



Dr. Carol J. Whitlatch

NIMH Grant Aids Research on Caregiver Interventions

The efforts of the Margaret Blenkner Research Institute to focus on research with practical, real-world applications got a boost recently with the announcement of a \$967,483 grant from the National Institute of Mental Health. The grant was awarded to Dr. Carol J. Whitlatch, Assistant Director for Research, for a four-year study of the mental health of caregivers for people with dementia and other chronic health conditions. Dr. Whitlatch is working closely with Lynn Friss Feinberg of the Family Caregiver Alliance in San Francisco on the project.

the researchers expect to develop interventions that are tailored to specific needs and circumstances

Since 1998, the two researchers have worked with a sample of 562 caregivers and care receivers from Cleveland and San Francisco. Participants have been tracked from the time of initial diagnosis of dementia or other chronic condition, through the changes that occur in both members of the caregiving dyad, or pair, as the condition progresses.

Data gleaned from the longitudinal study will be used to create interventions to help caregivers cope with the stress of the caregiving situation.

Because the group of caregivers is large and diverse, the researchers expect to develop interventions that are tailored to specific needs and circumstances based on such things as living arrangements, cultural or ethnic background, socioeconomic status, and the amount of time spent in the caregiving "career."

"A main component of this study is the development and distribution of educational materials that translate research findings into helpful resources for use in practice settings," added Dr. Whitlatch.

Benjamin Rose today!

HELPING PEOPLE AGE SUCCESSFULLY Vol. 3, No. 3

From the desk of Richard Browdie

Warm weather having arrived, some people plan vacations, some relax or work in the garden, and others think about what is or should be new and changing around them. Most of us at Benjamin Rose fall into the last group. And from all indications, it is going to be a busy summer.



Richard Browdie

Benjamin Rose personnel have been busy as usual providing services to older people in the Greater Cleveland area, but we have been exploring a number of changes in our operations to make our resources, that support our free care to the most in need, sustainable into the future. We are expanding our activities in community-based and state-level advocacy and policy analysis, building on activities associated with our co-sponsorship with Judson at University Circle of the program "And Thou Shalt Honor," which aired on WVIZ, to heighten public awareness of the issues surrounding caregiving in Northeast Ohio. In addition, I will share information from the Ohio Commission to Reform Medicaid, on which I serve.

The issues generated by those activities are high on the list of priorities at Benjamin Rose as we work to inform and engage the community, particularly advocates for older people, on the growing array of issues generated by ongoing economic difficulties across Ohio. The challenges facing human service systems and public services in general, as well as those that specifically impact

(continued inside)



Browdie (continued from front)

older people with unmet needs, will be numerous and, at times, contentious. While we want to contribute to the debate, we want even more to contribute to the solutions, and the background work has already begun.

There is new activity in the arena of family caregivers of persons with dementia. Caregiver stress is the focus of a major multiyear, NIMH-funded project by Dr. Carol Whitlatch of Benjamin Rose's Margaret Blenkner Research Institute (MBRI). This project extends MBRI's 20-year history of research on family caregiving. Another study builds on work conducted in collaboration with the Alzheimer's Association and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Drs. David Bass and Katherine Judge are leading a team from MBRI in developing a nationwide study to examine the benefits of services for dementia delivered through partnerships of local VAs and Alzheimer's Association chapters. Dr. Farida Ejaz, another MBRI researcher, continues to examine consumer satisfaction with long-term care services, building on her previous work that led to the establishment of Ohio's statewide nursing home consumer satisfaction survey.

Certainly, vacations will be taken this summer by folks at Benjamin Rose. We're going to need them, because our busy season is just starting.



SUMMER 2004 Volume 3, No. 3

Benjamin Rose today! is published by the Institutional Advancement division of Benjamin Rose.

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Cristine Laraway, Director of Marketing for Community Services, poses with her dog Reilly. A certified therapy dog, Reilly takes turns with his "sister" Zoe accompanying Ms. Laraway to work and offering comfort and friendship to Kethley House residents.

More Information for Caregivers

Family caregivers and others had some help sorting through the new Medicare benefits recently, thanks to a free program offered by Benjamin Rose Community/In-Home Services. The May 20 educational program in Broadview Heights offered an overview of the Medicare law and its potential effects on older adults and their caregivers; outlined community resources available to support family care; and featured a Family Caregiving Panel. Participants were even treated to a relaxation session with a certified yoga instructor.

Funded by the Ohio Department of Aging through the Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging, the program was made possible through the Older Americans Act.

Community/In-Home Services is planning a second informational program for caregivers on November 12 in Warrensville Heights. Participants will gain information on preparing nutritious meals and on managing stress.

For more information, contact Sylvia Galizio at 216.791.8000.

Del-ightful!



Martha and Del Donahoo (center) visit a local senior center with Michelle Abraham (right) and Lori Spadalsky as part of an outreach program of Benjamin Rose Home Care.

To most residents of northeast Ohio, Del Donahoo is as familiar a fixture as the Terminal Tower. The features reporter has worked for WKYC-TV 3 in many capacities since 1968, including general assignment reporter, news anchor and co-host of the local morning show, *Today in Cleveland*. He is arguably the most people-oriented reporter on television today, featuring notable restaurants, shops and people on his “Del’s Folks” news segment. In 1988, he was honored by

116 mayors from throughout northeast Ohio, who proclaimed his 65th birthday to be Del Donahoo Day. Del and TV3 have been generous with Del’s time as well. He and his lovely wife Martha have made several public appearances at various Senior Centers at events sponsored by Benjamin Rose Community/In-Home Services. Thanks Del and WKYC!!

Sidney Katz, MD

The latest Myth Buster honoree, Dr. Sidney Katz celebrates his 15th anniversary as Distinguished Scholar in Benjamin Rose’s Margaret Blenkner Research Institute in July.



An advisor to U.S. and world leaders, a lifetime member of the National Academy of Sciences’ Institute of Medicine, the co-director of the Stroud Program on the Science of Quality of Life in Aging at Columbia University, and recipient of the Bronze Star, Dr. Katz has been honored by dozens of organizations. His favorite award, however, is the Foundation for Health in Aging’s Lifetime of Caring Award, which he received in 2001—an honor he shares with former president Jimmy Carter and writer Maya Angelou.

In Memoriam

Helen Clements, Member Emerita, who served on the Benjamin Rose Board from June, 1949 to December, 1981, passed away at her home in Maine, on March 10 at the age of 94. Mrs. Clements served Benjamin Rose as president from 1955 to 1957. In 1980, she was honored with the first Trustee Award for her 31 years of service.

Chester Gray, a prolific public servant and June 2000 Myth Buster, died June 19, 2004. During his trailblazing career devoted to advancing the careers of minorities and disabled people, Mr. Gray held various leadership positions with the Ohio Bureau of Employment Services, the Ohio Civil Rights Commission, and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). He retired in 1984.

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findings
A NEWSLETTER OF THE
MARGARET BLENKNER RESEARCH INSTITUTE
Summer 2004

Taking Care...Taking Charge!

Making the Best Life Possible for Older Adults and Their Families

Eight percent of adults over 65 who live at home have one or more chronic illnesses — arthritis, high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease, memory loss, or vision and hearing disorders — that make it hard to do housework, take medications, fix meals, run errands, and manage finances. These abilities to manage everyday activities continue to decrease as the person grows older. But many older people, even those with Alzheimer's disease, can continue to live safely at home despite their infirmities with help from their families.

Care managers serve as personal coaches to families, helping them identify areas in which they need assistance, suggesting services that would improve their lives, and developing action plans to address problems.

More than 22 million American families provide care for an older person. Five million of these caregivers assist people with memory loss. Caregivers may be spouses, adult children, daughters-in-law, grandchildren, or life partners. Along with assisting their relatives, many caregivers juggle child care and job responsibilities. Their duties range from providing transportation, helping with housekeeping chores and personal care, and accompanying older adults to doctor appointments. They pay taxes, make sense out of Medicare bills, and track down missing Social Security checks.

Only 20% of older adults with chronic illnesses and family caregivers use community-based services like respite, adult day care, home care, or chore services. Many do not use outside assistance because they don't know what services are available or how to find them. Some feel services are too costly or believe family members should provide all the care themselves.

Services Help Older Adults and Caregivers

Transportation, meal programs, adult day programs, housekeeping, chore services, and respite services are available in most areas. Service agencies also offer information about health concerns along with counseling and support groups. Services can make life easier for older people and their families and prevent hospitalizations, emergency room visits, and excessive doctor appointments.

Save the Date!
Community Forum on
Taking Care...Taking Charge!
Making the Best Life Possible for
Older Adults and Their Families

Wednesday, July 28, 2004
9 to 11 a.m.
Kresge Room, Kethley House,
11900 Fairhill Road

Call 216.373.1674
for registration information

Resources for Older Adults and Family Caregivers

The best way to locate services is by talking with trusted **family members, neighbors, friends, and colleagues**. Many of them may have used supportive services. Ask them what providers they have used and how satisfied they were with the service. When you ask about finding in-home help for a family member, you may be surprised by how many within your circle of friends have firsthand experience and wisdom to share.

Many families today hire **home helpers**. Although these individuals may require more supervision, they often provide good long-term solutions to family caregiving situations.

The Internet also is an excellent tool for finding useful resources for older people and family caregivers and is especially helpful for long-distance caregivers. If you do not have a home computer, most public libraries offer free computer access and training.

The following organizations serve as gateways to other service organizations that may offer the help you need:

Benjamin Rose Community/ In-Home Services

216.791.8000.

Provides in-depth care consultation to older adults and their families by telephone or in-person interviews.



Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging

216.621.8010 • www.pas10a.org

Publishes a free resource guide for older adults and their families covering Cuyahoga, Lake, Lorain, Geauga, and Medina counties. Lists city offices on aging, along with providers of transportation services, home care, housing, meals, chores, skilled care facilities, and more.

Cuyahoga County United Way

First Call for Help

216.436.2000 • www.LinkToHelp.org

Provides information about a variety of local services and resources for older adults via telephone and online.

Eldercare Locator

800.677.1116 • www.eldercare.gov

A free national service that helps caregivers find aging-service organizations around the country that provide transportation, housing meals, home health care, adult day care, and more.

www.SeniorsConnect.org

This Web site, made available through the Cleveland Public Library, provides links to and information about local health organizations, legal and financial assistance providers, senior living options, and a variety of local and national caregiver resource organizations.

Ohio Department of Aging

614.466.5500 • www.goldenbuckeye.com

An excellent source of information about Ohio benefits and services for older people including energy-assistance programs, housing and legal assistance, Golden Buckeye cards, nutrition services, Medical drug discount cards, and more.

Cleveland Area Alzheimer's Association

Helpline: 216.721.8457

Central Office: 216.721.8457

Eastern Office: 440.974.7785

Western Office: 440.934.7750

Telephone helpline offers support and information services for families and professionals. Additional services include family planning meetings, respite reimbursement and care consultation, substitute caregiver programs, publications, and resources.

City offices on aging

Many communities have offices on aging that provide a variety of services for older adults and families, including transportation, senior centers, and meal programs. Look in the white pages of the telephone directory under the listing for your city for contact information.

Barriers to Finding Help

Hundreds of organizations in Greater Cleveland and Cuyahoga County offer a wide range of services to help older people cope with chronic illnesses and enable them to live at home. Agencies like First Call for Help and the Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging help families connect with service organizations.

But finding help is not always easy. Community-based services for people with chronic illnesses are not well organized or coordinated. Doctors and health professionals may not be well informed about community-based services or their costs, and are uncomfortable referring patients to these programs. Although some services are offered on a sliding-fee scale, cost can be a barrier to service use. Medicare covers primarily health-related services and Medicaid and other state programs, like PASSPORT, are for people with limited incomes.

Older people who are not feeling well and stressed-out caregivers may not have the time or energy to call many different agencies to see what (if any) services are available. Some services are not available in all communities, or may not have convenient hours or locations. Older adults may be uncomfortable when they are away from familiar surroundings and routines and often resist trying services that disrupt their usual routines. Some families are reluctant to let strangers come into their homes — even to provide much-needed assistance.

Care Managers Link Families with Services

Care managers (also called care consultants, service coordinators, or case managers) are social workers or nurses experienced in working with older adults and their families. These professionals practice in hospitals, social service agencies, and senior centers, or practice independently. They serve as personal coaches to families, helping them identify areas in which they need assistance, suggesting services that would improve their lives, and developing action plans to address problems.

Care managers help older adults and their families plan strategies to meet care needs. They also may offer ongoing monitoring of the situation so care can be changed when needs change. Most importantly, care managers help families decide on and find the most helpful services for their particular situation. Long-distance caregivers, who are unfamiliar with service providers in the city where their older relatives live, often find care managers are a key resource for arranging needed services.

Research Proves Benefits of Professional Care Managers

For the past 10 years, the Margaret Blenkner Research Institute (MBRI) of Benjamin Rose has conducted studies that develop and evaluate care management services. Two of these research projects were The Cleveland Alzheimer's Managed Care Demonstration, and the Chronic Care Networks for Alzheimer's Disease Initiative.

The Cleveland Managed Care Demonstration tested an innovative care-management program created by the Cleveland Area Alzheimer's Association and Kaiser Permanente of Ohio in partnership with the MBRI. This three-year study was funded by foundation and government grants. Findings demonstrated the benefits of offering care-management services to people with Alzheimer's and their families. Results indicated people with memory problems who used the care management program compared with those who did not had:

- Experienced 32% fewer hospitalizations and 50% fewer emergency room visits.
- Felt less embarrassed and isolated because of their memory problems.
- Reported fewer symptoms of depression.

Those who used the care-management program also were more satisfied with their health care.

We Depend on You!

As a nonprofit organization, Benjamin Rose relies on the generosity of individuals like you to further its mission of advancing the health, independence, and dignity of older adults by raising the standards for quality of care. Please consider making a donation today!

Complete the following information and mail this form to:

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850 Euclid Ave., Suite 1100
Cleveland, OH 44114
Attn: Development

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Community Forums

Approximately 100 researchers, practitioners, and family members gathered at Kethley House in March for an open discussion about the challenges of providing care to individuals with memory loss and/or other chronic health conditions. This first in a series of Community Forums sponsored by the Margaret Blenkner Research Institute (MBRI) was titled *The Faces of Caregiving: How Older Adults and Family Caregivers Think About the Care Situation*.

MBRI researchers Drs. Carol Whitlatch and Katherine Judge, Michelle Abraham, also of Benjamin Rose, and Jeffrey Mostade of Senex discussed interventions, coping skills, and what to expect with continuing memory loss. Overall, the Community Forum provided valuable insight into the challenges of providing care and emphasized the need for early stage interventions that provide support, information, and education to caregiving families.

The MBRI Community Forums support the mission of the Research Institute to conduct applied research that has practical value for the health care community and families.



Jeffrey Mostade of Senex (right) simulates a care-planning exercise with Margaret and John Mahovlic, a care couple participating in Project PLAN (Planning for Late Life Activities and Needs), an intervention study currently being conducted by the MBRI.

The next Community Forum is scheduled for Wednesday, July 28, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. in the Kresge Room, Kethley House, 11900 Fairhill Road. The topic is *Taking Care...Taking Charge! Making the Best Life Possible for Older Adults and Their Families*. Dr. David Bass and Sharen Eckert of Benjamin Rose, and a guest from another local service organization will present information on accessing services to improve the quality of life of older adults and their caregivers.

For more information, call 216.373.1674.

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