

## South County MCI Support Group Begins February 3<sup>rd</sup>!

**SUPPORT GROUP**  
**MCI Education & Support**  
**Group** for Families affected  
by Mild Cognitive  
Impairment

**Next Meeting: Jan 15 th**

**Time: 9:30 am**

**Topic: Senior Safety**

**Speaker: Sgt. Neil Scully,**  
**Sarasota County Sheriff's**  
**Department**

**Location:**  
**Senior Friendship**  
**Center- Center for**  
**Healthy Aging**  
**1900 Brother Geenen**  
**Way, Sarasota**

The Memory Clinic of Sarasota Memorial Hospital is pleased to announce the first meeting of the *Venice Mild Cognitive Impairment Education and Support Group*. The group will meet the first Tuesday of every month beginning **Tuesday, February 3, 9:30 a.m. at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church** at 1301 Center Road in Venice. The MCI Support Group will have a similar format to the group currently meeting in Sarasota. That group was selected as one of the 'Best Practices in Aging Services' in 2003 and has been replicated in other areas of the State.

Participants will enjoy speakers on various aging topics for the first half hour of the meeting. The group will then be separated so that individuals with memory problems and their loved ones can participate in separate discussion groups. Those with memory problems will begin their meeting with memory exercises or 'brain teasers' which can be practiced at home. Kathleen Houseweart, who facilitates discussion in the Sarasota group, reports that the participants asked for this format. "They read that memory exercises help and they wanted to try it - it is also a great ice breaker," says Houseweart. Participants then discuss issues relating to challenges they face due to their memory problems, including medication options, driving issues, daily activities and, of course, relationships. The group for loved ones discusses many of the same topics, but from a different perspective.

Houseweart is careful not to identify this group as a caregiver support group. "We think of ourselves as 'care partners,' since most of us care for each other." MCI patients are generally independent and want to remain so. This group is designed to provide information and support to allow individuals to do just that.

The Venice support group will be facilitated by Barbara Keyes, Parish nurse of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church and Pam Palowski of the Alzheimer's Association. The first speaker will be Kathleen Houseweart, MBA from the SMH Memory Disorder Clinic.

### THE MEMORY DISORDER CLINIC

(941) 917-7197

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## The Need for Respite

Respite care provides a break to caregivers from the physical and emotional stress of caring for a person with Alzheimer's or related disorder. The most common respite care programs are in-home care and adult day services. In-home services offer a range of options, including companion services, personal care, household assistance, and skilled care services to meet specific needs. There are many home care agencies and registries that can provide assistance.

Adult day services provide the individual with structured, supervised activities designed to allow them to be successful at the task. Trained staff works to keep the participants engaged in activities such as music programs, crafts, discussion groups etc. The participants benefit from opportunities to socialize with others and the caregiver has an opportunity to take care of themselves to run errands or just get some rest. Day care programs are available through the Senior Friendship center or other private providers in the area. Some Assisted Living Facilities offer day services as well.

Respite care is essential in maintaining the capability of the caregiver to care for the loved one. Limited assistance is available through the Elder Helpline (800/963-5337). The local Alzheimer's Association provides funding for respite under certain circumstances. For more information, contact 941-365-8883.



## Therapies



Music, art, pet and other types of therapies can help enrich the lives of people with Alzheimer's disease. Pets, for instance, have been shown to reduce depression and boost self-esteem. Art provides an outlet for expression. Music stirs memories, emotions and when accompanied by singing, encourages group activity.

## Working Caregivers: Finding a Balance

Two-thirds of caregivers in the United States work outside of the home. Juggling caregiving and work-related responsibilities is not easy. Developing coping strategies can help caregivers avoid reaching the point of exhaustion and burnout.

- Prioritize your time at home and at work. Keeping a calendar of activities helps to identify priorities.
- Learn to delegate. Share responsibilities with others. Do not be afraid to ask for help. It is not a sign of weakness.
- Keep communication channels open with your supervisor or your human resources department. Help your company recognize your needs and the needs of the other employed caregivers.
- Investigate and utilize your company's available resources. Remember that businesses want and need to keep good workers. They want to provide support for their employees.
- Use your vacation time and make sure the time is spent nurturing you. Make time for yourself. Spend time with friends, family members or participate in a group. *Source: US Department of Health and Human Services*

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## Falls and Injuries

While the risk of falls increases as we age, changes in visual perception, muscle strength, gait, posture, balance, and reaction time associated with Alzheimer's disease can increase the likelihood of falls. Individuals with Alzheimer's disease may become clumsy, bump into things, trip or cut themselves. To help prevent falls, caregivers should check for risk factors in the home. Also routinely check for cuts and bruises that may be caused by falls. The person with dementia may not tell you they are in pain or may forget they have fallen. Changes in behavior may be your only clue to an injury.

## State calls special legislative session to discuss budget short fall

The legislature will meet soon to discuss options to address the budget shortfall. The SMH Memory Disorder Clinic receives general revenue funds through the Florida Department of Elder Affairs. The clinic absorbed an 8% cut this year without cutting services. An additional 10.8% cut is expected. There is concern that the Memory Clinics could be cut out of the budget all together. If you have thoughts about the Memory Clinic feel free to contact your local representative:

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## Senior Friendly Phones



This Jitterbug cell phone is simple to use with bigger buttons, large text, and a powerful speaker for clear calls. It also has live friendly 24 hour operators at your service to assist you with your calls if you need help at affordable rates. These phones are available at Best Buys or Sears locally. For more information call 1-866-775-9297 or visit their website:

[www.jitterbug.com](http://www.jitterbug.com).

It is a good idea to have someone who knows your needs and knows something about cell phones look at this phone to help you decide if it is right for you.

## Companion Cards

Companion cards are now available through the Alzheimer's Association. The card is a discreet way to let people you are with, know about the difficulties your loved one may have with communication or behavior. These cards are provided at no cost to you. Contact the Alzheimer's Association at 941/365-8883 for details.

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Don't forget the NEW Venice MCI Education and Support Group starts February 3<sup>rd</sup> !

**Meeting:** 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of each month

**Time:** 9:30am

**Where:** Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church located at 1301 Center Road in Venice

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## FREE Memory Screenings

1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of the month, 1-3 pm Senior Friendship Center, 2350 Scenic Drive, Venice

2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of the month, 2-4 pm Senior Friendship Center, Caregiver Resource Center 1820 Brother Geenen Way, Sarasota

**For appointments call 941/917-7197**

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**Sarasota Memorial Hospital  
Memory Disorder Clinic  
Institute for Advanced Medicine  
5880 Rand Blvd., # 205  
Sarasota, FL 34238  
(941) 917-7197**

Located just 1/2 mile from I-75 on the south side of Clark Road.

[www.sarasotageriatrics.com](http://www.sarasotageriatrics.com)