



AGELESS NEWSLETTER

Talk to me, Not at me!
*Importance of clear
communication in healthcare
decisions.*

November 2024 Edition

Featured Story:

Rose's Journey Through Uncertainty, Family Conflict, and Healing

Rose had always been a fighter, battling asthma and end-stage COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease) for as long as her family could remember. On top of her breathing issues, she also suffered from vocal cord prolapse, which made it even more difficult for her to communicate her needs and concerns. With each breath feeling like a struggle, Rose found herself in and out of the hospital more times than she could count. The repeated hospital visits wore her down emotionally, but the real turning point came when she was told two years ago that she only had a few months left to live.

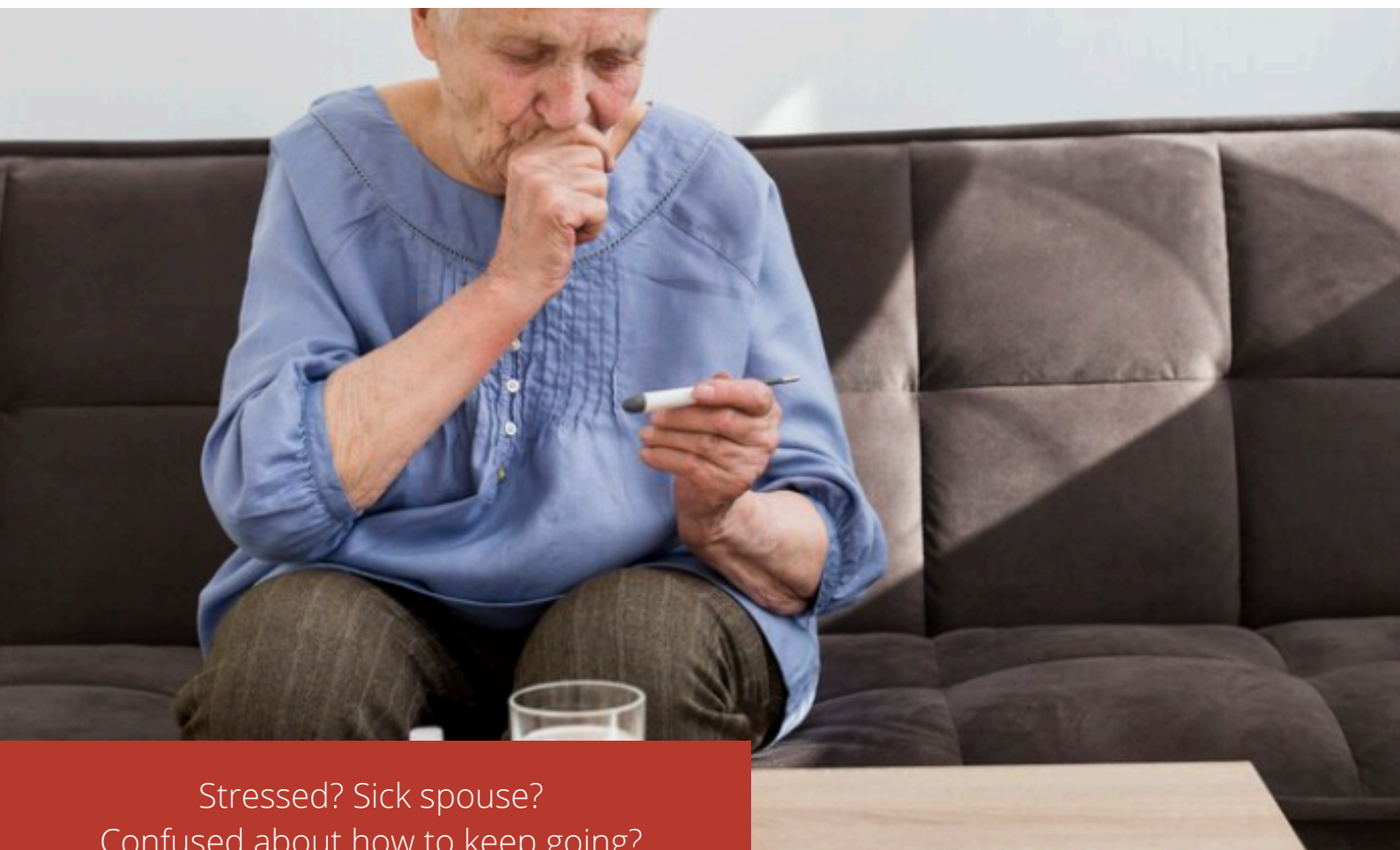
But Rose defied the odds—two years had passed, and she was still alive, albeit with worsening symptoms. Yet the emotional trauma of being told she was on borrowed time left a scar. Her family, who spoke primarily Spanish, felt increasingly distrustful of Rose's healthcare team. They felt as though the doctors were not making an effort to communicate clearly, leaving their mother in a state of fear and confusion. Rose, too, felt abandoned, as though the healthcare team had given up on her when she outlived their prediction. Miscommunication fueled the mistrust, especially when interpreters were unavailable or untrained to handle sensitive medical discussions.

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Things took a dramatic turn for the worse when Rose suffered a fall while trying to get out of bed at the rehab center where she was being treated. The fall, though not life-threatening, rattled her family. They were furious, believing that Rose should have been monitored more closely, even though she was cognitively alert. Tensions boiled over, and family conflict erupted—not only among the family members themselves but also between the family and the rehab staff. It felt like everything was crumbling around them.

At this breaking point, ****WPNSCareSync**** was called in to mediate and find a resolution. The CareSync team, recognizing the emotional and communication barriers that had escalated the situation, first ensured that a licensed and trained Spanish-speaking interpreter was present for all future discussions. With the language barrier removed, Rose and her family finally felt that they could express their concerns fully.



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One of the most important things we learned through our meetings was that Rose didn't fully understand why certain medical interventions, like using oxygen and inhalers, were so critical to her health. For Rose, it wasn't just a matter of learning how to use these tools; she needed to understand why they were necessary. Up until this point, Rose had been resistant to using her oxygen regularly, and she wasn't compliant with her inhalers, simply because she didn't know the full impact they could have on improving her quality of life. She feared they would make her dependent, rather than seeing them as a way to make her breathing easier.

The CareSync team spent time carefully explaining each aspect of her treatment plan, ensuring that Rose and her family understood the **why** behind each medical recommendation. Rose finally realized that using her oxygen regularly would prevent many of the issues that had landed her in the hospital before. She also learned how her inhalers worked to open her airways, making breathing less of a struggle. This personalized education, delivered in her native language, was transformative.

Rose's trust in the care team grew exponentially. She told us that, for the first time, she felt **seen and heard.** No longer was she just a patient being told what to do—she was part of the decision-making process. Her family's concerns about abandonment were also addressed. We reassured them that the care plan included emotional and psychological support, not just medical intervention.

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Together, we built a care plan that involved both medication management and regular follow-ups to avoid hospitalizations. Additionally, Rose's care team created a monitoring system for falls, reducing the chances of a future incident. The family, initially filled with mistrust and anger, felt a huge sense of relief. They appreciated that their concerns were finally being heard, and the careful, thoughtful communication between them and the care team helped re-establish trust.

Through CareSync's mediation and support, Rose was able to stay at home with fewer hospital visits. The emotional weight lifted from her shoulders, and her family's peace of mind returned as they now understood and trusted the plan in place. The road had been long and difficult, but by breaking down the barriers of communication, educating Rose, and addressing the family's fears, we helped give Rose and her family the sense of control they had been longing for.



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Uncover your stress levels: Take this quick quiz!

Do you often feel overwhelmed by the responsibilities of caring for your loved one? Yes No

Do you find it difficult to balance caregiving with your personal or professional life? Yes No

Have you noticed that you're getting less sleep or feeling more fatigued than usual? Yes No

Do you feel like you're losing control of your daily routine or caregiving tasks? Yes No

Do you find it hard to make time for your own self-care or relaxation? Yes No

Have you had frequent conflicts with family members about caregiving responsibilities? Yes No

Do you often feel isolated or that no one understands the stress you're under? Yes No

Have you felt more irritable or short-tempered while managing caregiving duties? Yes No

Do you worry about your loved one's health or safety, even when you're not with them? Yes No

Have you been neglecting your own health to focus on caregiving? Yes No

If you answered "Yes" to 3 or more questions, you may be experiencing caregiver stress. Taking care of yourself is just as important as taking care of your loved one. WPNSCareSync can help ease the burden with personalized geriatric care planning and emotional support.

Ask A Geriatrician:

How Can Psychological Goals Help Improve End-of-Life Care?

Q. “My dad is nearing the end of his life, and it feels like there’s nothing more I can do for him physically. How can we focus on his emotional or psychological needs?”

Our CareSync geriatrician Dr Chidimma Okoli, answers:

As your loved one approaches the end of life, psychological and emotional care can be just as important as physical treatment. Simple psychological goals, such as focusing on meaningful conversations, creating a peaceful environment, and fostering emotional connections through music, family visits, or even spiritual care, can help improve quality of life.



Remember, even in their final days, your loved one can still find joy and comfort. If you’re unsure how to approach this delicate time, WPNSCareSync can help you create a compassionate care plan for both you and your loved one.

****Got a question?***

Mail us at wpns@wpnservices.org to submit your query for next month’s “Ask a Geriatrician” feature!

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Lifestyle Corner:

Events and Updates

This month, explore empowering events designed to support you and your caregiving journey. Don't miss these resources and seminar that offers guidance and community.



Senior Benefits Coalition
Member Organizations



Senior Benefits Coalition
Be Empowered to Help Veterans

Come Join us for Caregiver Support Month
November 2024

November 13th 10-11am

VHA Caregiver Support

[VA Caregiver Support Program](#)
On Microsoft TEAMS
[Register Here](#)

*Must register to receive the recording

[Link To Register](#)

A VITAL STATE OF LIFE FOR SENIORS

Caregiving is not just a responsibility; it's a vital state of life that encompasses compassion, empathy, and the essence of human connection. Our seminar, "Embracing Caregiving: A Vital State of Life for Seniors," celebrates the profound role that seniors play as caregivers and offers guidance on navigating the challenges and joys of this important journey. Led by experts in gerontology, caregiving, and community outreach, this seminar provides seniors with insights, resources, and support to embrace their caregiving roles with confidence and resilience.



Join us for a complementary session providing seniors with insights, resources and support. Led by experts in gerontology, caregiving, and community outreach.

Wednesday, November 13, 2024
10:30 am - 12:00 pm
At the following location:
Fidelity Bank Community Room
9 Leominster Connector
Leominster, MA 01453



Free Educational Seminar
Simply Well
Seniors
Aging Well
Seminar Series

Reserve your spot today!

Call or text Kelly @ 978 302 8191
Hosted by Kelly Kurtz & Jeff Turcotte
MBA, REALTOR® SRES® CSHP®

This Month's Challenge:

Find 5 Minutes for You!

Caregiving is tough, and finding “me-time” can seem impossible. This month, we’re challenging you to take ‘just 5 minutes a day’ for yourself! Whether it’s a quick walk, a stretch, or a few deep breaths, those 5 minutes can recharge you.

How to Join:

- 1. Pick Your Activity:** Choose something you love—a short walk, reading a page or two, or a simple stretch.
- 2. Stick to It:** Set a daily reminder and commit to those 5 minutes.
- 3. Share with Us:** Tell us what you did! Send a picture or a few words to us, or share on social with #5MinuteSelfCareChallenge.

We’ll give a shoutout in next month’s newsletter for the most inspiring entry!

What would YOU do with 5 extra minutes?

- A) Read a chapter 📖
- B) Stretch 🧘
- C) Walk 🚶
- D) Meditate 🧘

Let us know on social media

Remember: Even 5 minutes a day can make a big difference. We can’t wait to see how you use yours!

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Ambassador of the Month: Maria S

This month, we are proud to recognize Maria S. as our CareSync Ambassador of the Month!

Maria has been caring for her mother, who has advanced dementia, and despite the emotional toll, she has shown remarkable resilience. Maria works with our team to ensure her mother's care is personalized and compassionate. She has gone above and beyond in sharing her story with other caregivers in our community and has been an incredible advocate for dementia awareness.

Maria's Words: "Caring for my mom is hard, but with CareSync, I don't feel alone. They've helped me with everything from medical decisions to emotional support. Now, I'm more confident in the care I'm providing her, and I'm so grateful for the team."

****Ambassador Nominations Now Open****

Do you know a caregiver who's making a significant impact? Nominate them to be our ****November Ambassador of the Month**** and let their caregiving story inspire others.

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Fun Holiday Trivia!



It's the holiday season! Let's get into the festive spirit with a fun trivia question.

Trivia Question: What traditional Christmas decoration is actually a parasitic plant?

Answer: The mistletoe!

Did you get it right?

Fun fact: In Norse mythology, mistletoe was seen as a symbol of love, and that's why we kiss under it today!

Holiday Themes and Tips for Caregivers

The holidays can be stressful, especially if you're caring for an aging or ill loved one. Here are some quick tips to manage stress and enjoy the season:

- 1. Plan ahead:** Make a list of must-do activities and delegate tasks to other family members.
- 2. Simplify traditions:** Focus on what matters most—connection. Even small moments can bring joy.
- 3. Involve your loved one:** Find holiday activities they can participate in, such as listening to holiday music or helping with light decorating.
- 4. Take time for yourself:** Self-care is critical. Even a short walk or a coffee break can help you recharge.

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Stay Connected & What's Next

Looking ahead to December, we're preparing an exciting Holiday Caregiving Survival Guide to help you manage the hustle and bustle while still caring for your loved one. Plus, we'll share inspirational stories of families who've navigated the challenges of caregiving during the holiday season.

Have questions? Don't hesitate to reach out! We're here to support you every step of the way. Let's make this holiday season about love, connection, and self-care.

Ready to learn more?

Follow us on social media for caregiving tips, community stories, and upcoming events.

Reach out to us via our chat feature or schedule a consultation on our website. Let's get through this caregiving journey together.

WPNSCareSync- Feel Like You Again.

