

THE CAREGIVER UPDATE

+810-239-7671

VALLEYAREAAGING.ORG

ISSUE 01 / JANUARY 2026



For 50 years, the Valley Area Agency on Aging has been honored to serve older adults, caregivers, and our community. We extend our heartfelt thank you to our dedicated staff, volunteers, partners, and supporters who make our mission possible every day. Your compassion and commitment have helped improve lives, promote independence, and strengthen our community. Here's to continuing this important work together for many years to come.

We are **ALL THINGS SENIOR!**

UPCOMING EVENTS

* **Dementia Caregiving Workshop**

Hasselbring Senior Center
2111 Flushing Rd. Flint, MI
Feb. 11 -25, 1pm - 2:30pm

* **Dementia Caregiving Workshop**

Flushing Senior Center
106 Elm St. Flushing MI
March 3 -17, 6pm - 7:30pm

* **Virtual Dementia Tour**

Davison Senior Center
10135 Lapeer Rd. Davison, MI
April 21, 2026, Noon - 4pm



New Year – Fresh Focus! Setting Healthy Boundaries

Delegate Tasks!

Do you feel overwhelmed by the slow progression of tasks being added to your plate? Have you acknowledged all the jobs you have taken on, along with caring for your loved one? Now is the time to sit back, take a slow deep breath, and give yourself the permission to ask for help.

Some ways to ask for help:

1. Delegate task to family members
2. Make a "priority list"
3. Make a "let it go list"
4. Call VAAA for help at (810) 239-7671.
1. Use a shared family calendar for appointments and scheduled time off

Message from Yaushica Aubert, VAAA CEO

"As a caregiver, please know, you are not alone. Be kind to yourself. There are beautiful moments and trying times when you are providing care. Your feelings are valid in both situations. Take some time to breathe. Take a step, no matter how brief, and do something for yourself, even if it is just enjoying a meal in the quiet moments. Your health and well-being are just as important as the people you are caring for. You matter too."



VAAA Program Spotlight

MI CHOICE WAIVER PROGRAM

The goal of the program is to help eligible persons to obtain the services they need to live at home as independently as possible. A comprehensive array of supportive services is provided under the direction of a care management team of both a nurse and a social worker. Our purpose is to prevent an unnecessary move into a nursing home.

To qualify for these services you must:

- Be a current resident of Genesee, Lapeer, or Shiawassee Counties
- Be age 18-64 if disabled or age 65+ if elderly
- Are unable to take care of their needs, and family and friends cannot provide the level of care needed
- Care needs must meet Nursing Facility Level of Care
- Must meet program financial eligibility criteria

If you, or if you know of someone who may benefit from this program, please call the Valley Area Agency on Aging Information & Assistance Department at (810) 239-7671, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

*Programs and services are subject to availability and may have eligibility requirements



MI Choice Waiver Program

Nursing homes used to be the only choice for older or disabled persons who needed help caring for themselves. Today there may be the choice to stay in your home or a community setting, but you or a family member may need assistance in doing so.

The MI Choice Waiver program provides services and support to people in their homes. Your home could be a house, apartment, condominium, adult foster care, or a home for the aged. The program serves adults aged 18 or older who need services like those provided in a nursing home. If you are younger than 65, you must have a disability. There are also financial eligibility rules.

Valley Area Agency on Aging (VAAA) currently receives funding from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) to provide MI Choice Waiver services in Genesee, Lapeer, and Shiawassee Counties. If you need assistance please call us at 810-239-7671 or scan the code below.

Eligibility Requirements:

- MI-Choice service need that cannot be met by another community resource
- Individual gross income of \$2,901 or less
- 18-64 years of age declared disabled by social Security or the Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS); or 65 years or older

To make a referral scan the code below:



Michigan Department of Health and Human Services

MI VIRTUAL CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUPS



Below are three virtual support group options (General, Dementia, and Kinship) for you to join. These support groups will discuss issues, challenges, and concerns that caregivers face. See topics below.

These groups are informal and provide dialogue along with peer support. Participants will be able to reflect and connect with others in a similar situation.

DEMENIA CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

First Wednesday of the month from 5:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.



RELATIVES RAISING RELATIVE'S CHILDREN - (KINSHIP) CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

Second Thursday of the month from 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.



GENERAL CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

First Monday of the month from 5:30 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.



SUPPORT GROUP TOPICS:

- January: Setting Healthy Boundaries
- February: Understanding Grief and Loss
- March: Caregiver Burnout Compassion Fatigue
- April: Effective Communication
- May: Dealing with Family Issues
- June: Helpful Tools and Technology
- July: Asking for Help
- August: How to Cope with Lack of Sleep
- September: Home Safety/Fall Prevention
- October: In-Home Help
- November: Caregiving During the Holidays
- December: Self-Care



Virtual Support Groups

Above are three virtual caregiver support group options (General, Dementia, Kinship) for you to join. These support groups will discuss issues, challenges, and concerns that caregivers face. These groups are informal and provide dialogue along with peer support. Participants can reflect and connect with others in a similar situation. To join a caregiver support group, either click the button or scan the QR Code with your phone camera to join the Zoom Meeting.

Get Involved!



**AmeriCorps
Seniors**

RSVP

RSVP shows you how you can apply the skills and wisdom you've acquired throughout your life to make a positive difference in the lives of others. A part of AmeriCorps Seniors, RSVP is America's largest volunteer network for people 55 and over, with more than 200,000 volunteers tackling tough issues in communities nationwide. You choose how and where you want to serve, how much time you want to give, and whether you want to share skills you have or develop new ones.

If you are interested in volunteering call VAAA at (810) 239-7671.

Winter Self-Care Activities

Physical Health:

- Schedule all your annual appointments
- Walk and Stretch
- Join a VAAA exercise class!



Emotional:

- Seek counseling (you are not alone!)
- Allow yourself to feel your emotions

Mental:

- Take a break
- Listen to music or an audio book

Social:

- Go to an afternoon movie
- Have friends over for brunch

Spiritual:

- Step outside and appreciate nature
- Go to a place of worship or watch it live



DEAR CAREGIVER



71 Self-Care Tips To Manage Stress, Avoid Burnout & Find Joy Again While Caring For A Loved One
Katie Duncan Nurse Practitioner

Caregiver Book Recommendation

Dear Caregiver, It's Your Life Too:
71 Self-Care Tips to Manager Stress,
Avoid Burnout & Find Joy Again While
Caring for A Loved One
By Katie Duncan, Nurse Practitioner

Duncan offers easy-to-follow tips that
are simple-to-use, even if you have no
spare time.

NEW! DRUMS ALIVE GOLDEN BEATS

Drums Alive Golden Beats class uses drum sticks with a stability ball and can be done seated or standing. We drum and dance while having fun!

- **Mondays:** Carman Ainsworth Senior Center - 1pm starting January 12, 2026
- **Mondays:** Brennan Community Center at 11am- January 5 - February 23, 2026
- **Thursdays:** Loose Senior Center at 9:30am
- **Fridays:** Swartz Creek Senior Center at 9:30am



Silver Sneakers

Drums Alive
GOLDEN BEATS



Mi Caregiver Connection

www.micaregiverconnection.com

As a caregiver, you do important and often overwhelming work. You are not alone. Your Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is here to connect you to local services and resources that are nearby!

For over 50 years, Michigan's 16 AAAs have worked with a clear mission: to enhance the quality of life for older adults, adults with disabilities and caregivers.

Valley Area Agency on Aging is just a click away! Connect with your local support and resources at MiCaregiverConnection.com – powered by the Area Agencies on Aging Association of Michigan.





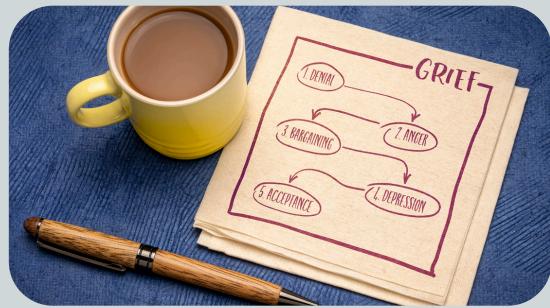
In Home Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Personal CareMedication ManagementRespiteEmergency Response UnitsHome Delivered MealsTelephonic Wellness Checks
Health Access Information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Information & AssistanceMI Choice Waiver ProgramNursing Home -TransitionCare Management Services
Wellness Programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Matter of BalanceArthritis Foundation Exercise ProgramArt TherapyCreating Confident CaregiversDementia Caregiver SeriesDiabetes PATHDrums Alive Golden BeatsSilverSneakers and Silver&Fit Exercise Classes

Valley Area Agency on Aging is a non-profit agency serving persons 60 and older and/or disabled individuals of Genesee, Lapeer and Shiawassee Counties. If you are living with disabilities or concerned about the well-being of an older adult please contact us for more information on our programs and services.

810-239-7671
www.valleyareaaging.org

Information for this newsletter came from Alzheimer.org, Dementia Caregiving Series and the National Institute on Aging. If you have additional questions, please reach out to Abbie Mars, Health and Wellness Program Manager at marsa@valleyaaa.org or 810-239-7671.

Acknowledge Grief and Loss



COMMON FEELINGS OF GRIEF:

- Denial (hoping the person will get better)
- Anger (being frustrated with the person, resenting the demands of caregiving, feeling abandoned)
- Guilt (having unrealistic expectations, wanting to still enjoy life, etc.)
- Sadness (crying, feeling overwhelmed with loss)
- Acceptance (finding personal meaning in caring for someone who is terminally ill, asking for and accepting help)

TIPS FOR COPING WITH GRIEF AND LOSS:

- Face your feelings (positive and negative)
- Claim the grieving process as your own
- Talk with someone you trust, grief counselor, therapist
- Combat feelings of isolation & loneliness - make a lunch date, stay involved in activities you enjoy
- Accept yourself - what do you expect from you and is it realistic?

**Follow us on Social Media &
Join our Caregiver Corner
Facebook Group!**

