



## "Seniors and the Dark Ages"



By Joe Steckler

Dear Friends,

The title seems ominous, does it not? Many years ago when I was a midshipman at the U.S. Naval Academy, the time after we returned from Christmas leave was called the "Dark Ages." Nothing much was happening, there was nothing to brag about, nothing to look forward to. Some seniors may feel the same way, but don't let this terminology apply to your life!

Recently I met with a Board member of Helping Seniors who said, "Joe, we need to do more to let people know how we help seniors." Those were golden words to me, for I have had the same thought for many years. In fact, we started the radio show in 2000, the television show in



2007, and the newspaper column in 2007 to inform, educate and connect seniors to resources. For this reason, Senior Scene Magazine, Spotlight Magazine, Hometown News, and Ebony News Today feature our columns and newsletters. We also have several television shows on channel 199 and 49, or you can go to [www.helpingseniorsofbrevard.org](http://www.helpingseniorsofbrevard.org) to access all of our media programs and more resources online.

Unfortunately, all of this information is worthless if it is not talked about, made known to others, and publicized by word of mouth. I recently talked to three people who had made calls to government or nonprofit organizations (agencies receiving taxpayer dollars) and not received a call back. I tried to discuss these failings with a member of the Florida Elder Helpline, but was talked to in a rude and condescending way. This is not right...it is time we all spoke up to correct these shortcomings!

In Florida we have a

state-sponsored system to help eligible people acquire Medicaid cards. There are rules about eligibility and those can be ascertained by calling the Elder Helpline at 1-800-963-5337.

Believe it or not, there is no cost to acquire this card. However, there are many who will prey on those who need care. Financial advisors may seek up to \$8,000 to start a process, while others work the system to get a client onto the Medicaid lists. One method is to get a client into a nursing home so that he/she may then be worked into the Medicaid system and ultimately transferred to an assisted living facility.

Are these methods necessary? Absolutely not if the system worked as designed. By that I mean the initial call to the Elder Helpline that starts the process at no financial cost to you. There also is a local office located at 1600 Sarno Road, Suite 117, Melbourne, Florida...32935, phone number 321-373-0824 to assist you in this process. You meet and talk to a live person, not a difficult-to-reach phone answerer at the Elder Helpline. Regardless of the process you elect, neither should cost you more than a little

time or a phone call.

For many it is wise to start the Medicaid Card acquisition process as early as possible so that wait times are reduced or eliminated. Otherwise, you may find yourself waiting two to six months to acquire a

card when you already need one.

One of the reasons Helping Seniors exists is to help elders access the system. There are many different obstacles in the way of aging with dignity, but why part of the "Dark Ages?" Be

informed about the many wonderful resources that can assist you. Call us at 321-473-7770 if you have a question. This, too, is a free call and will prove helpful to you. Be a member of the Enlightened Age, not the Dark Age.

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## Grown Kids of Parents With Alzheimer's Show Signs of Disease

*Troubling discovery worse in those with two parents with the disease*



Black Health Zone. Staff

Adults who have elderly parents diagnosed with Alzheimer's may have a new reason to worry. Research published last week in the journal *Neurology* finds Alzheimer's-related abnormalities in the brains of adult children of people with this form of dementia, even in middle age, when the grown children aren't yet experiencing problems with memory or mental skills. The troubling findings were most pronounced in the brains of those with two parents

suffering from the disease.

The findings echo previous research that suggests a person's risk of developing Alzheimer's is greater when his or her mother has had the disease than when his or her father has.

For the study, 52 participants (13 with a mom diagnosed after age 60, 13 with a dad diagnosed after age 60, 13 with both parents suffering the disease and 13 with no family history of Alzheimer's) ranging in age from 32 to 72 underwent MRI scans and two types of PET scans.

Those with two parents suffer-

ing the memory-stealing disease showed the most gray matter shrinkage and the most amyloid plaque deposits, key signs of Alzheimer's.

Researchers hope the study allows health-care professionals to identify people who could benefit most from therapies to prevent or delay progression of Alzheimer's before it causes memory loss or other impaired cognitive function. Though there is currently no cure for the disease, scientists are hard at work on finding a therapy that could halt it.

Adults with parents who have Alzheimer's may be at increased risk of developing the disease.