

# Connections

A Newsletter for the Members of Community Care



Member Reaches  
Major Milestone  
P.6



## PG.8 Tips for Dementia Caregivers

**BE GENTLE AND RESPECTFUL.  
TELL THE PERSON WHAT YOU  
ARE GOING TO DO, STEP BY  
STEP WHILE YOU HELP THEM  
BATHE OR GET DRESSED.**

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Community Care member Amy Vandenyngaard, right, on the job with a co-worker at Lawrence University's cafeteria

writing skills. It took about a year, but Amy was able to find a new job with the help of the Wisconsin Department of Vocational Rehabilitation.

At the beginning of 2022, Amy started her new job in the cafeteria at Lawrence University in Appleton. Amy helps around the dining room, cleaning tables and sorting silverware. She really enjoys the atmosphere and the college students.

“I think she likes everything about it. It took a few weeks to adjust,” her mom said. “Lawrence was very good with her; they would explain things. Amy’s made so many friends.”

# On the Job *with Amy*

**Member:**  
**Amy Vandenyngaard**  
**Age: 51**  
**Employer:**  
**Lawrence University**

Amy Vandenyngaard started working when she turned 18. She’s been working ever since. Like many people, when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, Amy lost her job. She’d worked at

the same place for 10 years, but when businesses started reopening, Amy didn’t get her job back.

With COVID, it took a while to find the right job for Amy, according to her mom, Deb Williams. Amy, 51, has a developmental disability and has limited reading and

*...the thing she enjoys most is being around people*

The “On the Job” feature provides an opportunity to highlight Community Care members like Amy who are working out in the community. As an organization, Community Care sup-

ports the goals of Wisconsin Employment First, which is part of a national movement advocating for integrated employment as the first option for individuals with disabilities.

At Lawrence, Amy works every day, Monday through Friday, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. A few of the perks of her job are that it's a short walk from her apartment to the campus and she gets a free lunch when she works. Another aspect of the job Amy really enjoys ... summers off, which gives her the opportunity to volunteer. But the thing she enjoys most is being around people.

“Wherever Amy goes, she finds someone she knows. As soon as she walked through the door at Lawrence, she knew someone, which made the transition easier,” her mom said.

“Everyone she meets when she takes the bus remembers her. It's great, she has so many guardian angels that watch over her.”

## Community Care Attends *Wisconsin Employment First Conference*

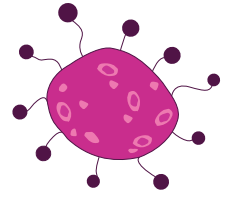
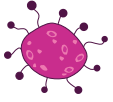
Community Care proudly sponsored and attended the Wisconsin Employment First Conference in May at the Kalahari Resort in Wisconsin Dells.

This annual conference focuses on promoting integrated employment in the community for individuals with disabilities.

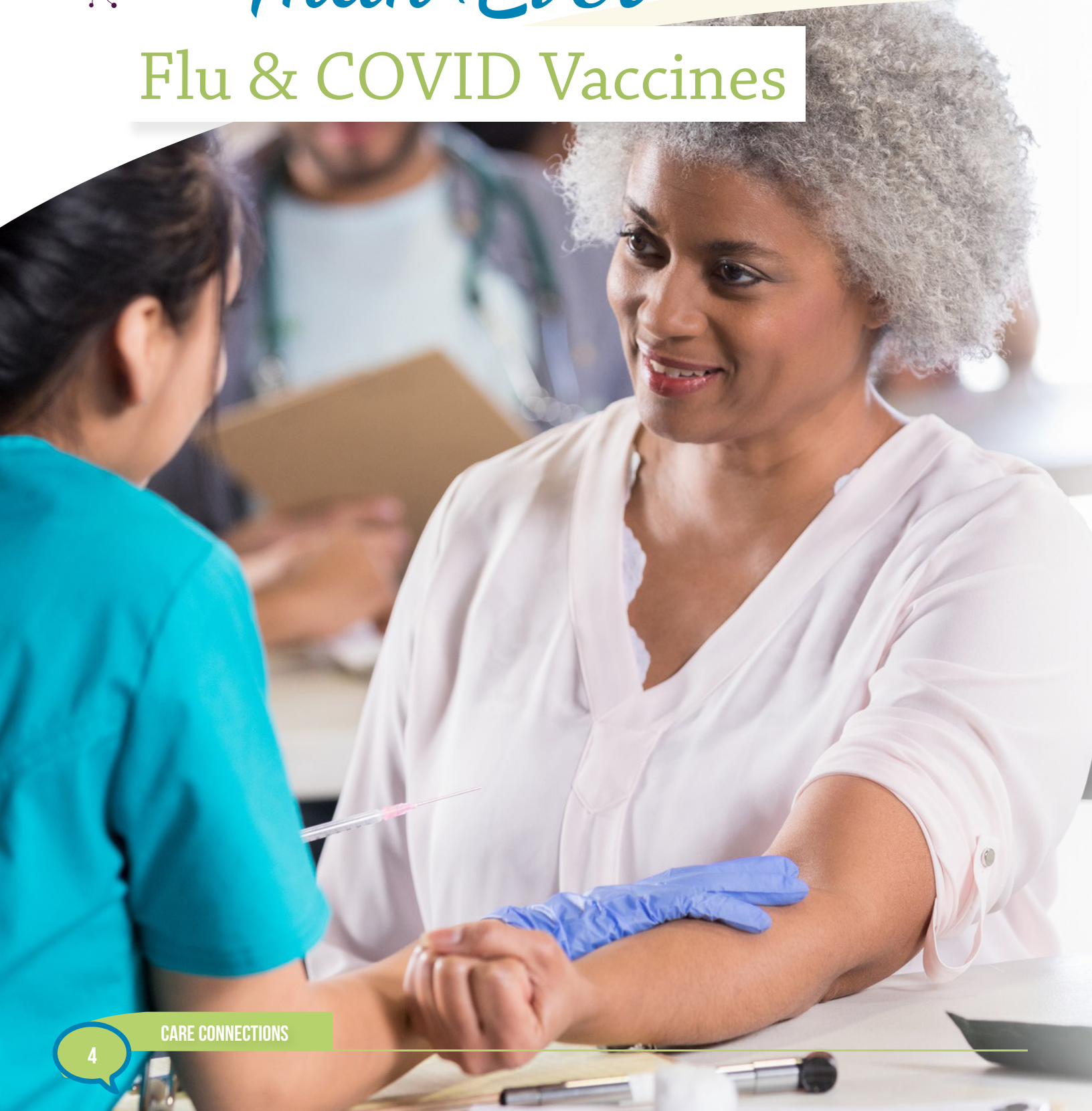
The theme of our booth was “Blossom at Work.” Pictured in the photo are Amber Gasper, our self-determination specialist, and Michaela Dao, a care manager from Dane County who is one of our Employment Champs.



# More Important Than Ever



Flu & COVID Vaccines



Flu season is right around the corner in Wisconsin and COVID-19 is still with us. This fall it will be important to get your flu and COVID vaccines. A new updated booster for COVID will be available this fall.

Getting these vaccines is one of the most important steps you can take to protect yourself, the people you love, and the people around you. COVID and the flu are both serious respiratory illnesses.

When it comes to getting a vaccine, Community Care members have several options. Members can:

- Ask their doctor about the flu or COVID vaccine (PACE members can get their flu shot at our Community Care clinics)
- Visit a community vaccination site or pharmacy
- Get the shot at their residential setting, if offered there
- Ask their care team about how to get the shot or get transportation to a vaccination clinic

### **Why should I get the flu vaccine?**

The flu is a serious illness that can make you extremely sick. It can lead to hospitalization, or even to death. The best way to protect yourself and others from the flu is to get the flu vaccine every year in the fall.

### **Who is at higher risk of having serious complications due to the flu?**

It is very important for people 65 and older and people with chronic health conditions, such as asthma or heart disease, to get a vaccine every year to decrease their risk of severe flu illness.

### **When is the best time to get the flu vaccine?**

Get the flu vaccine before flu begins spreading in your community. Ideally, you should get a flu vaccine by the end of October. However, getting a vaccine any time during the flu season can still be helpful, even into January or later.

### **Why should I get the COVID booster vaccine?**

This fall's booster will cover both the original strains of COVID as well as the new variants that are currently circulating and causing illness.

The best way to protect yourself and those around you from serious illness, hospitalization, or death is to be up to date with your COVID vaccines.

### **Can I get the flu and COVID vaccines on the same day?**

Yes, you can get both vaccines on the same day. You need both vaccines this year. The COVID vaccine does not protect against the flu, and the flu vaccine does not protect against COVID.

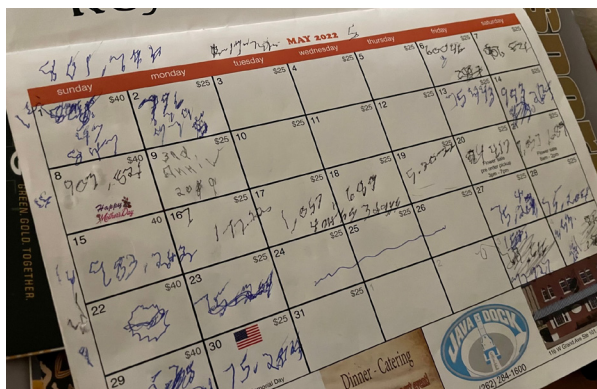
In addition to getting both a flu and a COVID vaccine, take the following steps to reduce your chances of getting sick:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Wash your hands often
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
- Wear a well-fitting mask indoors in areas of high COVID transmission in the community

# MEMBER REACHES MAJOR MILESTONE

Giles Bruecher has always been a walker, but it was only recently that he started counting his steps. Back in January, Giles, 59, logged his first 1 million steps, which he completed by walking around the Port Washington nursing home where he lives.

Giles started out by logging about 10,000 steps each day, Monday through Friday. Now it's closer to 15,000. He accomplished his first 1 million steps in close to 100 days, which he carefully noted on the calendar in his apartment.



Giles started tracking his steps to help cope with feeling cooped up during the COVID-19 pandemic. Now it is part of his daily routine, except on weekends when he turns off the pedometer that he uses to track his progress.

“I do it because I want to keep active,” Giles said. “I don’t like being set in one place. I’d rather do things.”

Giles got started tracking his steps thanks in part to a nurse practitioner at Harbor Campus, where he has lived for the past three years. The nurse practitioner gave him a pedometer because she thought it would be good to give him goals, said Sarah Wisniewski, a nurse who works with Giles.

“I thought that was a great idea. It has given him something to focus on other than COVID and it has really been great for his mental health,” Sarah said. “It’s really given him a sense of pride.”

Walking has been Giles’ main mode of getting around, ever since he was a

young man. As a boy, Giles was diagnosed with epilepsy and experienced seizures throughout his young life. In high school, he took driver’s education. However, Giles decided against taking the test to get

his license because he never felt comfortable behind the wheel, so he walked everywhere.

Brain surgery at 29 helped get Giles’ seizures under control. However, today he deals with tremors in his hands and neuropathy in his feet. Thankfully, all the walking Giles does seem to help with the pain.

“The hardest thing about walking is staying on your feet. The older you get, the harder it is,” Giles said. “If it wasn’t for the pedometer, I don’t know if I would walk as much as I do.”

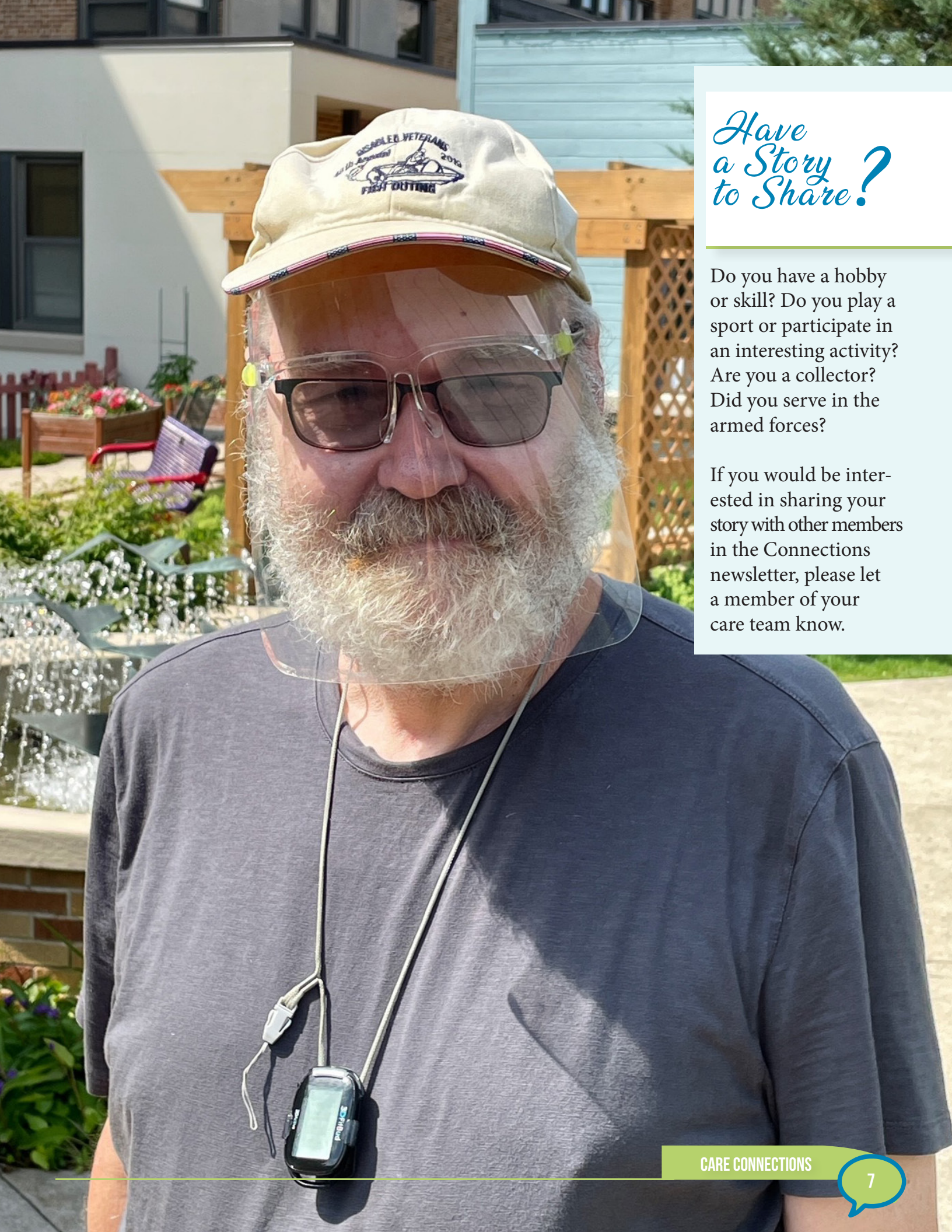
While he reached his first 1 million-step goal back in January, Giles has done it again two more times and plans to keep on doing it. In addition to making him feel better, walking gives Giles an opportunity to get out and see people and chat. While walking has

always been a part of Giles’ life, it has become even more important to him.

“Accomplishing a million steps is hard. It made me feel great,” Giles said.

“I’ll do it as long as I can, until I can’t walk anymore.”

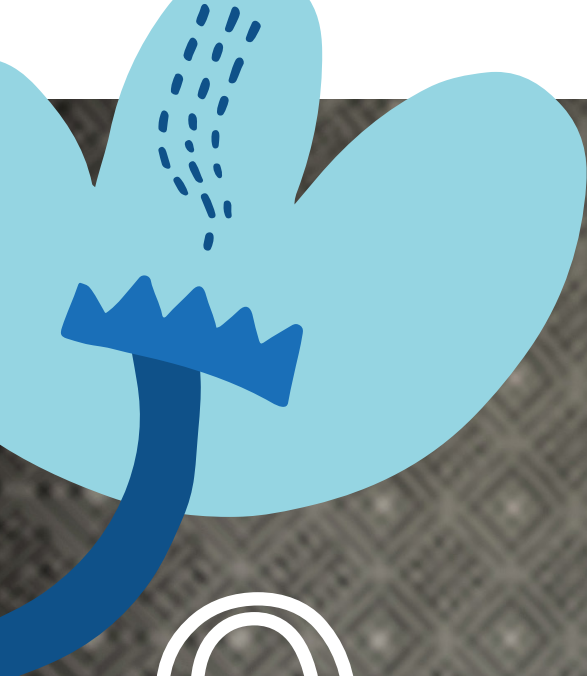
“Accomplishing a million steps is hard. It made me feel great.”



## *Have a Story to Share?*

Do you have a hobby or skill? Do you play a sport or participate in an interesting activity? Are you a collector? Did you serve in the armed forces?

If you would be interested in sharing your story with other members in the Connections newsletter, please let a member of your care team know.



# 9 tips for *Dementia Caregivers*



A caregiver, sometimes referred to as a caretaker, refers to anyone who provides care for another person. Millions of people living in the United States take care of a friend or family member with Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia. Sometimes caregivers live with the person or nearby, other times they live far away. For many families, caring for a person with dementia isn't just one person's job, but the role of many people who share tasks and responsibilities. No matter what kind of caregiver you are, taking care of another person can be overwhelming at times. These tips and suggestions may help with everyday care and tasks.

- 1 Try to keep a routine, such as bathing, dressing, and eating at the same time each day.
- 2 Help the person write down to-do lists, appointments, and events in a notebook or calendar.
- 3 Plan activities that the person enjoys and try to do them at the same time each day.
- 4 Consider a system or reminders for helping those who must take medications regularly.
- 5 When dressing or bathing, allow the person to do as much as possible.
- 6 Buy loose-fitting, comfortable, easy-to-use clothing, such as clothes with elastic waistbands, fabric fasteners, or large zipper pulls instead of shoelaces, buttons, or buckles.
- 7 Use a sturdy shower chair to support a person who is unsteady and to prevent falls. You can buy shower chairs at drug stores and medical supply stores.
- 8 Be gentle and respectful. Tell the person what you are going to do, step by step while you help them bathe or get dressed.
- 9 Serve meals in a consistent, familiar place and give the person enough time to eat.





## Tips for Caregivers:

### *Taking Care of Yourself*

Being a caregiver can be extremely rewarding, but it can also be overwhelming. Caring for a person with Alzheimer's or a related dementia takes time and effort. It can feel lonely and frustrating. You might even feel angry, which could be a sign you are trying to take on too much. It is important to find time to take care of yourself. Here are some tips that may offer some relief:

- Ask for help when you need it. This could mean

asking family members and friends to help or reaching out to local services for additional care needs.

- Eat nutritious foods, which can help keep you healthy and active for longer.
- Join a caregiver's support group online or in person. Meeting other caregivers will give you a chance to share stories and ideas and can help keep you from feeling isolated.
- Take breaks each day. Try making a cup of tea or calling a friend.
- Spend time with friends and keep up with hobbies.
- Get exercise as often as you can. Try doing yoga or going for a walk.
- Try practicing meditation. Research suggests that practicing meditation may reduce blood pressure, anxiety and depression, and insomnia.
- Consider seeking help from mental health professionals to help you cope with stress and anxiety. Talk with your doctor about finding treatment.

# 5

## Ways to Prevent Medicare and Medicaid Fraud



Fraud against Medicare and Medicaid affects everyone. Some examples of fraud include someone submitting a claim for payment for services they did not perform; someone submitting a claim for unnecessary services; or, someone using another person's ID card.

Medicare and Medicaid lose an estimated \$60 billion each year to fraud. Anyone can commit fraud, including providers, Community Care employees, and even members.

Here are some tips to protect yourself and Community Care from fraud:

- 1** Only share your ID card with doctors and healthcare providers who need the information to serve you.
- 2** If someone calls and offers free tests or services in exchange for your member ID number, hang up. It is a scam.
- 3** If you receive an email or text offering services or asking for personal information, do not respond and do not click on any links.
- 4** Never let someone else use your ID card for services. Never use another person's ID card.
- 5** If you self direct services, only approve the hours actually worked by the caregiver.

**If you suspect fraud, Community Care expects you to report it. To report fraud to Community Care, call 262-207-9440 or go to our website at [www.communitycareinc.org](http://www.communitycareinc.org). TTY call 711.**

**If you need help reporting fraud, talk to a member of your care team.**



# Over-the-Counter Benefit Card

## *for Partnership members in Medicare*

This year, Community Care began offering an Over-the-Counter (OTC) Benefit Card to Partnership members enrolled in Medicare. This benefit is only available to Partnership members.

If you are a Partnership member, you can use this monthly benefit card to purchase OTC products like pain relievers, cough syrup, toothpaste, and other personal supplies.

Each month, you will receive

\$35 loaded automatically onto the card, which you can use at many popular stores and pharmacies, like Walmart, Walgreens, CVS, Family Dollar, and more. There is also an online catalog available at [www.OTCNetwork.com](http://www.OTCNetwork.com).

The card only works when buying OTC items. You will not be able to use these cards to purchase items like food, gasoline, or alcohol.

You must activate the card before using it. The card includes instructions on how to do this.

Want to shop using your smartphone? Download the OTC Network app. Visit [www.OTCnetwork.com](http://www.OTCnetwork.com) to learn more.

If you have additional questions, check with a member of your care team.

## Community Care Supports Our Providers

At Community Care, the partnership we have with our network of providers is critical to our success. They ensure our members' health and well-being on a daily basis.

You may have noticed in recent months that the providers you work with have reported being short-staffed. This has affected many businesses, but specifically those in the health and human services field.

To help address this problem, Community Care has been providing one-time payments and rate increases to providers in our network since 2020.

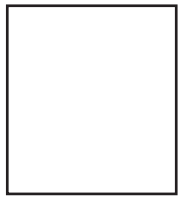
These additional funds have helped pay for needed personal protective equipment, to provide pay increases for direct care workers, and to support administration of our valued provider agencies. We expect to continue these increases for the rest of 2022 and into 2023.

We value our providers and are happy to demonstrate this with extra funding. We hope this additional support will help them work through staffing shortages.





205 Bishops Way  
Brookfield, WI 53005



Jane Doe  
5555 S. Pine St.  
Milwaukee, WI 53203

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