



Welcome Readers,  
I want to welcome you to "On The Home Front", the Visiting Nurse Plus e-letter. I hope you will find it interesting and informative. Feel free to email us your comments and suggestions.

Gloria Horton  
VNP Executive Director

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## Caregiving: Not Just Women's Work Anymore

### Research indicates one-third of family caregivers are men

The concept of "family" has changed drastically in this country during the past 30 years: women have entered the workforce in record numbers; couples have fewer children and at a later age; more geographic distance exists between generations; and gender roles have been altered. These changes have resulted in more men taking a leading role in caring for their aging loved ones. And while it's not possible to stereotype caring style along gender lines, several studies indicate that men face different challenges than woman traditionally have:

- Men more often report feeling unprepared for the role.
- Men find it harder to ask for help.
- Men find it more difficult to express their feelings of exhaustion, frustration and being overwhelmed.
- If employed, men are more reluctant to discuss caregiving issues at work.

In a MetLife Mature Market Institute study titled "Sons at Work: Balancing Employment and Eldercare", less than half of the male employees at three Fortune 500 companies who responded to the survey had informed their co-workers or their supervisor about their caregiving responsibilities, compared to roughly 60% of the women interviewed. One respondent, explaining why he was not comfortable sharing this information, said, "All I hear from my supervisor is that I need to stop letting my personal life affect my business life." More than a quarter of all respondents—men and women—reported that they were considering a job change because of their caregiving and work responsibilities.

Unfortunately, when men do not share this critical aspect of their lives in the work place, they may miss out on their company's eldercare assistance programs, including counseling and consultation, help with insurance issues, guidance in accessing community resources and more. As more and more men take on the role of caring for their spouses or elderly relatives, the notion of eldercare as a "women's issue" will be challenged at all levels, including the corporate level; consequently, companies will see an increase in both female and male employees' requests for work schedule modification, limited ability to travel, decline of promotions, and sometimes, giving up a job altogether.

Forward-thinking employers will recognize that providing caregiving support to their workers to help them arrange services and manage day-to-day concerns is a critical intervention. The MetLife study notes that "A geriatric care manager approach, currently being used in a number of large companies, may be the appropriate choice to reduce the risks of losing quality employees." At the very least, companies must accept that male employees need support as much as their female counterparts, often more thanks to long-held beliefs that taking care of someone else is a woman's job.

*Patti Healy, BSN, CMC is a nationally certified geriatric care manager with more than 25 years of geriatric nursing experience. Her services include an in-depth assessment of an individual's current needs, assistance with accessing services, and ongoing care management. For more information or to set up an evaluation, please call her at 425-0853.*

*View the entire study quoted in this article at [www.maturemarketinstitute.com](http://www.maturemarketinstitute.com).*



## VNP Customer Celebrates the Century Mark

Visiting Nurse Plus customer, Dorothea Schlechte (sitting) enjoyed flowers and other goodies brought to her by VNP Customer Care Supervisor, Pam Smith, in honor of Mrs. Schlechte's 100th birthday in December 2007! While Mrs. Schlechte was thrilled to have most of her family in town for this milestone, Pam noted that "Mrs. Schlechte is a gracious and wonderful lady of Evansville, and it's our pleasure to have her as part of the VNP family!"

## New Name...Same Exceptional Service

### *VNP Transitions to Lifeline Medical Alert System*

Since introducing the Health Watch Personal Response System to its customers in 2002, Visiting Nurse Plus has seen the demand for this service grow tremendously. With Philips Lifeline's acquisition of Health Watch in 2007, VNP has recently converted several hundred subscribers in its service area to Lifeline units.

As the founder of the personal response industry over 30 years ago, Lifeline's customer base includes more than 500,000 subscribers in North America. Lifeline offers the fastest response time of all systems, low monthly fees and no long-term contracts. This 24-hour-a-day service gives independently minded seniors the confidence to maintain an active life at home, knowing that if they suddenly need help, professionally trained responders are available to determine the nature of the emergency and take appropriate action—all at the simple push of a waterproof button worn around the customer's neck or wrist.

As the program provider of Lifeline systems for six southern Indiana counties, Visiting Nurse Plus will continue to provide local installation, education and ongoing support for its personal response customers and their families. Learn more about the Lifeline Medical Alert System at [www.lifelinesys.com](http://www.lifelinesys.com) or to arrange an installation, call Visiting Nurse Plus at 425-0853.



## Gibson County Staffer Named Caregiver of the Year

### *Award presented at annual holiday breakfast*

Mary Ann Conklin, a Home Care Aide in the Gibson County VNP office since 1998, was named 2007 Caregiver of the Year in December. The award is presented annually to a caregiver who demonstrates exceptional commitment to her customers and to VNP's mission.

In nominating her for this honor, Mary Ann's supervisors noted her desire to be an advocate for her customers, her unfailing dependability, and her always-present willingness to help out in a pinch.

Mary Ann and her husband, Bob, live in Hazleton, Indiana and have served as foster parents, providing family support to nine children.

Congratulations, Mary Ann!



## Think Seniors are Immune to Gambling Problems?

### *Don't Bet on It!*

With March 9-16, 2008 designated as National Problem Gambling Awareness Week, the National Council on Problem Gambling is trying to get the word out that seniors have become one of the fastest growing groups of gamblers in the nation—and they face a much higher risk for gambling problems than other adults.

Factors such as loneliness...the desire to escape from the depression of losing a spouse or medical concerns...financial worries...even the free transportation, meals and attention provided by casino and other gaming venue staff have contributed to gambling becoming the most frequently identified social activity among adults over 65.

Problem gambling in older adults often spirals out of control because of their delaying seeking help. "At my age, I should have known better" is a common emotion among these adults, who are often too embarrassed to ask for assistance until their addiction becomes all-consuming. And age won't prevent problem gamblers from suffering the consequences of their actions: an elderly grandmother was recently convicted of five felony counts for embezzling over \$250,000 to support her gambling habit and must now serve at least one year in prison.

If you or someone you know needs help, call the Council toll free at (800) 522-4700 or visit [www.ncpgambling.org](http://www.ncpgambling.org) for additional resources.

