

PLANNING FOR CARE:

Choosing the Right Long-Term Care Facility for Your Loved One



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CAREGIVER
ACTION
NETWORK



Meet Your Presenters



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PART 1

The Caregiving Reality

 You are doing one of the
hardest jobs in the world.

Considering long-term care for someone you love is rarely a calm, abstract choice. It comes wrapped in grief, guilt, exhaustion, and the urgent pressure to get it right.

Today is about giving you a clear, manageable framework — so you can make informed decisions without feeling like you have to become an expert overnight.

53M +

family caregivers in the
U.S. today

If you have walked into a hospital and felt completely overwhelmed by the words “discharge planning,” you are in good company.



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PART 2

Types of Care Settings

A simple overview — knowing the differences helps you ask the right questions.



Assisted Living

Housing + help with daily tasks (meals, bathing, medication reminders). Best for those who are mostly independent but need a safety net.



Nursing Home

24-hour skilled nursing for residents with significant medical needs. The highest level of non-hospital care.



Rehab Center

Short-term, intensive therapy after a hospital stay — surgery, stroke, fall. The goal is to return home.



Memory Care

Specialized environment for Alzheimer's and other dementias. Secured layout, staff trained in cognitive care.

When to Consider a Nursing Home

Common signs that a higher level of medical care may be needed.

1. Medical needs are outpacing home care

Complex medications, wound care, IV therapy, or 24-hour monitoring.

2. Safety issues are escalating

Frequent falls, wandering, leaving the stove on, getting lost.

3. Personal care is no longer manageable

Difficulty with bathing, toileting, transfers, or repositioning.

4. Hospitalizations are repeating

Multiple ER visits or readmissions within a few months.

5. Caregiver burnout is real

Your own health, work, and family are paying the price.

6. A doctor or hospital is recommending it

Especially at discharge — don't ignore that signal.



PART 4

Evaluating a Facility Before Admission

Tour in person when you can. Trust what your eyes, ears, and nose tell you.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- Cleanliness and odor — fresh smells, not heavy disinfectant masking
- Staff engagement with residents (eye contact, kind tone)
- Residents who appear clean, comfortable, and out of bed
- Call lights answered promptly — count how long it takes
- Activity calendar with real, daily programming
- Food at mealtimes — does it look appetizing? Is help offered?
- Visible licensure, recent inspection report on request

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- What is your staff-to-resident ratio on each shift?
- How long do most CNAs and nurses stay with the facility?
- Who is the medical director — and how often are they on site?
- What is your fall prevention and bedsore prevention protocol?
- How do you handle complaints and incident reports?
- May I see your most recent state survey results?
- What happens if our care needs change over time?



PART 5

Look Up Ratings & Complaints

Most caregivers don't know this free, public tool exists.

 FREE GOVERNMENT TOOL

Medicare Care Compare

[medicare.gov/care-compare](https://www.medicare.gov/care-compare)

Search any U.S. nursing home and see what state inspectors found — free, in plain language.

Free • Public • Updated quarterly

WHAT YOU CAN CHECK

✓ Overall facility rating

1–5 star score combining inspections, staffing, and quality.

✓ Staffing levels

Nursing hours per resident, per day.

✓ Health inspection results

Most recent state surveys.

✓ History of violations

Citations and severity over time.

✓ Penalties and fines

Federal enforcement actions.

✓ Staffing turnover

How often nurses and CNAs leave.



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DEMO

Step -by -Step: Medicare Care Compare

Four clicks. Anyone can do this from a phone or laptop.

1 Go to the website

Open [medicare.gov/care-compare](https://www.medicare.gov/care-compare) in any browser.

2 Select Nursing Homes

Choose the “ **Nursing homes including rehab** ” category.

3 Enter city or ZIP code

Search by **location** . You'll see every facility nearby.

4 Click the facility name

Review ratings, staffing, inspections, and penalties.

PRO TIP Compare three facilities side -by -side. Pay closest attention to staffing stars and recent inspection findings.



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PART 6

After Placement: Stay Engaged

Your role doesn't end at the front door — it shifts.



Know the Resident's Rights

Federal law guarantees residents the right to dignity, privacy, freedom from abuse and restraints, to participate in their own care plan, and to voice grievances without retaliation.



Build a Communication Plan

Identify a primary point of contact at the facility. Attend care plan meetings (every 90 days, minimum). Document conversations — date, name, what was said.



Visit Often. Vary Your Times.

Drop in on different shifts and days of the week. Weekends and evenings reveal the most about real staffing levels and culture.



PART 7

Early Warning Signs to Watch For

Trust your instincts. If something feels wrong, it usually is.

⚠️ Unexplained bruises, skin tears, or pressure sores

Especially on the back, hips, heels, or tailbone.

⚠️ Poor hygiene, soiled clothing or bedding

May indicate understaffing or skipped care routines.

⚠️ Withdrawal, anxiety, or fear around staff

A change in personality is often the first emotional flag.

⚠️ Medications mixed up or missed

Ask to see the medication administration record.

⚠️ Sudden weight loss or signs of dehydration

Often a clue that meals and water aren't being delivered consistently.

⚠️ Frequent infections, especially UTIs

Can signal inadequate toileting care or catheter management.

⚠️ Falls that no one can fully explain

Repeated falls deserve a written incident report — request copies.

⚠️ Staff defensive about simple questions

Good facilities welcome family involvement.

Resources & Support

Save this slide. Take a photo. These are the lifelines most caregivers never hear about.



Long-Term Care Ombudsman

ltcombudsman.org

Free, confidential advocate in every state.
Resolves complaints, protects residents' rights.



Medicare Care Compare

[medicare.gov/care -compare](http://medicare.gov/care-compare)

Official ratings, staffing, inspection reports,
penalties for every U.S. nursing home.



Caregiver Action Network

caregiveraction.org • **Help Desk: (855) 227 -3640**

Free resources, peer support, and a live Help Desk
for caregiver questions.



Your State Survey Agency

Search: "[your state] nursing home complaint"

How to formally report neglect, abuse, or unsafe
conditions. Each state has its own hotline.



Question & Answer

Drop your questions in the chat

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Nursing Neglect Attorneys

 (844) 407 -6737 — *No Recovery, No Fee*

info@bedsore.law • bedsore.law

Free, confidential case evaluations nationwide.

CAREGIVER ACTION
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Caregiver Help Desk

 (855) 227 -3640

caregiveraction.org

Free, peer-trained support — for caregivers, by caregivers.

A top-down view of a person's hands writing in a spiral notebook on a wooden desk. A laptop is open to the right, and a smartphone is lying face down above the notebook. The scene is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue and purple gradient. The text 'Caregiver Resources' is centered in white.

Caregiver Resources

Caregiver Action Network Family Caregiver Toolbox

CaregiverAction.org/toolbox

The screenshot shows the Caregiver Action Network website's Family Caregiver Toolbox. The top navigation bar includes links for COMMUNITY, DONATE, and CAREGIVER HELP DESK, along with social media icons for Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter. The main header features the Caregiver Action Network logo and navigation links for CARING BY CONDITION, CAREGIVER RESOURCES, ABOUT CAN, and STAY CONNECTED. The central heading is "The Family Caregiver Toolbox". Below this is a search section with the instruction: "Use ONE OR ALL dropdowns to find the resources that best fit your needs. View the results below." The search filters include "IAMA(N)", "CONDITION", and "TOPIC", followed by a "SEARCH" button. Two call-to-action buttons are present: "Call Help Desk. (855) 227-3640" and "More About Caregiver Advocates". The main content area displays three featured resources: "Honor Through Care: Bladder Cancer Support for Military Families" (marked as a REPLAY), "Supporting Your Loved One in a Clinical Trial", and "Benchmarks of Care Training: Leadership that Cares: Helping Caregiving Staff Navigate Work Challenges" (dated JULY 30 - 2 PM ET). A language selector at the bottom left shows "EN" with a flag icon, and a chat icon is visible at the bottom right.



*Caregiving doesn't come with a manual.
But it does come with help.*

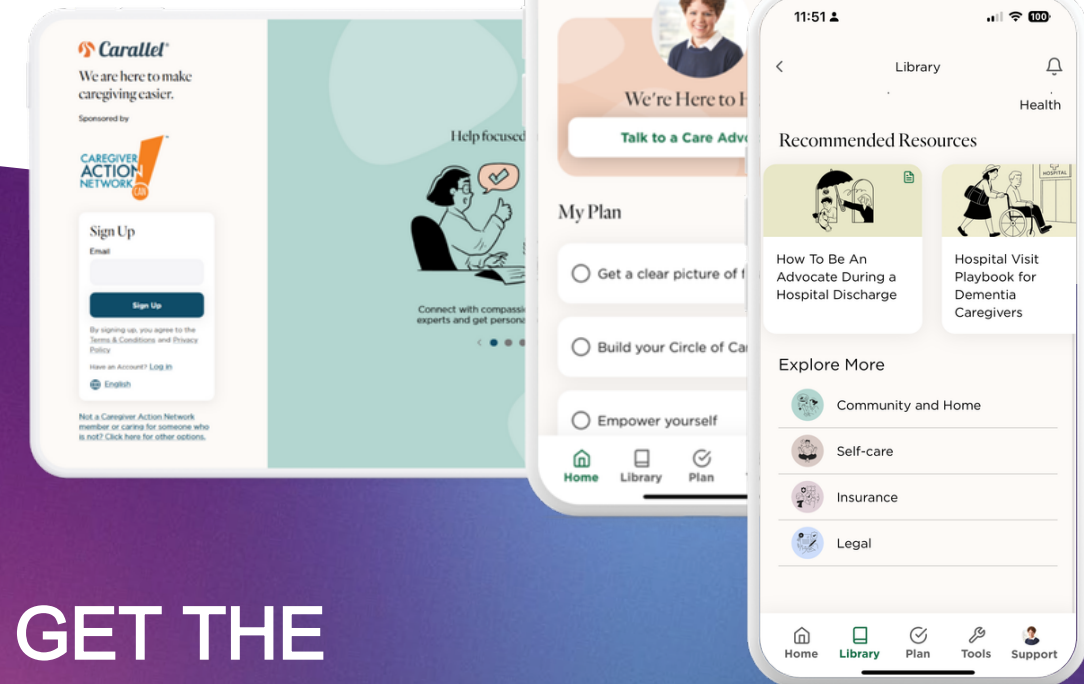
The National Caregiver Help Desk

Get advice from a caregiving expert, easy access to hundreds of resources, and a caregiving community...for free today!

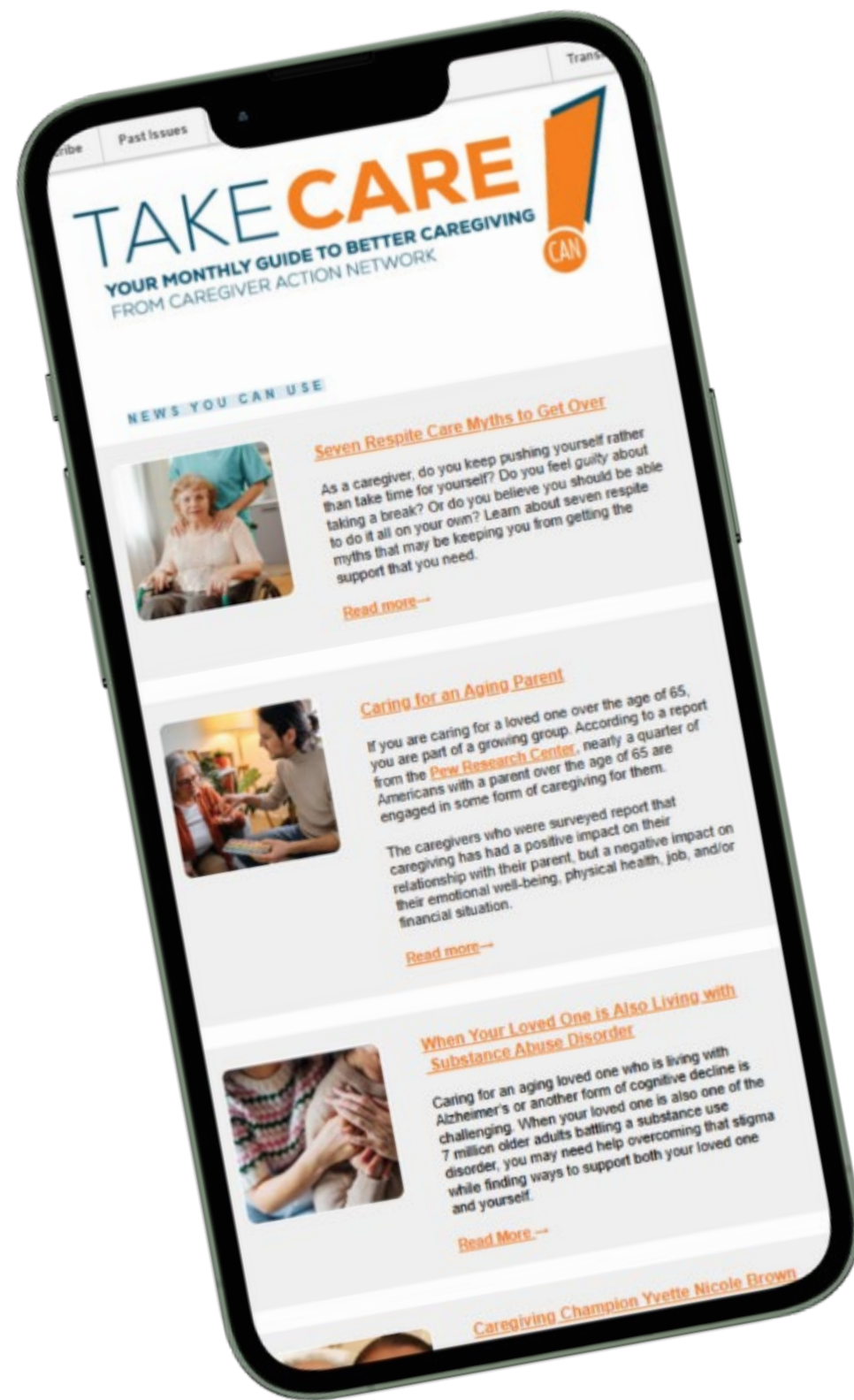


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**GET THE
FREE APP!**

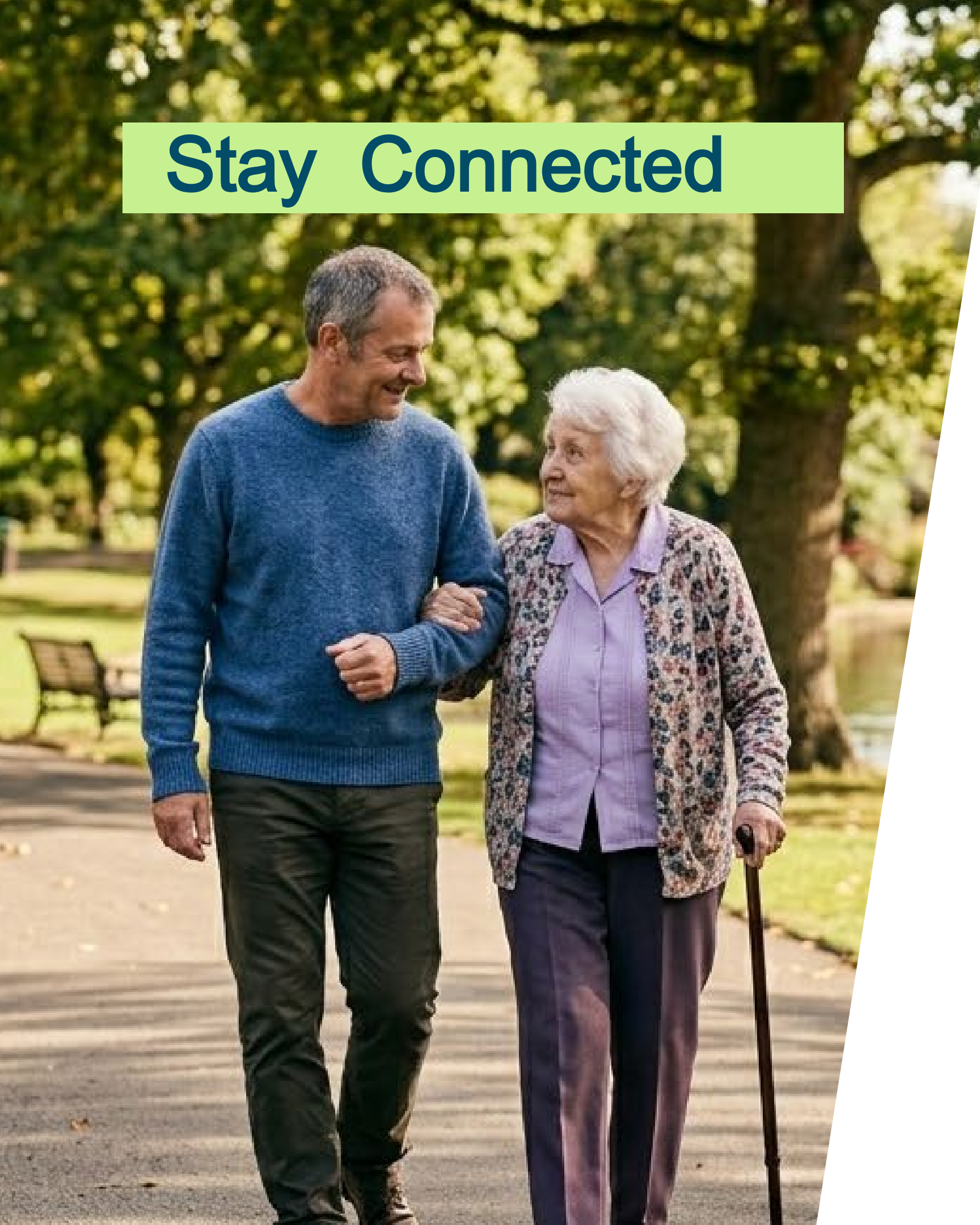


Take Care! Newsletter

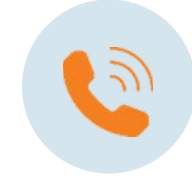
Subscribe and get the latest on new resources, headlines and happenings impacting family caregivers.



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