501(c)(3)**

***Independent Living Partnership***

6235 River Crest Drive, Suite C, Riverside, CA 92507

[www.LivingPartnership.org](http://www.LivingPartnership.org)

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