

Especially For Seniors

S I X T Y A N D B E T T E R

A Quarterly Newsletter of the Eldercare Program at St. Alexius Medical Center

The Gift Of Giving... Well Into Their 90's.

by Julie Skaret, Marketing Specialist
St. Alexius Medical Center Marketing Department

“Volunteers are not paid... not because they are worthless, but because they are priceless.” –unknown



Rose Cermak

You don't have to have a degree or professional background to volunteer your time and talents. In fact, there are no major qualifications for becoming a volunteer. All you need is a little extra time and a big heart. Two St. Alexius volunteers are proof that you can give back to your community at any age.

For more than 20 years, Rose Cermak, 90, has called St. Alexius her home away from home. Born and raised in Mandan, Rose found herself feeling lonely after the death of her husband in 1987. One of the Benedictine Sisters encouraged her to begin volunteering to fill the void, and she's been doing so ever since. Rose says, "There are a lot of people who come here and need someone to talk to, and I have big ears!" Rose says being able to help others with one small gesture or kind word can be very powerful. "Volunteering helps you as much as you help others. It makes you feel better about yourself," says Rose. You'll

find her volunteering Monday, Tuesday and Thursday afternoons at the Intensive Care reception desk.

“The heart of a volunteer is not measured in size but by the depth of the commitment to make a difference in the lives of others.” – DeAnn Hollis



Alice Kotaska

Alice Kotaska may not move as fast as she once did when she was a Licensed Practical Nurse in 1974, but that's not stopping her from continuing to help others in a hospital setting. Originally from the small North Dakota town of Conway, Alice worked as a nurse in Devils Lake and Rollette before retiring from the medical field. Now 91 years old, she recently decided to get back into the setting she once knew so well, this time as a volunteer. "It makes you feel glad to be helping others. It's a very happy feeling," says Alice. You'll find her volunteering Thursday afternoons at St. Alexius' Birth Place.

To learn more about becoming a volunteer, contact St. Alexius Volunteer Services at **530-7159**.

■ At Home

Post Hospital Care

by Tammy Theurer, RN, MSN, Director
St. Alexius Home Care & Hospice

With advances in technology and techniques, people are staying in the hospital for shorter periods of time following surgery or medical treatment. Sometimes, patients feel they may not be ready to go home without some type of follow-up care. Home Care services may be a good option in these situations. People who have had major surgery, have a new or recurring diagnosis, need skin/wound care, have new medications to manage, etc. may qualify for home health care services. Patients may be asked about this while still in the hospital. Even if home care services are not discussed, the patient or their family member may request a screening for home care services. Sometimes, people think they will do well on their own, but after they get home, they have problems or questions.

It is not too late to check into home care services. Feel free to contact St. Alexius Home Care & Hospice at **530-4500** or **1-800-223-1977**. We provide free in-home assessments. Should we determine there is a need for in-home care, we will contact your physician to get permission to provide services and work with Medicare or other insurance companies to set up services. Home Care is an important part of the health care system. Call us for more information.



Wellness Screenings

St. Alexius Center for Family Medicine – Mandan will be conducting wellness screenings from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. on: **Feb. 24, Mar. 31** and **Apr. 28**.

Screenings will include:

- Height
- Weight
- Body Mass Index (BMI)
- Blood Pressure
- Blood Glucose
- Cholesterol
- Bone Density Heel Scan

Participants should fast at least two hours prior to having their blood drawn. A \$15 fee will apply for the glucose, cholesterol and bone density scan. The fee will cover all three tests or \$15 for any one test.

Appointments can be made by calling **530-5550**.

Back Pain?

Are you age 50 or over?

Have you been diagnosed with and/or treated for osteoporosis?

Have you experienced a sudden onset of severe back pain in the past six months?

If you answered yes to all of the questions listed above, you may qualify to participate in a research study of an investigational device.

Qualified study participants may receive the following at no cost:

- Study-related physical exam
- Study-related device
- Study-related follow-up care



For more information, please contact:
St. Alexius Medical Center Clinical Research Services, 810 E. Rosser Ave., Suite 202, Bismarck, ND 58501, (701) 530-6950 or toll free 1-877-701-6677.

 **Clinical Research Services**
St. Alexius/PrimeCare
www.st.alexius.org

■ Insurance Issues

Higher Premiums for Medicare Part B

by Cindy Sheldon, Director, Health Insurance Counseling Program, North Dakota Insurance Department

For the first time in many years, Americans will not receive cost-of-living increases (COLA) in their Social Security check in 2010. However, millions of Medicare beneficiaries will face much higher Medicare Part B premiums in 2010.

Medicare Part B premiums are used for Medicare-covered services such as physician services, durable medical equipment and outpatient therapy.

Under a hold-harmless provision of federal law, basic Medicare Part B premiums cannot rise higher than last year's COLA. So, a zero COLA means that the basic premium (currently \$96.40 a month) must stay the same.

This hold-harmless policy gives this protection to the majority of people enrolled in Medicare Part B who also receive Social Security, Railroad Retirement or Civil Service retiree benefits.

Recent projections by AARP estimate the increase will affect about one in four Medicare beneficiaries. The increase will affect beneficiaries who:

1. Do not have their Part B premiums withheld from Social Security checks
2. Pay a Part B premium based on higher income
3. Are newly enrolled in Part B
4. Have their Part B premiums paid by Medicaid (low-income people will not be affected, but the state will pay the higher premium)

If you have questions concerning Medicare, please contact the North Dakota Insurance Department at **1-888-575-6611**.

■ Laughter Is Good Medicine

Truths children have learned:

- No matter how hard you try, you can't baptize cats.
- When your Mom is mad at your Dad, don't let her brush your hair.
- You can't trust dogs to watch your food.
- You can't hide a piece of broccoli in a glass of milk.
- Puppies still have bad breath even after eating a Tic-Tac.



St. Alexius Holds FREE Stroke Informational Session

The St. Alexius Neuroscience Center will be holding a stroke public education session on Feb. 23. Doctors Shiraz Hyder, MD, neurologist and Brent Herbel, MD, interventional radiologist will be discussing risk factors, prevention methods, symptoms and treatments.

The session is free and open to the public. Session starts at 6 p.m. in the St. Alexius Boniface Auditorium. Refreshments and door prizes will be offered.

For questions or to RSVP, call **701-530-7700**.



S. Hyder, MD



B. Herbel, MD

Stroke Support Group

Upcoming 2010 Meeting Dates

- March 24
- May 19
- August 18
- October 20

All meetings will be held in Meeting Room 2 at the rear of the cafeteria from 4:00-5:00 p.m.

For questions, contact Sarah at **530-8220**.

Truths adults have learned:

- Raising teenagers is like trying to nail Jell-O to a tree.
- Middle age is when you choose cereal for the fiber, not the toy.
- If you can remain calm, you don't have all the facts.
- You're getting old when you stoop to tie your shoes and wonder what else you can do while you're down there.
- You appreciate the fact that wrinkles don't hurt.



■ Social Security/Medicare

When Is the Best Time to Start Receiving Your Social Security Benefits?

by Howard I. Kossover, Public Affairs Specialist
Social Security Administration

When do you want your Social Security retirement benefit to start? Whether completing your application online or with an SSA representative, your decision is part of the retirement application. You are asked if you want to start benefits as soon as possible, with a particular month, or at full retirement age (FRA). Starting prior to your FRA reduces your benefit, starting after FRA increases your benefit. There is no overall “best time” to start SSA retirement. Based on individual and family circumstances, this is your decision. My purpose today is to expand your consideration of options. Over the years, many people have said to me that they do not want to start benefits before full retirement age but, if asked why, say they do not know or “just because.” Here is information to help you make an informed decision.

When computing your retirement amount, the SSA calculation is based on the number of months prior to, or after, full retirement age that you start benefits. Your FRA and estimated FRA benefit amount is provided annually on the SSA Statement received before your birthday if you are age 25 or older, paying Social Security taxes and not yet receiving monthly benefits. You can also easily obtain this information online with the SSA Retirement Estimator at www.socialsecurity.gov/estimator, one of the many planning tools in the Retirement section of www.socialsecurity.gov.

With your estimated full retirement age amount, you can learn the percentage of reduction or increase for any given month by using another of the online SSA retirement planning tools. Starting at the Retirement section, go to Benefit Calculators and then to “More charts & calculators.” From there go to “Compute the effects of early or delayed retirement” or use the direct link to it at www.socialsecurity.gov/OACT/quickcalc/early_late.html#calculator. Enter the specific month desired. The reply provides a percentage of your FRA amount (termed primary insurance amount in the reply) applicable for that month.

Compare estimates for several consecutive months and note that the change is small from one consecutive month to another. Getting online estimates for different months can help you decide

when to start your SSA retirement. For example, are you retiring from employment a few months prior to your FRA? Do you have a spouse or children eligible on your record? You might decide to start benefits early.

Are you working full time? The annual earnings limit ends once you reach FRA. You might decide to wait.

My point is that full retirement age is just a month. Make your decision based on what is best for you. Consider your current cash needs, health and family longevity, post-retirement work plans, other retirement income, anticipated financial needs, plans of your spouse or partner and, of course, the amount of your Social Security benefit.

You can contact the Social Security Administration in several ways. Visit the SSA website at www.socialsecurity.gov for information, retirement planning tools and the online retirement application. If receiving benefits, other services are available at “What you can do online.” Call the SSA national toll-free number **800-772-1213** (TTY **800-325-0778**) between the hours of 7:00 am – 7:00 pm for information about your benefits or to make an appointment. To reach the Bismarck office directly, call **701-250-4200** or toll-free **800-305-6526** between the hours of 9:00 am - 4:00 pm.

Howard I. Kossover is the Social Security Public Affairs Specialist for North Dakota and western Minnesota. Based in Grand Forks, he works with organizations, government agencies and businesses concerning all aspects of the Social Security programs. Questions of general interest can be sent to him at howard.kossover@ssa.gov.



■ Great Plains Rehabilitation Services

Taking Care of Your Legs - Compression Hosiery

by Greg Lord, Director
Great Plains Rehabilitation Services

Your Legs work hard for you!

Your legs work hard, carrying you throughout your busy day. The steady pumping of blood helps keep them healthy and fit. In just one day's time, an average heart pumps enough blood through the body's arteries, capillaries and veins to fill 288 5-gallon cans. Venous blood or the blood traveling through the veins is returned to the heart.

Since the legs are the farthest from (and below) the heart, blood flow in the legs is the most difficult to maintain. The blood must actually flow uphill to the heart. A system of uni-directional valves, spaced up the leg and opening in the direction of the heart facilitates this flow. The blood essentially "steps" its way from the feet to the heart in stages.

After years of use, it stands to reason that parts of this complex, hard working system may eventually wear or malfunction. Venous insufficiency occurs when valves cease to function properly and its blood supply is absorbed by the valve. This increased pressure can cause dilated veins, valve malfunctions and reduced circulation. The result can be fatigue, aching and swelling of the legs and feet, as well as what could be the initial stages of varicose veins.

Graduated compression hosiery are clinically proven to help treat venous insufficiency and varicose veins as well as the accompanying symptoms.

For years, many physicians have recommended graduated compression therapy as a treatment for venous insufficiency. Graduated compression hosiery compresses the surface veins, keeping their diameter small, and forcing blood into the deep vein system. It has been clinically demonstrated that controlled, graduated compression applied to the lower extremities accelerates the velocity at which the blood flows through the deep veins. This increased blood flow helps to relieve the symptoms associated with venous insufficiency.

Placing the greatest compression at the ankles where it's needed most, our graduated compression levels reduce pressure further up the leg to help improve circulation. There's a compression level just right for you!

Men get achy legs too!

Graduated Compression Hosiery is available in numerous levels of compression. For the relief of mild



symptoms and varicosities, 12-18 mmHg is recommended. To treat more chronic symptoms, and more painful varicosities, 20 to 30 mmHg is indicated. For more severe cases, and where a doctor is specifically recommending, 30-40 mmHg is available.

Compression level is always quoted at the ankle. Profiles of compression are measured by how much pressure is required to elevate a column of Mercury (Hg), as certain distance, as measured in millimeters (mm). This is a medically recommended standard in the US. Whether working long hours sitting or spending great lengths of time traveling on airplanes, men often suffer from many of the same symptoms associated with venous insufficiency. Symptoms may include swelling around the ankles and lower legs, and a snow-like appearance in the veins, web-like veins behind the knees or ankles or varying degrees of fatigue.

Men's dress socks are available in firm and extra firm support. They are made of nylon and spandex to provide comfort and durability.

Pregnancy and Varicose Veins

The additional weight and pressure associated with pregnancy may cause veins to dilate and work less efficiently. Fetal pressure on the large veins in the pelvic area may slow them, causing swelling, aching, tired legs and feet, and varicose veins. Maternity Graduated Compression Hosiery should be considered to alleviate these symptoms.

Compression Hosiery at Great Plains Rehabilitation Services

Our products range from light support to medically-approved custom stockings (30-40 mmHg). You'll get only top quality products from Great Plains. We take pride in the quality of our products, our service, and making customers happy. After all, your happiness is our business!

Come to our beautiful showroom store at 1212 East Main, Bismarck where you will find a full range of compression support hosiery, support socks, and medical stockings that are competitively priced. We guarantee you'll be 100% satisfied!

■ Keeping Fit...Spiritually

A New Year's Wish

by Rev. Darrel Aleson, Chaplain
St. Alexius Pastoral Care

Every Sunday morning, on my way home from a small church I serve, I drive past a billboard just south of Washburn. On it, in huge block letters, is a simple message: **"BE NICE."** As I reflect on the state of too much society these days, that billboard should be placed every mile or so on every highway. Are you with me in sometimes wondering what happened to "niceness" or old-fashioned manners or simple kindness?

Henry James once said: "Three things in life are important. The first is to be kind. The second is to be kind. The third is to be kind." By now, you may have figured out my theme: **BE KIND.**

As I write this (Dec. 22), we are in the midst of Christmas anticipation, where one of the key sentiments is "peace and goodwill to all persons."

There is too much in our world that says just the opposite. Politicians bad-mouth and accuse each other, reality shows have contestants (competitors)

saying and doing nasty or "back-stabbing" things in order to discredit or beat their fellow participants (...even in baking cakes or cooking). Comedians, trying too hard to be "funny" embarrass audiences to laughter with jokes about others that are often cruel and mean-spirited. The list goes on and on...but enough with the "negatives."

I'm all for kindness taking over once again. Our Lord even speaks of this: "Be kind-hearted, tender...forgiving one another." Kindness is really an attitude...an outlook on life that starts in our hearts. It is tenderness, love, good will, seeking to understand, desiring goodness and blessing as much for others as we desire it for ourselves.

This is my wish for each of us in entering a new year...that **KINDNESS** may inform all our thinking, our listening, our relationships, and our actions. In closing, I quote William Penn:

"I expect to pass through life but once. If therefore, there be any kindness I can show, or any good thing I can do to any fellow being, let me do it now, and not defer or neglect it, as I shall not pass this way again."

HAVE A KIND, GENEROUS, AND LOVING NEW YEAR!

Alzheimer's Association Bowling Fun Day



Saturday, March 6th
Noon
Midway Lanes, Bismarck



Help raise funds and awareness for the Alzheimer's Association Minnesota-North Dakota. This tournament is open to four person teams (limited to the first 52 teams) for \$100/team. The tournament will include bowling, a silent auction, food, prizes and FUN!

For more information, contact Krista Headland at **701-258-4933** or krista.headland@alz.org.

Please mail your event entry to the Alzheimer's Association, 1223 S 12th Street, Suite 7, Bismarck, ND, 58504 by March 1. Please make checks payable to the Alzheimer's Association.

TEAM NAME _____

BUSINESS/COMPANY NAME _____

	BOWLERS NAME'S	PHONE NUMBER	ADDRESS	LAST YEAR'S AVERAGE
1.	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____

WE WOULD LIKE TO BOWL NEXT TO _____

(TEAM NAME)



■ **Upcoming Eldercare Programs**

- **“Keeping Fit in Winter”**

Ruth Beachey, Physical Therapist, St. Alexius Balance and Dizziness Center
Kim Hanson, Exercise Physiologist, St. Alexius Human Performance Center

Date: Thursday, Feb. 11, 2010

Time: 9:30 a.m.

Place: St. Alexius Boniface Auditorium (east entrance)

Cost: \$5 (\$3 for “*Especially for Seniors*” members.) Register by Feb. 9 by calling the St. Alexius Education Center at **701-530-7700** or **1-800-843-9628**. Open to all ages. Refreshments and door prizes will be offered.

- **“How To Talk To Your Doctor and Find Out What You Need To Know About Your Health”**

Laura Archuleta, MD, St. Alexius Center for Family Medicine Mandan

Date: Thursday, Mar. 11, 2010

Time: 9:30 a.m.

Place: St. Alexius Boniface Auditorium (east entrance)

Cost: \$5 (\$3 for “*Especially for Seniors*” members.) Register by Mar. 9 by calling the St. Alexius Education Center at **701-530-7700** or **1-800-843-9628**. Open to all ages. Refreshments and door prizes will be offered.

- **“Don’t Get Scammed (Fraud and Identity Theft)”**

Brenda Munson, Project Coordinator, North Dakota Senior Medicare Patrol

Date: Thursday, Apr. 8, 2010

Time: 9:30 a.m.

Place: St. Alexius Boniface Auditorium (east entrance)

Cost: \$5 (\$3 for “*Especially for Seniors*” members.) Register by Apr. 6 by calling the St. Alexius Education Center at **701-530-7700** or **1-800-843-9628**. Open to all ages. Refreshments and door prizes will be offered.

If you are interested in receiving information on the “*Especially for Seniors*” program, please call **701-530-7755** for application and information.

2010 Cholesterol and Blood Sugar Screening Schedule

Feb. 4 - Mid Dakota Clinic

Mar. 4 - St. Alexius Atrium

Apr. 1 - Mid Dakota Clinic

May 6 - St. Alexius Atrium

St. Alexius Medical Center and Mid Dakota Clinic are co-sponsoring monthly screenings which include blood pressure, blood sugar, total cholesterol and HDL (good cholesterol). Participants should fast for 2 hours prior to the screening which is done on a first come, first served basis.

- **Cost:** \$15

- **Time:** 8:30-11:30 a.m.

- **Place:** at St. Alexius please use the Broadway entrance, at Mid Dakota, the north entrance.

For more information, please call the St. Alexius Education Center at **701-530-7700**.

■ **Support Groups/Discussion Groups at St. Alexius**

Alzheimer's/Dementia/Family Caregiver Support Groups - second Tuesday of each month from 7:30-9 p.m. or the third Tuesday of each month from 1:30-3 p.m. Call 530-7755. Free.

Hope & Healing Spiritual Support Group - first four Tuesdays of each month from 7-9 p.m. Call 663-1660.

Lupus Support Group - second Thursday of each month at 12 noon. Call 258-6345. Free.

Mastectomy Education and Discussion Group - third Thursday of each month from 7-8 p.m. Call 530-4000. Free.

Parkinson's Support Group - third Thursday of each month from 3:30-4:30 p.m. Call 223-9216. Free.

Surgical Weight Loss Support Group - first Tuesday of each month from 6-7:30 p.m. Call 530-5189.

Wheelies - third Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. Call 530-8187 or 530-8200.

Visit www.st.alexius.org/customers/events/ for more information.

Free senior health insurance counseling is available to Medicare beneficiaries. This includes comparing policies, help with paperwork regarding bills and understanding long-term care insurance. For more information or to make an appointment, call 701-328-2440, 888-575-6611 (Toll-Free), or 800-366-6888 (TTY Line).

Especially For Seniors™ newsletter is published regularly for members to provide educational tips on senior living. If you have any questions about this issue or Eldercare services at St. Alexius, call the Eldercare office at 701-530-7700.

If you are interested in receiving the newsletter, would like to update your mailing information or be removed from this mailing list, please call 701-530-7755 or email smgeiger@primecare.org.

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