News from KABC

KABC Board, Membership, and Staff wish to thank Margaret Farley, our former executive director and Board member for her advocacy and service. We welcome Mitzi McFatrich as interim director.

KABC is conducting a search for a full-time, dynamic leader. To learn more about this opportunity see the job description. Interested parties may forward resumes to info@kabc.org

The Kansas Experience

Thank you to the professional medical staff at Lawrence Eye Care Associates for providing helpful information on glaucoma.

January is not only a popular time to make resolutions, it’s also Glaucoma Awareness Month. Scheduling an appointment to assess your eye health is a good way to start off the New Year. Preventative care is very important especially in diagnosing vision diseases like glaucoma, as it can onset without any symptoms.

So what is glaucoma?
Glaucoma is a condition that damages your eye’s optic nerve. It’s linked to a buildup of pressure inside your eye. The increased pressure in your eye, called intraocular pressure, can damage your optic nerve, which sends images to your brain. High intraocular pressure usually can’t be felt and can cause permanent vision loss or even total blindness. Once vision is lost, it can’t be corrected or “brought back.” But lowering eye pressure can help keep the sight that remains. Most people with glaucoma who follow their prescribed treatment plan and have regular eye exams are able to keep their vision.

What causes glaucoma?
The fluid inside your eye, called aqueous humor, usually flows out of your eye through a mesh-like channel. If this channel gets blocked, or the eye is producing too much fluid, the liquid builds up. Sometimes, experts don’t know what causes this blockage. It can be inherited - from parent to child, but less-common causes of glaucoma include a
blunt or chemical injury to your eye, severe eye infection, blocked blood vessels inside your eye, and inflammatory conditions. It’s rare, but eye surgery can sometimes bring it on. It usually affects both eyes, but it may be worse in one than the other.

How will my doctor know if I have glaucoma?
Glaucoma tests are painless and don’t take long. Technicians test your vision, and do a test called tonometry to check your eye pressure. They will use drops to dilate your pupils and then the doctor will examine your eyes. While your eyes are dilated, the optic nerve will be checked for signs of glaucoma. Photographs or special imaging tests of your optic nerve may be taken so they can spot changes, if any, at your next visit. A visual field test may also be ordered to see if you’ve lost peripheral vision.

What is the treatment for glaucoma?
Glaucoma is treated by lowering your eye pressure. Options to do this may include prescription eye drops, oral medications, laser treatment, surgery or a combination of any of these. The most common treatment is prescribed eye drops that help decrease eye pressure by improving how fluid drains from your eye or by decreasing the amount of fluid your eye makes. When you receive a diagnosis of glaucoma, you're potentially facing lifelong treatment, and regular checkups with your doctor will provide you with the best possible outcome for your vision health.

Having regular eye exams to screen for signs of glaucoma and beginning treatment can lower your risk of vision loss.

Advocacy In Action

Monday, January 11 the Kansas Legislature convened for the 2022 session. KABC has two legislative priorities for this session:

1. Charlie’s Bill/HB2004 will provide elders the right to appeal eviction in assisted living and home plus facilities in Kansas. When Charlie Imthurn was evicted by the facility where he lived, he had to immediately find a new, safe, appropriate home with care. Charlie had dementia. You can help protect all older adults by assuring that they have somewhere to turn and the right to appeal an eviction to the state’s administrative hearings court.

2. Providing Safe Care. Help assure that workers who provide care in nursing homes and assisted facilities have the training and supervision to safely provide care to frail elders. There is a move afoot which will undercut the training and support aides need and the safe hands on care elder residents deserve. This emerging effort threatens the approved training standards currently in place for nurse aides and seeks to make permanent the COVID emergency measures allowed for a workforce challenged by illness from COVID. Help KABC promote better options that already exist.

Learn more about both priorities.

Resources

Understaffing in nursing homes

Chronic understaffing has been a serious problem in nursing homes for decades and has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. While there are numerous factors contributing to this problem, one major cause is the lack of adequate minimum staffing standards at both the state and federal levels. Minimum standards ensure that staffing will not fall to a level that would be harmful to residents.

The National Consumer Voice as published a solid article that talks about the importance of staffing.

When Conservatorship Goes Terribly Wrong
Roughly 1.5 million Americans are under guardianship or conservatorship, most of them over 65. Many conservators and guardians do excellent work, unfortunately some are unethical and untrustworthy. Unscrupulous professional guardians exploit vulnerable individuals. Sometimes judges sign off on guardianship without requiring due diligence from the attorneys involved.

This article from Next Avenue details one family's story of how it went wrong, and things they found to be helpful.

If you need help with Guardianship in Kansas, contact the Kansas Guardianship Program.

COVID 19 Resources

Clarification from CMS on Nursing Home Visitation

On December 23rd, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) provided clarification on its November 12th guidance by publishing Nursing Home Visitation Frequently Asked Questions. The FAQs address questions like whether residents can have close contact with their visitors, if they can visit without wearing masks, if visitors can share meals with residents, and more.

Read Consumer Voice's summary of the new guidance and advocacy tips to help you visit with your loved one. Need more help? Contact KABC.

Gov. Kelly Issues Emergency Orders

On Jan. 6th, Governor Laura Kelly signed a State of Disaster Emergency to alleviate healthcare staffing shortages and facilities’ constraints caused by the surge in COVID-19 cases. The crux of this for elders living in nursing homes or assisted facilities means that the aides providing your daily hands on care may have as little as 8 hours of on-line training if he/she is a “Temporary Nurse Aide,” rather than the 90 hours of required training in classroom and clinical settings that normal Certified Nurse Aides receive in order to provide safe, hands on care. The emergency order also lifts the requirements for timely completion of continuing education by health care workers, a critical need for a workforce with high turn over rates caring for elders with dementia and other high care needs.

Governor Kelly said, “This disaster declaration provides a 15-day solution to give our front-line health care workers the support they need as they battle this COVID-19 surge. This action is temporary until the legislature returns, at which time I will work with them to pass legislation to extend my executive orders through the month of March.” For more detail on the emergency order read here

Upcoming Events

KABC hosts free trainings year round. If you're interested in KABC presenting to your group email info@kabc.org or call the office at 785-842-3088.

Your Rights Shouldn't Change Just Because Your Address Does...
Unfortunately, older adults are often forced to do just that.

Many Kansans, especially in rural communities, have difficulty finding or affording consistent and quality home care. Without support to remain at home, older adults often move to assisted living facilities where they lose their right to appeal an eviction.

For those who cannot afford assisted living or need more care than offered in these settings, and who cannot find adequate HCBS, the only option may be nursing homes which can often strip elders of their right to receive care in the least restrictive environment.

For the first 2 years of the pandemic, older adults who needed care in a facility were forced to surrender their right to have visitors without extreme COVID restrictions.

Your rights shouldn’t change just because your address does...

**Help protect elder rights in all settings today with a gift to KABC.**

[DONATE NOW]

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**Support KABC At No Cost!**

**Dillons/Kroger**

Before your next shopping trip to Dillon’s, be sure to designate KABC as your Community Rewards Charity to improve elder care as you shop. Click the photo to sign up and designate KABC as your charity of choice!
**Amazon Smile**
Amazon donates a percentage of each item purchased through their website to a charity of your choice. Before you click that “Buy Now” button, designate KABC as your Amazon Smile charity and better elder care with every purchase!

**Don't Forget The App!**
Amazon recently added the Smile charity feature to their mobile app too! Here's how to activate it on your phone:
1. Open the Amazon app on your phone
2. Select the main menu (=) & tap on "AmazonSmile" within Programs & Features
3. Select "Kansas Advocates For Better Care" as your charity
4. Follow the on-screen instructions to activate AmazonSmile in the mobile app

Your donations help strengthen our advocacy work to assure aging adults and Kansans with disabilities always have quality long-term care.

**Thank you!**

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**About Kansas Advocates for Better Care**
KABC is a charitable 501(c)(3) non-profit organization whose mission is to improve long-term care for older adults in Kansas. Our mission is achieved through public policy advocacy, trainings and education, and by providing guidance & support to older adults and their families who need help with long-term care issues.

**Our Contact Information**
*{{Organization Name}}*
*{{Organization Address}}*
*{{Organization Phone}}*
*{{Organization Website}}*

*{{Unsubscribe}}*

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