



COUNCIL on AGING

YOUR SOURCE AND VOICE ON SENIOR ISSUES

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The mission of Council on Aging is to transform Charlotte-Mecklenburg into a *senior-friendly** community through education and advocacy.

CURRENT EMERGING ISSUE STATUS REPORT

DATE: 03/23/2009

IDENTIFIED ISSUE: CAREGIVER SUPPORT

The availability of coordinated, supportive services is needed in Charlotte-Mecklenburg that offer caregivers access to resources, readily available quality assistance and respite to enable them to continue to provide quality care for their older loved ones.

CURRENT SITUATION:

- A large number of fee-based home health care agencies are available to provide in-home medical and non-medical aid.
- Mecklenburg County Department of Social Services (DSS) provides in-home aid for qualified individuals as well as caregiver services.
- Adult day care programs do exist, but additional funding is needed to provide more facilities and programs necessary to meet the increasing needs of caregivers.
- Support groups are available through community organizations.
- Mecklenburg County DSS and Western Carolina Alzheimer's Association are offering a pilot program for caregivers, Project CARE (Caregiver Alternatives to Running on Empty).
- Mecklenburg County currently has a phone hotline (Just 1 Call) that provides one-stop access to information and assistance for Mecklenburg County's caregivers.
- Mecklenburg County DSS offers the Family Caregiver Support Program. This service can provide individual information, referral, and case assistance to help caregivers with specific needs. The Family Caregiver Support Program can help the caregiver connect with needed services and coordinate those services.

COUNCIL ON AGING EDUCATION/ADVOCACY EFFORTS:

- **Council on Aging Vision for Caregiving:** Supportive services that offer caregivers access to resources, readily available quality assistance and respite to enable them to continue to provide quality care for their older loved ones. Choices would include:
 - Easy access to health services meeting the needs of older adults that accept Medicare/Medicaid;

- Adult Day Care and respite opportunities;
- Choices of specialists in geriatric care;
- Affordable home health care services;
- Support groups;
- A senior registry available that accounts for frail and/or homebound older adults who may need assistance in the event of an emergency;
- Socialization
- Mental health services.
- The goal of the Council on Aging Caregiving Task Force is to help alleviate emotional, physical and financial stress for caregivers in Mecklenburg County by providing much needed information about available support.
- Council on Aging's Caregiving Task Force meets on a monthly basis. To learn more about the [Caregiving Task Force](#) efforts, or if you'd like to contribute to positively impact this process, please contact [Katie Kutcher](#).

RESOURCES/ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- [Caregiver Resources](#)
- To view a presentation by Karen Knutson of SeniorBridge from **Annual Conference 2008, "It's YOUR Future...Make sure it's senior-friendly!"** click [here](#).
- Learn about Powerful Tools for Caregivers, click [here](#).

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- Help Council on Aging raise awareness about caregiving issues, and available services and support by having a program presented to your organization, business or club through the Council on Aging [Speaker's Bureau](#).
- Set up a Powerful Tools for Caregivers program. Contact [Katie Kutcher](#), 704-391-5216.
- Check Council on Aging's [calendar for upcoming programs supporting caregivers](#).
- Or, [donate](#) today to help ensure a *senior-friendly* tomorrow.

*A *senior-friendly* community allows aging adults to maintain independence, dignity and quality of life.