



Connecting You to Community Services

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ELDERCARE LOCATOR LAUNCHES HOLIDAY CAMPAIGN TO HELP OLDER ADULTS AND CAREGIVERS MANAGE RISING COSTS OF PRESCRIPTIONS DURING TOUGH ECONOMIC TIMES

As Older Adults Continue to Spend More Money Each Year on Prescription Drugs, Eldercare Locator and Consumers Union Release Tips and Information to Help Seniors and Caregivers Manage Prescriptions and Make Smart, Economical Health Care Decisions

Washington, DC –The Eldercare Locator, a public service of the U.S. Administration on Aging, in partnership with Consumers Union, a nonprofit publisher of Consumer Reports, announced the launch of a “Home for the Holidays” campaign to assist older adults and their caregivers in making smart, economical health care decisions. In the U.S., three-fourths of people over 45 take prescription drugs, with an average of four medications each day¹ and by 2010, annual per person spending on drugs for older adults is projected to reach \$2,810 a year, an increase of 133 percent over spending in 2000². The Eldercare Locator launches this medicine management campaign specifically during the holiday season so that families gathering together can discuss the issue, evaluate the current situation and implement a management plan option to benefit an older love in the New Year.

“Each day, many older Americans open up their medicine cabinets and find them filled with countless numbers of bottles. The use of multiple medications may increase the likelihood of medication misuse,” said Kathy Greenlee, Assistant Secretary for Aging, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. “There are some simple steps older adults can take to ensure that they are taking their medicines correctly and are getting the best value. The intention of our holiday campaign is to provide the aging population and caregivers with tools to remove the stress from the medicine management process.”

¹ http://www.aarp.org/health/conditions/articles/meds_and_you_intro.html

² <http://www.familiesusa.org/assets/pdfs/drugodd0fd.pdf>

Eldercare Locator's seventh annual "Home for the Holidays" campaign seeks to provide useful tools and information about prescription drug management through a new brochure, *Prescription Drug Options for Older Adults: Managing Your Medicines*. The brochure provides tips on how to more actively participate in health care decisions by managing prescription drug options, including suggesting resources for creating a medicine record, talking to doctors about medicines and cost-saving steps such as generic drugs and competitive pharmacy pricing.

"Family gatherings during the holidays are great opportunities for conversations about a loved one's wellbeing, including medicine management and costs," said Sandy Markwood, CEO of the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a). "During tough economic times, prescription medicine management is a particularly serious issue because it can affect your health and your wallet. Understanding the options available can help older adults and their family members better manage health conditions, reduce the chance of harmful drug interactions and get the best value for their medicines."

To order a free copy of the new brochure, "*Prescription Drug Options: Managing Your Medicines*," contact the Eldercare Locator at 1.800.677.1116 or visit the Resource Center at www.n4a.org/programs/eldercare-locator/resources. For information about prescription drug options and other senior resources in your area, contact the Eldercare Locator to find State and Area Agencies on Aging, Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs) and Indian Tribal Organizations. Professionals can learn more about how to help older adults take an active role in their health care by using the "*Prescription Drug Options for Older Adults*" toolkit at www.n4a.org/programs/best-buy-drugs.

About Eldercare Locator

The Eldercare Locator is the first step to finding resources for older adults in any U.S. community and a free national service of the U.S. Administration on Aging (AoA) that is administered by the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a). Contact the Eldercare Locator at 800.677.1116 or www.eldercare.gov.

About Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs™

This organization is a public education project of Consumers Union dedicated to publishing reports and information about the comparative effectiveness and cost of various prescription drugs and especially how a drug to treat a given illness or condition compares against other such medicines. For more information visit www.CRBestBuyDrugs.org.

National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a)

n4a is the leading voice on aging issues for Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) and a champion in our nation's capitol for Title VI Native American aging programs. Through advocacy, training and technical assistance, n4a support the Aging Services Network of 629 AAAs and 246 Title VI programs. In partnership with Consumers Union, n4a provides new, free resources for older adults and professionals who assist them in making informed prescription drug decisions.

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