Keeping Up With Care ~ June 2022

The Kansas Experience

KABC's Executive Director Dan Goodman and Media Consultant Mike Swenson recently interviewed adult brothers in Sumner County (south central Kansas) who are assisting their mother, Joellen Schmidt. In 2020, Joellen’s health took a turn for the worse when it was discovered that she had an inoperable brain tumor.

The two sons, Kevin and Martin, who also live in Caldwell now care for Joellen as part of their daily routine. Of course, Kevin and Martin have jobs and families to care for as well, so as Joellen’s needs drew greater, the sons attempted to find in-home care services that could supplement their own efforts. A small town like Caldwell doesn’t have such services so they went to Wellington and found a service. However, after a couple of visits, the home health care professional inexplicably stopped coming to Caldwell.

This story is just one of thousands that plays out across Kansas and the rest of the nation every day. Our elderly citizens, after a lifetime of working, raising a family and helping others, have one simple wish – to be able to stay in their own homes as they age. The problem is that in Kansas, the state supports institutional care (nursing facilities, etc.) much more than home and community-based care. And in the rural areas of Kansas like Caldwell, access to home care is scarce or even nonexistent.

Consider this -- Kansas ranks 47th in the nation regarding low-care Nursing Home Residents and 39th in geriatric providers per 100,000 adults ages 65+.

KABC believes this is due to inadequate home care coverage across the State and likely compounded in 2022 due to the lack of direct care staff. Older Kansans needing long-term care are forced into Nursing Home care way too early because of the lack of home care coverage and long-term care options which would allow them to stay in their home and communities. This costs those individuals the quality of life that they desire while also impacting State budgets with the lack of cost avoidance and diversion from more costly services that community-based care offers.

Kevin and Martin Schmidt are sharing their story to help raise awareness of their situation and that of the many other families in Kansas having the same experience. Studies continue to show that home- and community-based services help older adults stay at home, involved in their communities and is where most people prefer to live.

We would like to hear your stories, too. Please contact the KABC office, info@kabc.org or 800-525-1782. If you prefer, you can mail your thoughts: 536 Fireside Ct., Ste. B, Lawrence, KS 66049

Advocacy In Action

For the first time since 1987, the federal government is asking for public input about how staffing levels effect the quality of care in nursing facilities.
The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) is asking for stakeholder input about setting federal minimum staffing standards in nursing homes and how best to measure health disparities in resident outcomes.

The request for information follows the Biden Administration’s Feb. 28, 2022, proposal of significant nursing home reforms. Because inadequate staffing is the primary driver of poor health outcomes in nursing homes CMS has said it plans to propose a minimum staffing standard within one year.

You can submit your comments through the CMS portal. Follow the Submit Formal Comment in the green box under the Request for Information (RFI).

KABC is compiling consumer experiences and will submit them for you if you prefer. We would like to hear from you about the implementation of a minimum staffing standard as Kansas Advocates for Better Care strongly supports this proposal. You may email your comments to info@kabc.org or follow the link to our survey to submit your comments no later than June 8, 2022.

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**Resources**

**Finding Comfort.** This new booklet from CaringKind NYC is for family members, friends and caregivers of a person who has dementia. The purpose is to provide information about the best ways to offer comfort and the best possible quality of life for someone whose dementia is progressing.

The approach to care described here is called “palliative.” The goal of this care is to increase comfort and pleasure and reduce pain and suffering. Palliative care can be very helpful to those who have advanced dementia. Many people think that palliative care is only for people who are about to die, but that is not so. Palliative care helps people who have many types of serious injuries or chronic illnesses. It can be helpful for many months, or even years. Studies show that palliative care can help people who have advanced dementia. **It is not about giving up.**

This booklet is intended to help you bring the best possible quality of life for the person you care for who has dementia. For the person with even the most advanced dementia, comfort matters and is possible. The more you are able to share with staff about what the person you care for enjoys and is comforted by, the better. In turn, when there are signals that your relative is not comfortable, the focus should be on working with staff to figure out what is causing the source of their distress and taking the necessary steps to prevent or minimize it in the future. This is how to bring “person centered care” to someone with dementia.

For more information about this project, contact: Ann Wyatt AWyatt@cknyc.org
June 15th is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) was launched on June 15, 2006 by the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse and the World Health Organization at the United Nations. The purpose of WEAAD is to provide an opportunity for communities around the world to promote a better understanding of abuse and neglect of older persons by raising awareness of the cultural, social, economic and demographic processes affecting elder abuse and neglect.

We need everyone to educate each other about the impact of elder abuse and the pervasiveness of ageism (biases against older people) in our culture. We all deserve to lead happy lives, free from abuse as we age. Through outreach and statewide engagement, we can raise this social issue to a worldwide priority that must be addressed and prevented. **Take action today!**

About Special Focus Facilities

**Special Focus Facilities (SFFs) and SFF Candidates** are nursing homes that have a history of serious quality issues or are included in the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) program to stimulate improvements in their quality of care.

CMS and state agencies (Kansas Dept. for Aging & Disability Services/KDADS in Kansas) inspect nursing homes on a regular basis to determine if they are providing the quality of care that Medicare and Medicaid requires in order to protect and improve residents’ health and safety. When nursing homes do not meet CMS’ health care or fire safety standards, these instances are cited as deficiencies, and the problems are required to be corrected.

Most nursing homes have some deficiencies, with the average being 6-7 deficiencies per inspection. However, CMS has found that a number of nursing homes have:

- More problems than other nursing homes (about twice the average number of deficiencies)
- More serious problems than most other nursing homes (including harm or injury experienced by residents), and
- A pattern of serious problems that has persisted over a long period of time (as measured over the three years before the date the nursing home was first put on the SFF list).

Currently Kansas has only two facilities that are active SFFs. There are another 10 facilities that are on the SFF candidate list, and have been for quite some time. KABC is concerned about the lack of oversight in nursing homes overall, and especially what kind of level of quality care these facilities are able to provide.

"As inspection data and deficiencies persist, the National Special Committee on Aging is concerned about the timeliness, consistency and effectiveness of SFF program oversight along with the wellbeing of residents in those facilities. Please review **Senator Robert Casey’s letter** to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, (CMS) for details."

If you have questions or concerns about SFF facilities in Kansas, please contact the KABC office, 800-525-1782.
Upcoming Events

Watch for more information about KABC's Annual Membership Meeting & Caregiver Training

Friday, Sept 9th - Location and Topic to be determined!

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*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 800-525-1782*

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Join the Kansas Long-Term Care Ombudsman on June 29th for this interactive zoom training....if you have already attended this session we encourage you to share it with your friends. We will be providing additional offerings soon. Click the photo to register!

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*Help end the practice of temporary aides with a gift to KABC.*

*KABC is fighting for aides to have all the resources they need to give safe and better care.*

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*If you would like to make a tax-deductible donation, click the button below. If you prefer, you may mail your check to:*

**KABC**

536 Fireside Ct, Suite B Lawrence, KS 66049

[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!

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**Amazon Smile**

Did you know that 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

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**KABC's Privacy Policy**

Kansas Advocates for Better Care (KABC) protects your privacy.

KABC maintains password-protected computerized data files regarding financial support. We do not sell or share our membership list or member financial information with any other agency, and will not divulge any personal information about any members, contributors or contacts without express written permission.

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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
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