

Kin Care *Newsline*

Older Adult Edition

NEWS FOR KIN CARE CUSTOMERS

IN THE NEWSLINE: *The Hardest Job; Dealing with Menopause; Changes in Medicaid for Nursing Home Expenses*

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The Hardest Job

Recently, a tribe of eighty brave primitive people emerged from the deep recesses of the Columbian jungle in South America to join the modern world. Somehow, despite never having interacted with any aspect of the modern world, they were able to communicate their amazement about their newfound joys (shoes were great because walking in the jungle hurt their feet.) Most fascinating, though, was their lack of a word for the future. They lived for today and died just as they had lived, alongside their tribesmen and the creatures of the jungle, devoid of physical comforts but emotionally secure in their place among their people and the environment.

We, who walk with shoes, don't necessarily have it so lucky. Many choose not to think much about it, but the future is ever present and for some, it will have limited resemblance to the past. We are a society that expects, with each life phase, to learn, to achieve, to build something that will last, to make a life that will fulfill us and hopefully create a cocoon that will protect us by building wealth and a support system to care for us when we become needy — or so we hope.

The lucky get to live their entire lives with their people in a familiar environment, achieving while able, so they can nurture those who need it, then sheltered by that same environment. It is no coincidence that “familiar” means “to be knowledgeable about and comfortable with.” It is from the word “family.”

The rest of us must rely on our institutions to provide that familiar environment. The challenge is to make those institutional systems family-like. That is hard when regulations

necessarily dominate operations and staff on shifts come and go. It is easy to see how the rules in a nursing home, state facilities, or other group residences and the need to maintain order and avoid problems become the priority such that nurturing along with cozy familiarity are rarities if not downright hostile to the daily running of such an operation. Benign consistency, a sort of operational meritocracy where individual needs are subservient to the greater “good” of the facility becomes the priority. Avoid problems, get everyone fed and medicated and “all is well” — on paper.

None of our personal family homes run smoothly and thank goodness no one is looking in to make sure they all do. The resulting blandness would make life a bore and not worth living. Finding a way to make the lives of people who need our help rich with the nurturing and familiarity which makes “family” what we want to come home to is the hardest job of all.

Cont. from Dealing with Menopause

Black Cohosh has also been found to be beneficial for reducing hot flashes, improving mood and insomnia.

Chaste tree berry helps to stimulate up regulation of the progesterone receptors, which may help one to achieve hormonal balance, while Korean Ginseng aids in lifting mood and decreasing stress hormone levels.

Often herbal formulas are found to contain all three of the above components. As a clinical nutritionist, I recommend one at a time used over a three to four week cycle to ascertain its efficacy.

**FROM THE
EXPERT**

Nutrition Bites

By Deborah Arneson, BS, MS, CCN
Nutrition Consultants

Dealing with Menopause

More and more research is under way regarding estrogenic plant compounds and their benefits relating to menopause symptoms. Red Clover, an isoflavone rich compound known to reduce hot flashes is the most widely used aid throughout the world, which may well be a testimony to its efficacy. All natural substances may take time – up to weeks or 2 to 3 months as well as a commitment to work towards using natural versus hazardous, synthetic based HRT products. Over a 3 to 4 month period, used daily, 44% of women found relief with Red Clover.

Red Clover has also been shown to reduce vaginal dryness as well as to increase HDLs, the good blood fats that protect your heart.

Black Cohosh is another helpful herb, which tends to exhibit anti-estrogenic activity, which is often beneficial for the large percentage of women who are burdened with excess estrogen generally stored in excess body fat.cont. on page 1...

Kin Care, Inc. provides Geriatric Care Management, a consultation service, to older adults. **Kin Care, Inc.** also provides CILA housing and support services to persons with developmental disabilities in the homes of Kin Care host families and group homes. **Kin Care, Inc.** is accredited by **CARF**, The Rehabilitation Accreditation Commission. We maintain an open door policy. The results of inspections and reviews are available by written request. **Kin Care, Inc.** is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Legal Briefs

By D. Rebecca Mitchell, Esquire
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Changes in Medicaid for Nursing Home Expenses

On February 8, 2006, Congress passed the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, which imposes new restrictions on the eligibility of older persons for Medicaid benefits to pay for nursing home costs. These changes affect anyone who might need Medicaid to pay for nursing home expenses in the future, whether or not they are trying to shelter their money and property.

The new law changes the “look back” period for transfers of property by a person who applies for Medicaid nursing home benefits, increasing it from three to five years. Gifts made during the five-year period may result in ineligibility. The method for calculating the period of ineligibility caused by making gifts has been changed. Instead of starting on the date of the gift, under the new law the penalty period does not start until a person is in a nursing home, out the funds, and would otherwise qualify for Medicaid. There are also new limitations on the use of annuities which may cause problems for those who do not conform to the new technical requirements.

Every older person who applies for Medicaid nursing home benefits will have to provide documentation of all financial transactions for up to five years prior to the application date. If the applicant has made contributions or gifts to churches, charities or family members within the five-year period, she may be ineligible for Medicaid nursing home benefits for many years after the gifts were made, even if she had no intention of using the Medicaid program at the time. With the passage of this new law, planning is more critical than ever.