



# Renaissance

Choices Today...Possibilities Tomorrow

## Elderbridge Launches New Services

This past year, many government funded programs have experienced cuts as state and federal administrations seek to trim their budgets. The majority of funding for Elderbridge Agency on Aging comes from those federal and state sources. In order to offset unstable federal and state funding, Elderbridge Agency on Aging decided to establish a supportive organization called Elderbridge Alliance that would be able to charge for services not offered through traditional Older Americans Act funding.

CEO of Elderbridge Shelly Sindt says "I am excited by the new things that we are doing here. Elderbridge Alliance provides a new line of services that we think are more responsive to the requests made to us from family members and caregivers. We are launching services in phases and phase one services were launched on July 1, 2017.

- **Home Safety Assessment** will help identify potential fall and safety hazards that can jeopardize well-being and independence of the client.
- **Healthcare Visit Companion** will accompany an individual to medical appointments and assist with communication with the medical provider.
- **Errand Buddy** is a service that accompanies individuals on errands and appointments.

- **HomeMeds** is an in-home medication assessment program that uses specialized software to screen medications of individuals for potentially harmful problems.
- **Care Coordination** will help individuals live safely at home by linking them to services needed through a person-centered action plan.
- **Home Again** provides support to individuals who return home from a hospital or nursing facility.

Nurses and social workers agree that programs such as Home Again and Care Coordination would help individuals transition easier from hospital to home and reduce the likelihood of being rehospitalized for the same health problems.

Sindt explained that she would like to see even more non-traditional services added to the Elderbridge Alliance roster as well. Sindt also said that more requests and suggestions are coming in from both care recipients and partnering organizations.

"Phase two of Elderbridge Alliance will be to add additional services that we are getting requests for that we're not currently able to provide. I would also like to see us access grant funding and endowments to subsidize and offer the services on a sliding-fee scale."

Sindt went on to say that Elderbridge Agency on Aging will continue providing the same traditional services funded thru the Older Americans Act, on a contribution basis. Elderbridge Alliance allows us to provide services on a fee-for-service basis, expanding our ability to serve the needs of our consumers.

If you are seeking services not covered by Elderbridge Agency on Aging, contact Elderbridge Alliance at 855-664-4692 for more information.

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## Leaving the Hospital

### *Older Patients Resist Home Help at Their Peril*

As many as 28 percent of patients offered home health care when they're being discharged from a hospital — mostly older adults — say “no” to those services, according to a report in Kaiser Health News. Understanding why this happens and what can be done about it is important — part of getting smarter about getting older.

Refusing home health care after a hospitalization puts patients at risk of a difficult, incomplete or slower-than-anticipated recovery. According to one study, without these services, older adults' odds of being readmitted to the hospital within 30 or 60 days double.

Why, then, do seniors, resist getting this assistance? “There are a lot of misperceptions about what home health care is,” said Carol Levine, director of the United Hospital Fund's Families and Health Care Project, a sponsor of the new report. Under Medicare, home health care services are available to older adults who are homebound and need intermittent skilled care from a nurse, a physical therapist or a speech therapist, among other medical providers. Typically, these services last four to six weeks after a hospitalization, with a nurse visiting several times a week. Some patients receive them for much longer.

Many seniors and caregivers confuse home health care with “home care” delivered by aides who help people shower or get dressed or who cook,

clean and serve as a companion. The two types of services are not the same: Home health care is delivered by medical professionals; home care is not. Nor is home care covered by Medicare, for the most part.

“Older adults are quite concerned about their independence, and they worry that this might be the first step in someone trying to take that away,” said Dr. Leslie Kernisan, a San Francisco geriatrician and creator of the website “Better Health While Aging”.

Other reasons for refusals: Seniors see their homes as sanctums, and they don't want strangers invading their privacy. They think they've been getting along just fine and have unrealistic expectations of what recovering from a hospitalization will entail. Or there are circumstances at home — perhaps hoarding, perhaps physical neglect — that an older adult doesn't want someone to see. Or the patient's cognition is compromised and he doesn't understand his needs or limitations. Or cost may be a concern.

This is where services from Elderbridge Alliance can help. Home Again is a service provided by Elderbridge Alliance that supports an individual who returns home from a hospital or nursing facility stay.

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Professional and knowledgeable staff will visit you within the first few days after returning home. A Home Again staff member will:

- Ask about those simple daily tasks that need to be done and try to help with as many of them as possible
- Assess needs and determine if arrangements for community services should be made
- Help with understanding instructions from the hospital
- Review emergency numbers and discuss where personal medical information should be stored for easy access by emergency responders
- Check medications and assist with getting any needed OTC drugs or prescriptions
- Make follow-up appointments to the doctor

- Arrange transportation if needed
- Provide written summary of assessment, action taken, and referrals or recommendations made
- Follow-up with the individual one week after visit

The rate for Home Again is \$75 per hour. The consumer will be provided a detailed invoice for services rendered. For more information on Home Again and other Elderbridge Alliance services, call 855-664-4692.



## If You're an Older Iowan, *You're not a Priority*

There, I've said it. I've felt it for a long time, under both Democratic and Republican leadership at the Iowa Capitol. But now, it's worse. It's time to speak up. Just look at the results of the recent legislative session in Iowa:

- Significant cuts for elder abuse initiatives, the services of the Area Agencies on Aging, the Department on Aging and the Office of Long Term Care Ombudsman
- Cuts to existing programs, and failure to create needed programs, that address immense challenges in recruiting and retaining the health and long-term care workforce needed to support aging Iowans
- No funding to address violent or sexual offenders in Iowa's nursing homes
- A failure to address the needs of 300,000+ family caregivers supporting their loved ones
- A lack of funding or initiatives to deal with growing housing, transportation, and financial security concerns

Where funding existed, it was substantially reduced. Where funding or other initiatives were needed, they were either not discussed or not seriously addressed. The impacts are real, significant and disturbing for Iowa's aging population and those who care for and support them. They include:

- Waiting lists for things like home delivered meals and assistance with chores around the house
- Denial of requests for, or delays in getting, financial help for emergency prescriptions or money to help with rent; a ramp to be built to a home's entry; etc.
- Fewer or delayed investigations of elder abuse
- Less response to complaints about the care being provided in nursing facilities

When I talked to legislators during the recent session about taking actions to improve the quality of life for older Iowans and their caregivers, I was typically told something like this: "It's a good idea and we'd like to do it, but we just don't have the money."

"We just don't have the money" is not a reason; it's code for "This is not a priority for me or my party."

Iowa's general fund budget for next year spends more than \$7.2 billion — that's billion. The budget for the Department on Aging and the Office of Long Term Care Ombudsman is a little more than \$12 million — less than one quarter of one percent of the total.

Many in Iowa find that hard to believe. We rank seventh in the nation in the percent of our population 65 and over. One out of every four Iowans is a baby boomer approaching their 60s and 70s. People 85 and over are one of the fastest growing segments of the population. And yet aging is not a priority? Really? The current situation is unacceptable. Iowans deserve better. We can make things better by:

- Looking for opportunities. Here's a big one: We have a new governor in Iowa, and plenty of candidates who want to take her place. Let's give all of them a chance to show that they understand the challenges facing Iowa's aging and caregiving population, and will commit to addressing them.
- Expecting more from our legislators. It's time for Iowans to hold their legislators' feet to the fire. Let them know that you don't support the decisions they've made and that your vote for them in the future depends on them making aging and caregiving issues a greater priority.
- Becoming an aging activist. There is a saying in politics that "You are not going to get something you don't ask for." So, start asking.

The bottom line: We need more leadership and more ideas.

I'll ask you for both. Show leadership by getting engaged in the issues. Offer up ideas on how we can get beyond the status quo on aging and caregiving and the conversation stopping statement that "we just don't have the money."

JOHN HALE is a contributor to "A Better Iowa" in the Des Moines Register

## New Service Offered by Elderbridge Alliance

Studies have shown time and time again that being active and engaged in one's community have benefits for both the body and the mind. While many seniors and adults with disabilities are proud of their ability to stay independent and living in their own homes, lessened mobility and slower pace of living can leave some feeling like prisoners there. To help combat this, Elderbridge Alliance has created Errand Buddy.

Errand Buddy accompanies individuals on errands such as shopping, hair salon appointments, banking, coffee or meal outings, and other non-medical engagements. Travel is provided to and from destinations safely and comfortably, whether traveling from home or a care facility.

You will have complete peace of mind with our Errand Buddy service knowing that a trained professional from Elderbridge Alliance can keep you or your loved one active and safe. We relieve the family of day-to-day activities that

can complicate already busy schedules.

If you are a caregiver, Elderbridge Alliance Errand Buddy will provide you with that much needed helping hand so that you can have confidence knowing your loved one is cared for and able to complete their errands and appointments safely and on schedule. Our services are custom fit to meet your needs and those of your loved one.

While Errand buddy services do not cover medical appointments, Elderbridge staff are excited to also be offering Healthcare Visit Companion, which does provide transport to and from appointments and much more.

The rate for Errand Buddy is \$50 per hour. The consumer will be provided a detailed invoice for services rendered. For more information on Errand Buddy and other Elderbridge Alliance services, call 855-664-4692.

## Adult Day Services: The Overlooked Option

More and more Iowans are stepping into the role of family caregiver for their loved ones. Many of them find the responsibilities of that role very demanding and life changing. Often, caregivers have difficulties finding a balance between caring for their loved ones and taking care of themselves. Without that self-care, it's not long before the caregiver begins to show signs of burnout and compassion fatigue.

Adult Day Service is a vital source of respite care for family caregivers. Studies have shown that adult day care services help reduce stress and decrease symptoms of depression for family caregivers. Also, families have reported that loved ones who used adult day services had positive reactions, been easier to manage and are more active and alert.

These services are designed for adults over 18 years of age, who are experiencing physical or memory impairments that make it unsafe for them to stay at home alone or who are in need of socialization.

In the Elderbridge Agency on Aging service area, there are two adult day services; Schmoker Adult Day Services at Friendship Haven in Fort Dodge and The Salvation Army Adult Day Health Center in Mason City.

Both of these services offer similar programs to their participants. A large community area serves as the location for group activities and meals, while more secluded areas provide a place to rest or to enjoy a quiet moment. There are multiple activities each day, such as games, sing-a-longs, outings or chapel services.

Participants may come for full days or half days, partial or full weeks. There are a variety of payment options, such as long term care insurance, Medicaid, Veteran's benefits or participants can chose to pay for these services out of their own pockets. Also, transportation from home to the center may be available for an additional fee.



Staff and clients are enjoying a day at Salvation Army ADHC. For more information please contact the Adult Day Service in Fort Dodge at 515-573-2121 or The Salvation Army ADHC in Mason City at 641-424-0800.

## Tax Credit Bill for Family Caregivers

Every day, 40 million Americans care for adult loved ones, assisting them to live independently in their homes and communities, keeping them out of more costly nursing homes and saving taxpayer dollars. The unpaid care these family caregivers provide is valued at about \$470 billion a year, more than total Medicaid spending in 2013. Family caregivers help with bathing and dressing, preparing meals, managing medications, driving to appointments, keeping up with finances and more.

The bipartisan Credit for Caring Act was introduced May 17, 2017 in the U.S. Senate by Senator Joni Ernst of Iowa and two others. The Credit for Caring Act would help support America's family caregivers by offering a federal tax credit of up to \$3,000 annually for those who qualify.

Why is a tax credit needed?

Family caregivers take on huge responsibilities that can be overwhelming, stressful and exhausting — not to mention challenging financially. Many juggle family caregiving duties while working full or part time jobs; some are still raising families.

Seventy-eight percent of family caregivers use their own money to care for loved ones — paying for transportation, home modifications, medications, assistive technology and more.

-Those caring for loved ones 18 and older spent an average of nearly 20 percent of their annual income on caregiving expenses — an average of roughly \$7,000 in 2016.

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In order to help their loved ones, family caregivers often risk their own health and financial security. They tap into their savings accounts, delay or stop saving for their future, and neglect their own health care. In addition to easing some of the added financial costs of family caregivers, this tax credit could assist in the following ways:

- Providing relief so that family caregivers can take a hard-earned break
- Helping family caregivers who work pay for home care or other support so they can continue working while also fulfilling their family caregiving responsibilities

The Credit for Caring Act was developed to help address the financial challenges of family caregiving and to help family caregivers stay in the workforce and be more financially secure. It would give eligible family caregivers the opportunity to receive a tax credit for 30 percent of the qualified expenses above \$2,000 paid to help a loved one,

up to a maximum credit amount of \$3,000. Family caregivers must meet the following criteria:

- Be a spouse, adult child, parent or another relation named under the "dependent" definition
- Help a loved one, of any age, who meets certain functional or cognitive limitations or other requirements, as certified by a licensed health care practitioner
- May or may not live with the loved one
- Have more than \$7,500 in earned income for the taxable year
- Can document qualified expenses

The bill also includes important provisions to do the following:

- Index certain dollar amounts and income levels to inflation
- Coordinate with other existing tax provisions to prevent double-dipping
- Phase out at higher income levels

SEPTEMBER 2017 MENUS				
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
	<b>Each Meal Includes:</b> * 1/3 of the Required Daily Amounts (RDA) for persons age 70+ * Skim or 1% milk * Condiments as appropriate * Sodium < 800mg <i>Amy Evans MS RDW LDW</i>			
	<b>LABOR DAY</b>	5 Crunchy Pollock Roasted Red Potatoes Broccoli Strawberry-Rhubarb Crisp w/ Ice Cream WWV Roll	6 Tater Tot Casserole Topped Salad Apple Slices Oatmeal Fruit Bar CJ	7 Egg Salad on Bun Tomato Spoon Salad Potato Salad Royal Brownie Cantaloupe
11 Tuna & Noodles Broccoli Creamy Cole Slaw Cinnamon Apples Apricots	12 Chicken, Orange and Almond Salad Raisin Bran Muffin Fruit Cup Chocolate Pudding	13 Liver & Onions -OR- Beef Patty Balled Potatoes w/gravy Mixed Vegetables Strawberries and Bananas WWV Roll	14 <b>COOK'S CHOICE</b>	15 Meat Loaf Baked Potato Harvard Beets Cranberry/Pear Crisp Orange Juice
18 Porcupine Meatballs Mashed Potatoes Brussel Sprouts Strawberries & Bananas	19 Cheese Burger WWV Bun Santa Fe Corn Baby Carrots Plums CJ	20 Golden Baked Chicken Potatoes w/ Gravy Garden Beans Fruit Cup WWV Roll	21 Crunchy Pollock Potato Wedges Peas Chocolate Pudding Peaches	22 Ham Loaf Roasted Red Potatoes California Blend Raisin Rice Pudding
25 <b>COOK'S CHOICE</b>	26 Salisbury Ground Beef Baked Potato Mixed Vegetables or Mixed Vegetable Salad Peach Crisp	27 Hot Pork Sandwich w/ WWV Bread and Potatoes w/Gravy Carrots & Broccoli Oatmeal Raisin Bar	28 Hearty Veg Beef Soup Corn Bread Banana Half Cinnamon Apples w/Crunchy Topping	29 Creamed Chicken Buttermilk Biscuit Green Beans Strawberry Rhubarb Raisin Crisp CJ

## Long Waits and Long Odds for Those Who Need Social Security Disability

In the U.S., fewer than half of people who apply for disability benefits — about 45 percent — are ultimately accepted, says Lisa Ekman with the National Organization of Social Security Claimants' Representatives. Getting a hearing takes an average of nearly 600 days. It may become even harder for those whose disability is difficult to see or measure.

This spring, the Social Security Administration introduced changes to fight fraud and streamline the application process, including a new rule that removes special consideration given to a person's longtime doctor. Ekman said this is a mistake. "Those changes would now put the evidence from a treating physician on the same weight as evidence from a medical consultant employed to do a one-time brief examination or a medical consultant they had do a review of the paper file and may have never examined

the individual," Ekman said. She said this could lead to more denials for disabled people with complex conditions like lupus, multiple sclerosis or schizophrenia. These illnesses can affect patients in very different ways and may be hard for an unfamiliar doctor or nurse to evaluate.

Ekman said more denials will lead to more appeals, which will increase the backlog. That backlog started snowballing about 10 years ago, said Jason Fichtner; he's now a senior research fellow in public policy at George Mason University's Mercatus Center, but was acting deputy commissioner of the Social Security Administration back then.

During the recession, he said, a lot of people who applied for benefits were disabled but not necessarily unable to work. There are now more than a million people across the country waiting for hearings, and, adding to the strain, the administration's core operating budget has shrunk by 10 percent since 2010.

## Area Foundations Help Fund Elderbridge Aid Program

Elderbridge Agency on Agency Board of Directors and staff want to thank three philanthropic organizations for their generosity shown us recently. The Hanson Foundation, First Citizens Charitable Foundation and the Cerro Gordo Community Foundation have each donated significant grants to the Elderbridge Material Aid Program.

- The Hanson Foundation donated \$5,000 to help seniors and adults with disabilities by providing funding for personal emergencies covered through the Elderbridge Material Aid Program.

- The First Citizens Charitable Foundation has again chosen Elderbridge as one of its philanthropic beneficiaries. The First Citizens Charitable Foundation also gave a gift of \$5,000 for our Material Aid Program.
- The Cerro Gordo Community Foundation has also donated a generous gift of \$3,000 to help with material aid for qualified individuals who are going through unforeseen financial hardships.

Thank you for these generous gifts aiding those in their time of need.

## Consider a Gift to the Elderbridge Endowment Fund

Your gift to the Elderbridge Agency on Aging Endowment Fund is a forever gift. Your generosity makes it possible for our organization to continue to exist for generations to come and to serve all those who need our support.

An important benefit in making a gift to the Elderbridge Endowment Fund is the additional tax credit that you receive through the Endow Iowa program. When you give, you are eligible to receive a 25 percent Iowa state tax credit, in addition

to the normal federal deduction for a charitable gift. A few other ways to give that you might consider include cash, stocks, and IRA charitable rollover. We also recommend the wonderful gift of remembering our endowment fund in your will by naming it as a beneficiary.

On-line gifts can be made at [www.elderbridge.org](http://www.elderbridge.org). If you have any questions, please contact Tammie McCreedy at [tmccreedy@elderbridge.org](mailto:tmccreedy@elderbridge.org) or by calling 800-243-0678.

## Good Bye and Good Luck Andrew

Andrew Buenger, was the VISTA Community Outreach Specialist who came to Elderbridge in August 2016 through the National AmeriCorps Vista Program and the Iowa Department on Aging.

Unlike many in the VISTA program, Andrew did not have to travel to parts unknown to fulfill his one-year commitment. Buenger got to return

home to Northwest Iowa where he grew up. A graduate of Central College in Pella and Clay Central High School in Everly, Andrew said he was fortunate to find the position and to be able to work out of the Elderbridge office in Spencer. "I have always had a sense of the importance of giving back to my community. I've been a Spencer resident all my life and saw this opportunity

to give back to the people who helped me."

Highlights during his time with Elderbridge included helping coordinate projects such as the Centenarian Recognition Event in Spencer last October, the Caregiver dinners in 8 counties this spring and marketing the new services offered through Elderbridge Alliance.

"It's been an honor to serve and to be part of an organization that serves such a huge part of the state of Iowa."

Andrew has been nominated for the Governor's Volunteer Award for his VISTA work with Elderbridge and will receive his certificate of recognition in ceremonies August 9th at Buena Vista University in Storm Lake.

## ARE YOU PREPARED?

Unscramble the words below to find a list of items that should be included in your emergency preparedness stockpile

- |                           |              |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| 1. BSTAKLEN               | 12. GMSAE    |
| 2. ODOF                   | 13. MCS SOAP |
| 3. AEWRT                  | 14. APM      |
| 4. TRSTBAEEI              | 15. IAODR    |
| 5. LHASGLFTHI             | 16. HTLISEW  |
| 6. OEYNM                  | 17. STOELCH  |
| 7. IMCNDEIE               | 18. SHOSE    |
| 8. ESHCTMA                | 19. KCJATE   |
| 9. RNEAPENOC (2 WORDS)    |              |
| 10. FTIARITDIKS (3 WORDS) |              |
| 11. OOPTDFE (2 WORDS)     |              |

- |                   |
|-------------------|
| ANSWERS:          |
| 1. Blankets       |
| 2. Food           |
| 3. Water          |
| 4. Batteries      |
| 5. Flashlight     |
| 6. Money          |
| 7. Medicine       |
| 8. Matches        |
| 9. Can Opener     |
| 10. First Aid Kit |
| 11. Pet Food      |
| 12. Games         |
| 13. Compass       |
| 14. Map           |
| 15. Radio         |
| 16. Whistle       |
| 17. Clothes       |
| 18. Shoes         |
| 19. Jacket        |



22 N. Georgia Ave., Ste 216  
Mason City, Iowa 50401

It is our mission to enable older Iowans to live with the maximum dignity, well-being and independence.

Returned Service Requested

The Elderbridge Agency on Aging. . . seeks to enable older Iowans to live with the maximum dignity, well-being and independence. Created under the Older Americans Act, Elderbridge has been meeting the needs of Iowans age 60 years and older and their caregivers for more than 35 years.

Elderbridge serves older Iowans in a 29-county area in Northwest and North Central Iowa with the goal of providing the necessary information and resources to empower our constituents to manage their lives and the aging process to the best of their and our abilities.

To learn more about the services Elderbridge provides to older Iowans, contact an Elderbridge office or visit [www.elderbridge.org](http://www.elderbridge.org).

Mason City  
22 North Georgia Avenue, Suite 216  
(641) 424-0678 or 1 (800) 243-0678

Fort Dodge  
308 Central Avenue  
(515) 955-5244 or 1 (800) 243-0678

Carroll  
603 North West Street  
(712) 792-3512 or 1 (800) 243-0678

Spencer  
714 10th Avenue East  
(712) 262-1775 or 1-800-243-0678

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Change of Address

The Renaissance is published monthly by the Elderbridge Agency on Aging. It is available to persons aged 60+ living in our 29-county service area without charge. If you wish to give a voluntary donation to help defray costs, the suggested donation is \$5.